

Hong Kong Customs detects case of illegally importing animals in third phase of “Pet Guardian” operation (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs mounted an operation against smuggling of animals codenamed "Pet Guardian" with the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of Shenzhen Customs since November 2023. In late January this year, Hong Kong Customs launched the third phase of the operation and detected one suspected case of illegally importing animals on January 22. Four suspected illegally imported animals with an estimated market value of about \$120,000 were seized.

On that day, Hong Kong Customs at Sha Tau Kok spotted a woman pushing a bike, who entered Hong Kong through the Chung Ying Street Checkpoint from the Mainland side of Chung Ying Street. The front basket of her bike carried two handbags suspected of containing animals. Customs officers then took action and found four suspected illegally imported animals, including one kitten and three puppies, inside the handbags. The 32-year-old woman was subsequently arrested.

Investigations of the case is ongoing and the four animals have been handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for follow-up action.

Being a government department specifically responsible for tackling smuggling, Customs has long been combating various smuggling activities on all fronts. Customs will keep up its enforcement action and continue to resolutely combat all types of smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, and carry out targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to disrupt relevant crimes.

Customs reminds the public that importing animals into Hong Kong without a valid permit is an offence.

Under the Rabies Regulation, any person found guilty of illegally importing animals, carcasses or animal products is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for one year.

