

Man fined for possession and keeping of illegal wildlife

2 November 2017: 42-year-old Lau Kin Wei Clement was fined \$4,700 in court today for possession and keeping of illegal wildlife. As he did not pay the fine, he was jailed for 23 days in default.

2 On 16 November 2016, the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) investigated a feedback on alleged keeping of illegal wildlife by Lau. AVA conducted a raid at Lau's residence and confiscated seven illegal wildlife species, comprising two Wagler's pit viper, a Paradise tree snake, a Painted bronzeback snake, a common snapping turtle, an alligator snapping turtle and a Giant black scorpion. AVA seized the animals and they are currently in the care of the Wildlife Reserves Singapore.



Caption: Some of the seized wildlife, include a Paradise tree snake, an alligator snapping turtle (CITES-listed species) and a common snapping turtle. (Photo: AVA)

3 The keeping of wild animals such as scorpions, snakes and turtles are not allowed in Singapore. Wild animals are not suitable pets as some may transmit zoonotic diseases to humans and can be a public safety risk if mishandled, or if they escape into our dense urban environment. In this case, the species seized can inflict painful bites and some are venomous.

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4 In addition, wild animals that are non-native to Singapore may be a threat to our biodiversity if released into the environment. Demand for such animals would also fuel illegal wildlife trade, which severely impacts the wild populations of numerous species.

5 In Singapore, it is an offence to possess any illegal wildlife species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna or Flora (CITES). The alligator snapping turtle is an example of a CITES-protected species. Offenders shall be liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$500,000 and/or 2 years imprisonment, and to the forfeiture of the wild animal. It is also an offence to keep wild animals not protected by CITES, including the Wagler's pit viper and the common snapping turtle. Offenders shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 and to the forfeiture of the wild animal.

6 While AVA continues to ensure that regulatory measures against illegal import and export, possession of live animals and wildlife are in place and enforced, the public can play their part too. Members of the public with information on such illicit activities can contact AVA at 6805 2992 or via AVA's online feedback form. All information shared with AVA will be kept strictly confidential.

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