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Acres finds 156 online advertisements touting illegal pets



A baby ball python believed to have been smuggled into Singapore as an illegal pet.
PHOTO: ST FILE

SINGAPORE - An undercover investigation by wildlife rescue group Acres (Animal Concerns Research and Education Society) into the online illegal pet trade found 156 advertisements touting exotic animals as pets.

The six-month investigation involved monitoring six online platforms - Gumtree, Locanto Classifieds Singapore, ST701, Carousell, Adposts.com and ChaosAds.

A total of 100 advertisements were found on Gumtree; 33 on Locanto Classified Singapore and 14 on ST701.

Carousell had six such advertisements while Adpost.com had two and ChaosAds had one. [Get The Straits Times.](#)

Acres contacted 17 sellers who had multiple advertisements, of which 14 responded and confirmed they were selling such animals. The remaining three did not respond. The findings were revealed by Acres on Monday (Dec 21).

The investigation culminated in joint sting operations with the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) where animals such as sugar gliders and an Asian Leopard Cat were seized.

Acres also made a few recommendations to the AVA to curtail the smuggling of live animals via the land checkpoints and by air, including the use of wildlife sniffer dogs. "We strongly urge anyone who comes across the sale of wild animals to immediately contact Acres," said Mr Tan En, director of advocacy at Acres.

In response to the advertisements found on their online platform ST701, Singapore Press Holdings said: "Such ads are not allowed and it is unfortunate that some have slipped through our vetting. We will step up vigilance and work with Acres to stop the online illegal wildlife trade."

Carousell said it has been removing listings of illegal wildlife on its platform and will work with AVA and Acres to prevent wildlife trading via its online platform.