

Two travellers jailed for smuggling pangolin scales (with photos)

Two travellers who smuggled pangolin scales were convicted for violating the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, and were sentenced to imprisonment today (May 12).

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that a 20-year-old male traveller arrived in Hong Kong on July 17, 2019, from the Democratic Republic of Congo via Ethiopia and was about to return to Mainland China with a 46-year-old male traveller. About 50 kilograms of pangolin scales were found in their respective baggage by Customs officers.

Subsequent to follow-up investigations, the AFCD charged the two men with the illegal import of listed species in Appendix I to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). They were convicted at the District Court earlier and sentenced to 27 and 21 months' jail respectively today.

All eight species of pangolin are listed in Appendix I to the CITES and regulated under the Ordinance in Hong Kong. The penalties under the Ordinance have been amended and increased since May 1, 2018. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of 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.

To enquire about the control of endangered species or to report suspected irregularities, the public can call the AFCD on 1823 or visit www.cites.hk.

