

Thirty-one specimens of endangered turtles suspected of illegal possession seized in joint operation by AFCD and Police (with photos)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) conducted a joint operation with the Hong Kong Police Force on May 17 on a case of suspected illegal possession of endangered species. Thirty-one live and dead specimens of turtles suspected of being illegally possessed were seized on a premises and two male suspects were arrested.

A spokesman for the AFCD said, "During the operation, officers found 31 live and dead specimens of endangered turtles on the premises of a suspect, including 21 live turtles. All the turtles are listed as Endangered or Critically Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, as well as the Appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586), including six big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*), which are listed on CITES Appendix I, and nine Chinese three-striped box turtles (also commonly known as golden coin turtle) (*Cuora trifasciata*), three Beale's eyed turtles (*Sacalia bealei*), two yellow-margined box turtles (*Cuora flavomarginata*) and one wattle-necked softshell turtle (*Palea steindachneri*), which are listed on CITES Appendix II. Furthermore, some tools suspected for hunting purposes were also seized from the car of one of the suspects. Investigation is still underway.

The spokesman went on to say that there are wild populations of big-headed turtles, three-striped box turtles and Beale's eyed turtles in Hong Kong. All local wild chelonians are protected by the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170). Since the suspects have indicated on a social media platform that turtles were captured from Hong Kong countryside, the AFCD is also investigating along the direction of whether illegal hunting and possession of protected wild animals stipulated under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) is involved.

The spokesman added, "Illegal possession of endangered species is a serious offence. Any person contravening the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586) will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years upon conviction. The specimens will also be forfeited. In addition, the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) also stipulates that unless otherwise permitted, no one shall hunt, wilfully disturb, buy, sell, export, offer for sale or export, possess or control protected wild animals (including all wild chelonians). Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year upon conviction."

The spokesman said that the Government is committed to combatting illegal hunting of and trading in wild animals to protect local wild species and endangered species. The AFCD will remain vigilant and continue monitoring various platforms and social media, and proactively taking action to deter trade in endangered species.

The AFCD encourages members of the public to call 2150 6978 or email espint@afcd.gov.hk to report any suspected illegal trading of endangered species.



Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

The Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 42 specified places during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of a number of cases testing positive, 42 specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. Mobile specimen collection stations have been set up by the Government in different districts to facilitate testing to be conducted in compliance with the compulsory testing notice. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

Persons who have tested positive in the past three months (including positive cases tested either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests (RATs) that have been self-declared to the DH) do not need to undergo compulsory testing. For those who are subject to compulsory testing (save for those who have declared their positive RAT results as mentioned above), they must undergo nucleic acid tests in accordance with relevant compulsory testing notices and cannot use RATs to fulfil the requirement of such notices. In other words, a negative RAT result cannot be deemed as fulfilling the compulsory testing requirement. Furthermore, unless a person subject to compulsory testing has obtained a medical certificate proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons, the person cannot provide a deep throat saliva sample to fulfil the compulsory testing requirement.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website via the following link: www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20220519.pdf.

If any persons test positive under compulsory testing, such positive cases will be handled in the same manner as in those identified through other nucleic acid tests or self-declared through RATs. Their isolation arrangements (as well as the quarantine arrangements of their household members) are no different from other positive cases.

Persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must go to any of the mobile specimen collection stations, community testing centres (CTCs) or recognised local medical testing institutions to undergo professional swab sampling in fulfilling the requirements for compulsory testing. Young children may continue to undergo

the test using a stool specimen. For details on obtaining stool specimen bottles, please refer to the COVID-19 thematic website: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/Stool_bottle_collection_points.pdf.

If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be extended for one day.

The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated to get vaccinated without delay. The Government is working towards the goal of boosting the vaccination rates of children, teenagers and the elderly so that they can be protected by the vaccines as early as possible. Furthermore, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the CHP of the DH has updated the consensus interim recommendations, and persons aged 60 or above who have taken three doses of vaccine are recommended to receive an additional dose (i.e. fourth dose) of either Comirnaty vaccine or CoronaVac vaccine at least three months after their last dose. Members of the public who are eligible should get the fourth dose as early as possible for better protection.

CTCs provide testing services for the public. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). The system shows the booking status of the centres for the coming two weeks to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. As of 6pm today (May 19), there was around 97 per cent availability for booking places for the coming two weeks. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

The Government will reopen the mobile specimen collection stations at Hing Man Estate in Chai Wan and Richland Gardens in Kowloon Bay tomorrow (May 20). Separately, ticketing machines have been installed in a number of service points for on-site ticket arrangement. Members of the public who have obtained a ticket can visit the CTC website (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) to check the real-time queueing ticket status. Booking service is also provided for some large-scale mobile specimen collection stations, and members of the public may use the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) to reserve a suitable time slot for testing.

Other than persons subject to compulsory testing, all members of the public may conduct free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable). The opening dates and

operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations are stated in the Annex.

Outdoor mobile specimen collection stations will be closed if the Strong Wind Signal No. 3 or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal has been issued, while all mobile specimen collection stations together with all CTCs will be closed when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

(a) For tests which require using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable)

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;

2. To attend any of the CTCs (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf), and the relevant sample must be taken through combined nasal and throat swabs; or

4. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the stool sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

(b) For persons holding a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner proving that they are unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, vending machines set up at MTR stations or designated general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times,

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);

2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and the maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. The fixed penalty for discharging the liability is \$10,000. The person may also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Any person in breach of the compulsory testing order would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff in Southern, Kwun Tong and Wan Chai Districts (with photos)

In light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from sewage samples collected in Southern, Kwun Tong and Wan Chai Districts, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (May 19) that the Southern District Office (SDO), the Kwun Tong District Office (KTDO) and the Wan Chai District Office (WCDO) will distribute a total of about 66 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in the Districts.

The SDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and

property management staff living and working in Pok Fu Lam Terrace and World Fair Court for voluntary testing through the property management companies.

The KTDO also started to distribute rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Choi Ha Estate, 71-79 Ting Fu Street, San Hei Building, Yen Ning Building, Yick Fu House, Kien May Building, Dor Hei Building, On Tak Building, On Tai Building, On Cheung House, On Yin Building, Ting Shing House, Ting On Building, Ting Yip Building, Ting Yip Mansion, Ting Hing Building, Kathy's Court, Fu On Building, Tak Kee House, Tak Cheong House, Tak Ming Building, Chit Wong Mansion, King Wah Building, Yan Wing Mansion, Wing Ming Building, Wing Shing Building, Wing Ying Building, Shui Kei House, Park Mansion, Lap Hing Building, Hing Fung Building, Wah Fat House, Kam Wo Building, Sheung Heu Building, Tsut Hei Building, 2-2B Ting Fu Street, 18-22 Ting Yip Street and 12-14 Ting Yue Square for voluntary testing through the property management companies.

In addition, the WCDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Elizabeth House, Kei Wa Building, Besthing Mansion, Lockhart House, Hyde Centre, Dandenong Mansion, Wai Sun Building, Chi King Court, Wah Fat Mansion, Golden Jubilee House, Ascot Mansion and Lockhart House for voluntary testing through the owners' corporations and the property management companies.

The HAD made the above arrangements in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Members of the public may refer to the demonstration video produced by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) under the Department of Health (DH) via www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzFAUzTtmKk to learn how to use the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit.

Persons testing positive through an RAT should take a photo of the test result and declare the result within 24 hours via the Declaration System for Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If members of the public encounter difficulties in using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The CHP under the DH will contact the relevant person later to complete the report procedure. There is no need to declare negative test results.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.



[Education Bureau announces latest anti-epidemic measures for schools](#)

In view of the latest developments of the epidemic and the recent further relaxation of social distancing measures by the Government, the Education Bureau (EDB) announced today (May 19) the updated arrangements of anti-epidemic measures in schools, including the relaxation arrangements for school activities.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The EDB attaches great importance to the health of students and reviews various anti-epidemic measures in schools from time to time. In response to the announcement made by the Government earlier

that the second stage of the relaxation in social distancing measures will be implemented today as scheduled, we will relax the conditions for students to participate in mask-wearing activities on a half-day basis, such as speech days, parents' days, open days and campus visits. However, students attending the events are still required to meet the relevant anti-epidemic prevention measures of the venue.

"In addition, secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens can also arrange for students to participate in non-academic mask-wearing extracurricular activities (such as music or sports activities, school team training) on a half-day basis on Saturdays.

"We believe that the above measures will help students better adjust to normal school life, and at the same time allow schools to arrange more diversified activities for students so as to enhance their physical and mental development."

The EDB has updated the guidelines on "Health Protection Measures for Schools" and uploaded them onto the EDB's website (www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-sch/diseases-prevention/guidelines-covid19.html). Schools should continue to observe the various anti-epidemic measures stipulated in the "Health Protection Measures for Schools" issued and from time to time updated by the EDB and the "Health Advice to Schools for the Prevention of COVID-19" issued by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP).

The spokesman added, "As for the daily rapid antigen test (RAT) arrangement, taking into account the implementation of relevant arrangements in schools since the resumption of face-to-face classes and the number of cases reported by schools to the CHP, we have observed that the RAT at this stage can help gatekeeping in schools. After listening to views of the CHP, it is considered necessary for schools to maintain the daily RAT arrangement until late June. The EDB will continue to distribute RAT kits to students with financial needs through schools. The Government will review the development of the epidemic in a timely manner and consider later whether to adjust the daily RAT arrangement."

Vaccination is the most effective way to protect against COVID-19 and it can prevent severe cases and reduce the risk of death. In view of the fact that the vaccination rate of younger students, especially those aged 3 to 11, still needs to be improved, the EDB strongly urges parents and schools to arrange for school-age students, especially younger students, to be vaccinated as soon as possible to protect their lives. Vigorously increasing the vaccination rate will also help the campus to build a more effective protective barrier so that students can study with peace of mind.

CE chairs 13th meeting of Commission on Children (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, chaired the 13th meeting of the Commission on Children today (May 19).

A Commission on Children was established for the first time by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in fulfilment of the Chief Executive's pledge in her Election Manifesto to consolidate the efforts made by relevant bureaux and departments and focus on addressing children's issues as they grow up. Since June 2018, the Commission has been advising the Government in the formulation and implementation of various policies and programmes aiming at taking better care of children.

Mrs Lam said, "While the Government has rolled out various initiatives in recent years, including strengthening the provision of child care services, expanding by phases the On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Service to 10 000 places in the next school year in order to achieve the objective of 'zero waiting' time, introducing the Funding Scheme for Children's Well-being and Development to support worthwhile projects, transforming more than 170 public play spaces to enhance the outdoor play environment for children, developing a central databank on children in Hong Kong to enable the Government and other stakeholders to collect and share useful data on children, etc., more need to be done as illustrated in the two subjects addressed by the Commission at this meeting."

During the meeting, members were briefed on:

(1) A comprehensive review of residential child care and related services to be conducted by the Government in the light of the incident in Children's Residential Home of the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children which had aroused major public concern: The review would cover three major areas, namely service regulation and monitoring, service planning and provision and service quality and staff training. Members supported the review and offered views on major aspects that it should cover. The Government would complete the review in September 2022 and report the outcome to the Commission; and

(2) The fifth Report of the Child Fatality Review Panel and the Government's responses

([www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/2867/en/CFRP_Fifth_Report_\(Eng\).pdf](http://www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/2867/en/CFRP_Fifth_Report_(Eng).pdf)): Members noted that the review covered the death of 259 children aged below 18, 100 of whom were due to non-natural causes. The report revealed that most of the children who died of non-natural causes lost their lives because of suicide, followed by accidents. Members commended the work of the Review Panel and offered advice on possible ways to expand the coverage of the review and improve the timeliness in making recommendations. Members also supported the early implementation of the various recommendations made by the Review Panel to prevent child and youth deaths.

Referring to the proverb that "it takes a village to raise a child", Mrs Lam said that protection of children should be the priority and obligation of not only the Government, but also all service providers, principals and teachers, and most importantly, parents.

"To raise alertness and ensure that each party will do its best, I said in my 2021 Policy Address that we would take forward legislation on establishing a mandatory reporting mechanism of child abuse. The Labour and Welfare Bureau is aiming at introducing a Bill into the Legislative Council in the first half of 2023," she added.

Members noted the Government's efforts to stabilise the epidemic while upholding the pro-child and pro-family principle. For cases where children were involved, the Government had been striving to ensure that each and every decision was made in the interests of the children and their families. Separation of children and parents during hospitalisation or quarantine should be avoided, and specific needs of the affected children should be fully taken into account.

Mrs Lam said, "I express my sincere gratitude to the Commission for its dedication over the years and members' initiative of presenting proposals on how to strengthen care for the child at this meeting. We will make sure that their views are conveyed to the next-term Chief Executive for consideration."

Members extended their heartfelt appreciation to the Chief Executive for her staunch support in the establishment of the Commission and the importance she attached to safeguarding the rights, interests and well-being of children.

The chairperson of the Commission is the Chief Secretary for Administration. As the post of the Chief Secretary for Administration has been left vacant, the meeting today was chaired by the Chief Executive.

