



PRESS RELEASE

6 February 2006

DANGEROUS ANIMALS RESCUED BY ACRES WILDLIFE RESCUE TEAM

SINGAPORE 6 February - The Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (Acres) received a call on its 24 hour Wildlife Crime Hotline at 8.24pm last night, leading to the rescue of seven tarantulas. These animals are potentially dangerous since they have a venomous bite.

The anonymous caller informed Acres that two plastic bags with animals inside had been placed at a location in the Serangoon area. The Acres Wildlife Rescue Team responded to the call and arrived at the scene within ten minutes.

A total of seven tarantulas of at least four species were found in small containers in two plastic bags. Some of the tarantulas were at least eleven centimetres in length.

Two of the tarantulas were identified as the Mexican Redknee Tarantula (*Brachypelma smithi*). The Mexican Redknee Tarantula is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which Singapore is a party to.

This rescue comes less than two weeks after a raid by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) on an HDB flat where six pet tarantulas were confiscated.

Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, anyone in possession of CITES listed species without a permit can be fined up to \$50,000 for each animal (but not to exceed in the aggregate \$500,000) or to imprisonment to a term not exceeding two years or both. Under the Wild Animals and Birds Act, offenders can be fined \$1,000 for each animal.

“Acres is glad that these animals were not released into the nature reserves where they would undoubtedly upset the already fragile ecosystem. However, abandoning these potentially dangerous animals in a public area poses a serious threat to public safety. We thank the informant for providing us the tip-off leading to the safe collection of these animals” said Louis Ng, President and Executive Director of Acres.

Acres urges the public not to keep tarantulas or other wild animals as pets. Anyone with information on anyone who trades or possess illegal pets can call the 24 hours Acres Wildlife Crime Hotline at: 9783 7782.

The tarantulas have been handed over to the AVA.

Contact:

Louis Ng (President and Executive Director)

Email: louis@acres.org.sg Handphone: +65 97968592

- ends -

Notes to editors

- Photos of the animals and the rescue are available on request.
- To date, the work of the Acres has led to the rescue of more than 160 animals from the illegal wildlife trade.
- The Acres Wildlife Crime Hotline 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.
- Founded by a group of Singaporeans in 2001, Acres is a local charity aimed at fostering respect and compassion for all animals. Acres' approach to raising animal welfare issue is to focus on education and back up our advocacy with scientific clarity accrued through research. Using our findings, we will inform the public and work towards synergistic partnerships with the authorities and related parties to improve animal welfare.