

LCQ11: Illegal trade of endangered species

Following is a question by the Hon Elizabeth Quat and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (June 17):

Question:

The Customs and Excise Department regularly makes public the annual numbers of cases detected in respect of illegal imports and exports in contravention of the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586), as well as the annual quantities and values of the seizures from such cases. However, more detailed breakdowns of such figures by the species involved in the seizures are not readily available to the public. Regarding the statistics on illegal trade of endangered species, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of a tabulated breakdown, by the four categories of seized items, namely (a) ivory, (b) pangolins, (c) woodlogs and (d) other endangered species (please specify), of the (i) number of cases detected, (ii) quantity of the seized items, (iii) value of the seized items, and (iv) number of individuals arrested and prosecuted, in 2019;

(2) of a detailed breakdown, by species, of the two categories of seized items, namely (i) woodlogs and (ii) other endangered species, mentioned in (1) (set out in a table); and

(3) whether the Government will, for the purpose of enhancing transparency, consider making public regularly the details of all seizures, including a breakdown by species of the number of cases detected as well as the quantities and values of the seized items; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Elizabeth Quat is as follows:

(1) and (2) The seizure records of illegal import and export of ivory, pangolin scales, wood logs/chips and other endangered species under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap.586) in 2019 are tabulated below:

Ivory	Pangolin scales	Wood logs/chips	Other endangered species
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Number of cases	23	11	42	583
Seizure quantity (kg)	2 058	8 940	334 124	30 427
Estimated value (\$ million)	21	44	16	53
Number of persons arrested	21	16	12	448
Number of persons prosecuted	19	7	3	197

The wood logs seized were mainly red sandalwood and rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp.), while the wood chips were mainly agarwood. Other endangered species seized mainly involved orchids, American ginseng, dried seahorses, shark fins and leather products of reptiles, etc. Since a great variety of endangered species is involved, it cannot be listed out exhaustively.

(3) The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) will publicise details of seizure cases of endangered species, such as species involved, seizure quantity, estimated value, sentences, etc. via press releases and its homepage from time to time. The AFCD will also provide relevant information to the public upon enquiry.