



PRESS RELEASE
30 September 2010

STING OPERATIONS RESULT IN SEIZURE OF ALLEGED TIGER SKINS AND A LIVE ANIMAL

SINGAPORE, 30 September 2010 – Three sting operations by ACRES within about a week resulted in the seizure of a complete alleged tiger skin, three pieces of alleged tiger skin and one hedgehog. All products were being advertised for sale online by three different sellers.

Posing as buyers, ACRES undercover officers conducted the sting operations in Hougang for the sale of a hedgehog (15 September), in Choa Chu Kang for the sale of a whole alleged tiger skin complete with the head and claimed to be from Sri Lanka (21 September) and in Serangoon for the sale of pieces of alleged tiger skins claimed to be from Thailand (22 September).

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) responded immediately and seized the items. AVA is currently investigating the cases.

The hedgehog was offered for sale by a Chinese man for \$150, the whole alleged tiger skin by an Indian man for \$400 and the pieces of alleged tiger skins by a Chinese woman for \$128 each.

“These seizures, together with the major seizures of alleged tiger parts in Singapore in March this year, have put a huge dent in the illegal wildlife trade. There is an urgent need to curb the illegal wildlife trade. Less than a century ago, more than 100,000 tigers roamed the world’s jungles and forests. Today, less than 3,200 remain in the wild” said Ms. Anbarasi Boopal, Director of ACRES Wildlife Crime Unit.

All commercial tiger trade has been banned since 1987 by CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), which Singapore is a party to. AVA is the CITES authority in Singapore and administers the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (ESA), which lists all CITES species in its Schedules. Under the ESA, it is an offence to import, export and re-export any CITES species without a permit from AVA. The possession, sale, offering or exposing or advertising for sale or displaying to the public of any illegally imported CITES specimen is also an offence. The penalties, on conviction, are a fine of \$50,000 (per species), not exceeding an aggregate of \$500,000 and/or 2 years imprisonment. Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) (Prohibition of Sale) Notification, the domestic sale of tiger specimens is prohibited. Any person who sells, offers or exposes for sale or displays to the public any tiger parts and products, commits an offence. The offender shall be liable to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 for each species (but not to exceed in the aggregate \$100,000) or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 1 year or to both.

Anyone who advertises for sale any tiger products contravenes the above Act, even if the products turn out to be not authentic. By making a claim that the product is from tigers, the seller is potentially driving up the demand for tiger products, which directly contravenes the spirit of CITES and the local legislation meant to enforce CITES.

Under the Wild Animals and Birds Act, hedgehogs are one of the several exotic animals who are prohibited by the AVA to be kept or sold as pets in Singapore. Penalties on conviction are a fine of \$1,000 per animal.

“The illegal wildlife trade appears to be going online and ACRES will continue to monitor and take action to wipe out this trade. The public plays a crucial role and we urge them to keep a look out for the sale of endangered species and call us on our 24-hour Wildlife Crime Hotline (9783 7782). ACRES is confident that with the community playing an active role, we can wipe out this illicit trade before it wipes out our wildlife” said Mr. Louis Ng, Executive Director of ACRES.

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Notes to editors

- Photographs and video footage of the sting operations are available on request.
- In 2003, ACRES, in collaboration with The New Paper, conducted undercover investigations into the illegal trade in tiger parts in Singapore. The investigations revealed that alleged tiger parts, including tiger bones, tiger paws and tiger penises, were on sale at Traditional Chinese Medicine stores in Chinatown.
- Between 2008 and 2009, ACRES received three tip-offs regarding the sale of alleged tiger parts in Singapore. ACRES investigations confirmed alleged tiger parts being sold as lucky charms in all three cases. Enforcement action by the Agri-food and Veterinary Authority followed.
- Between December 2009 and February 2010, ACRES undercover investigations revealed that 59 shops in Singapore offered alleged tiger parts for sale. 500 pieces of alleged tiger parts were found on sale during the investigation.
- ACRES is a Singaporean animal protection charity and Institution of Public Character aimed at fostering respect and compassion for all animals. It currently has more than 20,000 individuals on its supporter database.

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