

Live birds seized in illegal import

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (April 4) reminded members of the public not to bring live birds into Hong Kong without a valid health certificate or they might face prosecution.

An incoming local man was intercepted by the Police at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point during an inspection today. 121 birds without valid health certificates, including 60 heads of Scaly-breasted Munia, 15 heads of Willow Warbler, 40 heads of Oriental Magpie Robin and 6 heads of suspected African Grey Parrot which is an endangered species, were seized from his bag. The birds of unknown source were transported to Animal Management Centre and Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point. After taking samples for avian influenza testing, birds which are not endangered species have been disposed. Follow-up investigations by the AFCD are underway.

African Grey Parrot is listed in Appendix I to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap 586) in Hong Kong. Any person importing, exporting, 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. The specimens will also be forfeited upon conviction.

Under the Public Health (Animals and Birds) Regulation (Cap 139A), any person who imports live birds or poultry without a valid health certificate issued by the veterinary authority in the country of export is liable to a fine of \$25,000 and forfeiture of such animals.

The spokesman said the AFCD will continue to work closely with the Customs and the Police to combat illegal importation of poultry and birds to minimise the risk of avian influenza outbreak brought by imported poultry and birds that had not gone through inspection and quarantine.

Suspected cases of illegal keeping of poultry or illegal import of poultry or birds should be reported to 1823.