

Traveller jailed for smuggling rhino horns

A traveller who smuggled rhino horns was convicted for violating the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, and was sentenced to imprisonment today (August 3).

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that a 34-year-old female traveller arrived in Hong Kong on October 19 last year, from Johannesburg, South Africa. About 16 kilograms of rhino horns were found in her baggage by Customs officers.

Subsequent to follow-up investigations, the AFCD charged the woman with the illegal import of listed species in Appendix I to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). She was convicted at the District Court today. With 36 months' imprisonment as the starting point for sentencing, the defendant was sentenced to 24 months behind bars today after a one-third reduction as she pleaded guilty.

Rhinos are listed in Appendix I to the CITES and regulated under the Ordinance in Hong Kong. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years. The specimens will also be forfeited upon conviction.

To enquire about the control of endangered species or to report suspected irregularities, the public can call the AFCD on 1823 or visit www.cites.hk.

