

[AFCD seizes eight endangered freshwater turtles suspected of being illegally possessed \(with photo\)](#)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) seized eight endangered freshwater turtles suspected to be illegally possessed in an inspection operation yesterday (April 7).

AFCD staff conducted inspections yesterday and found eight endangered freshwater turtles which are regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586) (the Ordinance) without valid documentary proof of origin on a premises. They include four big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*) and one Annan leaf turtle (*Mauremys annamensis*) which are listed species in Appendix I to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and three golden-coin turtles (*Cuora trifasciata*) which are listed in Appendix II to the CITES. At least one of the freshwater turtles is suspected to be poached in Hong Kong. The AFCD has seized those freshwater turtles and will conduct further investigation.

A spokesman for the AFCD said, "Under the Ordinance, the possession of specimens of CITES Appendix I species for commercial purposes is generally prohibited and the possession of live animals of Appendix II requires a valid Licence to Possess or documentary proof to show that the specimen is not of wild origin."

Under the Ordinance, any person importing, re-exporting, or possessing endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years upon conviction. The specimens will also be forfeited.

The spokesman said the Government is committed to protecting endangered species by combatting illegal wildlife trades. The AFCD will continue to carry out inspections to combat poaching and illegal trade of endangered species.

