

Traveller jailed for smuggling saiga antelope horns (with photo)

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

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that a 50-year-old male traveller arrived in Hong Kong on November 29, 2019, from Moscow. A total of 224 saiga antelope horns were found in his baggage by Customs officers.

Subsequent to follow-up investigation, the AFCD charged the man with the illegal import of a listed species in Appendix II to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). He was convicted at the District Court. With 30 months' imprisonment as the starting point for sentencing, the defendant was sentenced to 20 months behind bars today after a one-third reduction as he pleaded guilty.

Saiga antelopes are listed in Appendix II 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 commits an offence and 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.

