

Customs catch smugglers of endangered animals

Shanghai customs officials have caught several cases involving illegally bringing in or mailing endangered animals, plants or related products this year.



The unprocessed Siamese crocodile skins sent illegally in a mail package. [Photo/Shanghai Daily]

More than 60 dried sea horses and two Siamese crocodiles were found recently, the authority said yesterday.

Officials said a required certificate must be obtained to import or export endangered animals, plants and their related products to or from China.

This is according to Chinese regulations and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The authority said the sea horses, weighing 0.34 kilograms, were found in a passenger's luggage when it went through a machine examination at Pudong International Airport in July.

The passenger said the dried sea horses were bought for relatives as gifts, and he did not realize sea horses were an endangered animal.

The sea horses were sent to the inspection and quarantine authority.

Sea horses are not allowed to be imported to China. Listed on Appendix II of CITES and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The species is not allowed to be fished or traded.

In June, the authority also found two animal skins in a mail package from Southeast Asia. The unprocessed skins were wrapped by salt and were later confirmed to be Siamese crocodiles. The Siamese crocodile is listed on the Appendix I of CITES, and banned from international trading.

Other imports of endangered species and related products attempted to have been smuggled into the country in recent years include ivory and pangolin scales.

The authority said it will penalize violators according to regulations.