

Hong Kong Customs makes first seizure of suspected illegally imported toothfish items (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 8) seized about 220 kilograms of suspected illegally imported toothfish items with an estimated market value of about \$120,000 at Hong Kong International Airport. This is the first seizure of suspected illegally imported toothfish items made by Customs since the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources Ordinance (CAMLRO Ordinance) and its subsidiary legislation came into effect on July 1 this year.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers yesterday inspected an air consignment, declared as carrying frozen fish, imported from the Netherlands into Hong Kong. Upon examination, Customs officers found in 32 paper boxes the batch of toothfish items suspected of being imported without a licence issued by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD).

The case was handed over to the AFCD for follow-up investigation.

Under the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (Toothfish Catch Documentation Scheme) Regulation, any import, export or re-export of live or dead toothfish items is prohibited except under and in accordance with relevant licences issued by the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation. The maximum penalty as stipulated in the CAMLR Ordinance is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk). For details of the CAMLR Ordinance and the requirements concerned, please visit www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/CCAMLR/ccamlr_Main.html.

