



**AGRI-FOOD & VETERINARY AUTHORITY
AND IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY
JOINT NEWS RELEASE**

Man fined \$12,800 for illegally importing and keeping tarantulas

34-year-old Tam Jiaming was fined \$12,800 by the court for illegally importing and keeping tarantulas in his place of residence. Tarantulas are not approved to be kept as pets in Singapore. Some of the tarantulas are species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

2 On 4 January 2018, officers from the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) directed a Singapore-registered car for checks at the Tuas checkpoint. When queried by an ICA officer, Tam responded that he had nothing to declare. During the course of inspection, the ICA officer found 6 live tarantulas, kept individually in containers, in a sling bag. The bag was placed on the rear passenger seat. The case was referred to the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) for investigations. AVA conducted follow-up checks at Tam's residence and seized an additional 92 tarantulas. The tarantulas had been placed under the care of Wildlife Reserves Singapore.



The live tarantulas were kept in containers in a sling bag (Photos: ICA)



92 tarantulas were found kept in Tam's house (Photo: AVA)

Public advisory

3 Our borders are our first line of defence in safeguarding Singapore's safety and security. The security checks are critical to our nation's security. ICA will continue to conduct security checks on passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contrabands.

4 The keeping and trading of illegal wildlife and wildlife parts/products, is an offence in Singapore. Offenders shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 and to the forfeiture of the wildlife. Importation, possession or sale of any CITES-protected species without CITES permits is also an offence. Offenders can be fined up to \$50,000 per CITES-listed animal (not exceeding a maximum aggregate of \$500,000) and/or up to two years imprisonment. In addition, if the animals were subjected to unnecessary suffering or pain, the offender may also be liable, on conviction, to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for a term of up to 12 months.

5 AVA would like to remind travellers against the illegal import of live animals, birds and insects into Singapore. The keeping and sale of wild animals such as tarantulas are not allowed in Singapore. Demand for such animals would fuel illegal wildlife trade, which severely impacts the wild populations of numerous species. Wildlife are not suitable pets as some may transmit zoonotic diseases to humans and pose a public safety risk if mishandled or if they escape into our dense urban environment. Non-native animals may also be a threat to our biodiversity if released into the environment.

6 The public can refer to AVA's [website](#) or download AVA's mobile app, SG TravelKaki (available free-of-charge from [iTunes](#) and the [Google Play store](#)), for more information on bringing back animals from overseas travels. Members of the public can also alert AVA via our [online feedback form](#) or call us at 6805 2992 of any suspected cases of illegal wildlife trade, and provide information (e.g. suspected person or company involved, type of products alleged to be smuggled, advertised or offered for sale, etc). Information shared with AVA will be kept strictly confidential.

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