

For immediate release

11 Pasir Ris Farmway 2
Singapore 519326
Tel : +65 6581 2488
Fax: +65 6581 6318
www.acres.org.sg
info@acres.org.sg

PRESS RELEASE



11 November 2005

ACRES LAUNCHES ALL OUT ATTACK ON THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

SINGAPORE 11 NOVEMBER – Following a year of undercover investigations, confiscations and rescue of animals from the illegal wildlife trade, the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (Acres) has launched an intensive awareness campaign lasting from October 2005 until January 2006. Through advertisements on MRT trains and the radio, and a series of roadshows in schools and shopping malls, Acres is determined to spread the message that ‘Wild Animals Are Not Pets’.

Globally, the illegal trading in wildlife, timber and other natural resources is now surpassed only by the trafficking in drugs and weapons. In Singapore, statistics from the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority show that the illegal wildlife trade is on the rise. Ninety-seven cases were reported last year, an almost three-fold increase from the thirty-four cases in 2000.

Since the launch of the Acres Wildlife Rescue Team in 2004, Acres has intensified its efforts in ending this illicit trade in Singapore. To date, the work of the team has led to the confiscation of more than 140 animals from the illegal wildlife trade. Animals confiscated include primates, snakes, iguanas, spiders, scorpions, tortoises and turtles.

The team has also conducted undercover investigations from June until July 2005, which revealed an alarmingly high number of illegal animals being traded openly in pet shops. One in five pet shops were guilty of this illegal trade and, in total, 111 animals were recorded on sale illegally, mostly of species which face a high risk of extinction in the wild according to the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

Since the undercover investigations revealed a large number of illegal animals being openly on sale, one of the main aims of the awareness campaign is to let people know which animals are prohibited as pets. Louis Ng, Executive Director of Acres said: “As consumers, the public play an important role in the illegal wildlife trade. Ultimately, if people stop buying illegal pets and wildlife products, this illicit trade would not be able to continue. We are urging Singaporeans not to buy exotic animals as pets and to also blow the whistle on anyone who buys or trades in these prohibited animals.”

Anyone with information can call the 24 hours Acres Wildlife Crime Hotline at: 9783 7782.

The radio advertisements can be heard on 987FM in the month of November 2005. The advertisements on the MRT trains will begin in December 2005 for a period of six weeks. The roadshow is currently at East Point Shopping Mall until Sunday 13 November 2005. The roadshow has travelled to United World College, National University of Singapore, Novena Square, Bishan Park and White Sands Shopping Mall.

Acres is confident that with the help and support of the public, this cruel trade can be eliminated and this combined effort can put an end to the labelling of Singapore as a hub for the illegal wildlife trade.

Contact:

Louis Ng (Executive Director) Email: louis@acres.org.sg Handphone: +65 97968592

- ends -

Notes to editors

1. Photographs of the animals confiscated and of the Acres roadshow are available on request.
2. Founded by a group of Singaporeans in 2001, Acres is a local charity aimed at fostering respect and compassion for all animals.
3. The Acres Wildlife Crime Hotline (9783 7782) provides an avenue for those who know of anyone who buys, owns or trades in exotic animals, to blow the whistle on these wildlife traders and buyers.
4. This awareness campaign is sponsored by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA).