

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

INFORMATION TO THE PARTIES AT COP17 REGARDING SINGAPORE CITES ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS  
AND MEASURES TO TACKLE THE ILLEGAL IVORY TRADE

This document has been submitted by Singapore, in relation to agenda item 57.6 on *Report on the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS)*\*.

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

## **CITES Enforcement in Singapore**

### **Signatory to CITES**

1. Singapore became a Party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1986. The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) is designated as the national CITES authority responsible for the implementation and enforcement of CITES and wildlife policies in Singapore. AVA administers wildlife-related legislation such as the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (ESA) and Wild Animals and Birds Act (WABA) in Singapore.

### **Wildlife legislation**

2. The ESA gives effect to CITES to Singapore. It empowers AVA to grant permits for import and export of CITES species and conduct investigations on wildlife enforcement cases. Controls under the Act apply to zoological and bird parks, wildlife traders, pet bird and fish dealers, traditional medicine traders, museums, migrants, travellers, pet owners, scientific institutions and the general public. It is an offence to import and export a CITES specimen or its parts and derivatives without a permit. It is also illegal to possess a CITES specimen which has been imported without a permit.
3. The maximum penalties include a fine of \$50,000 per scheduled species (but not to exceed in the aggregate \$500,000) and/or a jail term of up to 2 years. In recent years, heavy penalties including custodial sentences and fines were meted out on the offenders. In 2014, 3 foreign nationals were each jailed 15-16 months for smuggling rhino horns and ivory tusks through the airport. In Jan 2015, a man was jailed for 16 months for smuggling of [190 endangered black pond turtles](#) through the Singapore Changi airport. In Mar 2015, an [aquarium shop](#) owner was fined a \$41,000 for possession, display and sale of endangered wildlife, including 2 highly endangered tortoises, in the shop. This exemplifies the efforts that Singapore takes to curb wildlife trade for both international and local context.
4. Under the ESA, the import and export of CITES-listed wildlife require prior issuance of permits from the exporting and importing countries before the transactions can go through. Transshipment of wildlife is only permitted if the shipments are accompanied by valid CITES permits from the exporting countries and for highly endangered species (ie. Appendix I species), the CITES import permits from the destination countries must also be presented to the State through which the shipment is being transhipped.

### **Enforcement**

5. AVA investigates all wildlife enforcement cases, which could include illegal import and export, sale and possession of illegal wildlife, which are referred to us through tip-offs or detected through our operations and surveillance. AVA also monitors the Internet wildlife trade and would follow up on any suspected cases of wildlife trafficking. Between 2011-Jun 2016, AVA investigated a total of 227 enforcement cases.
6. Offenders are given a warning, compounded or prosecuted. The illegal wildlife (or parts and products) would also be seized and forfeited to AVA. Specimens may be re-homed at approved premises, such as wildlife reserves and museum or where appropriate, repatriated to the country of origin.

## Cooperation with national, regional and international agencies etc

7. In Singapore, partner enforcement agencies such as Singapore Customs (SC), Immigration Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Singapore Police Force (SPF) have been integral in the interagency cooperation network towards curbing illegal wildlife trade which includes risk assessment and intelligence gathering to target containerised sea and air cargo moving from Africa to parts of Asia. Where appropriate, AVA will, in agreement with SC and ICA, participate in regional and international wildlife enforcement operations.
8. AVA has conducted controlled deliveries for such illegal shipments and worked with other management authorities if the shipments are in-transit through Singapore. Through risk profiling, Singapore is able to adopt a more systematic and effective approach towards identifying shipments for enhanced checks. Our border agencies, i.e. Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, use advanced technologies to detect illegal items, including wildlife products such as ivory.
9. As such, Singapore is committed to fulfil our obligations to CITES to combat the illegal wildlife (including ivory) trade. The actions taken by Singapore to intercept illegal ivory shipments testify that Singapore takes a serious view on the issue and does not condone the use of Singapore as a conduit for the illegal ivory trade. Singapore had a good enforcement system which included a strong rule of law and legislative powers. Singapore is already using risk assessment/risk profiling to target high risk shipments and collaborating with both local and international enforcement agencies.
10. Singapore also works closely with other regional and international enforcement agencies such as Interpol, CITES Secretariat, CITES and non-CITES Parties, non-government organisations (NGOs) as well as members of the public. AVA investigates every tip-offs and alerts (eg. from World Customs Organisation, CITES Secretariat, Interpol, ASEAN-WEN and foreign authorities), on any suspected illegal wildlife or ivory shipments through Singapore.
11. At the regional level, Singapore is a member of the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) which comprises of wildlife law enforcement agencies in the 10 ASEAN countries, and AVA is the national focal point. ASEAN-WEN facilitates cross-border collaboration between ASEAN member countries in the combat of the illegal wildlife trade through intelligence/information sharing and capacity-building.
12. In recent years, Singapore has participated in [Operation Cobra](#) and [Operation Cobra 2](#), and has yielded significant seizures during this period such as the [illegal transshipment of 1.8 tonnes elephant ivory](#) in January 2013 and the illegal transit of [rhinoceros horn](#) and [elephant ivory](#) by travellers in 2014.
13. In May 2015, Singapore participated in [Operation PAWS II](#) and [Operation Cobra 3](#), organised by Interpol and partner enforcement agencies such as ASEAN-WEN, and successfully intercepted and seized [4.6 tonnes of ivory, 4 pieces of rhinoceros horns and 22 pieces of big cat teeth](#) arriving from Kenya and en route to Vietnam.

14. In Dec 2015, six shipments comprising of 2.25 tonnes of ivory tusks and 646kg of pangolin scales from Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo, en route to Laos were intercepted and detained by Singapore.

### **Capacity-building and species ID training workshops**

15. AVA conducts and coordinates CITES capacity-building and species identification training workshops for inspectors and enforcement officers who are involved in inspections of wildlife consignments at the ports, pet/bird/aquarium shops, farms, trade premises and investigations of wildlife enforcement cases to enhance their skills and knowledge about CITES and identification of CITES-protected species.

### **Public outreach programs**

16. Singapore held an Ivory Crush Event (*Annex A*) on 13 June 2016, during which 7.9 tons of confiscated illegal ivory stockpiles were destroyed to send a signal that Singapore has zero tolerance on the illegal wildlife and ivory trade. The ivory seizures and crush event were also widely publicised in local and international media which also served to raise awareness and educate consumers not to purchase ivory products.
17. Prior to the destruction, Singapore had also collaborated with the University of Washington and contributed more than 300 ivory samples for DNA analyses to identify the sources of illegal ivory and elephant poaching hotspots. Singapore also regularly shares intelligence and investigation information through the submission of Eco-messages to Interpol whenever there are significant wildlife seizures including ivory.
18. To create public awareness and enhance compliance with CITES, AVA has implemented the following outreach programs:-
- (a) Publicized wildlife enforcement cases and events in the mass media, news reports, newsletters and social media (eg. Facebook).
  - (b) Regular circulars (*Annex B*), meetings and dialogue sessions with wildlife traders and trade associations about CITES and its requirements.
  - (c) Updates about CITES in AVA Homepage.
  - (d) Distribution of CITES pamphlets, traveller's brochures (*Annex C*), CITES and TCM brochures (in Chinese), posters at ports of entry/exit, fishery ports, checkpoints, cruise centres, travel fairs, pet shops, schools etc.
  - (e) Public talks at community centres, libraries, tertiary institutions and Zoo.

### **Conclusion**

19. In summary, Singapore has already taken proactive measures to address the illegal wildlife and ivory trade and we continue to be committed to the work in battling such illegal trade. These measures are already consistent with the National Ivory Plan (NIAP) and as such, Singapore should not be classified as a 'country of primary concern' in the NIAP process.

AV 16.01.004.0021

20 July 2015

To Shipping & Logistics companies, Declaring Agents and Freight Forwarders

## **ADVISORY ON TRADE IN CITES WILDLIFE AND TIMBER**

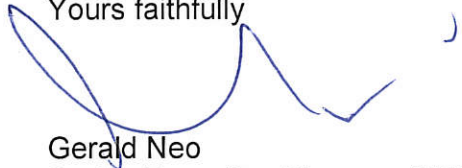
Singapore is a Party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which is an international agreement to ensure that trade in wild fauna and flora does not threaten them with extinction. CITES regulates international trade in wildlife and their parts and products through a system of CITES permits which are granted when certain conditions are met. The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) is the CITES Management Authority in Singapore that implements and enforces CITES.

2 Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act [ESA], all imports, exports and re-exports of CITES specimens would require CITES permits prior to arrival and departure of consignments. In addition, in-transit and transshipment of CITES specimens via Singapore would also require valid CITES permits from the exporting/re-exporting country and importing country (if required, eg. where the specimens are listed in CITES Appendix I ie. highly endangered). Under the ESA, offenders are liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$50,000 per specimen (not exceeding an aggregate of \$500,000) and/or up to 2 years' imprisonment for wildlife smuggling offences. Any person found abetting in the commission of the offence may also be liable for conviction under the ESA. In addition, companies implicated may be required to bear the cost of storage, confiscation, maintenance and repatriation of the contraband.

3 In recent years, AVA has detected several significant cases of illegal wildlife and timber being imported or transhipped through Singapore. Recent cases involved seizures of ivory tusks, amounting to 6.5 tonnes since 2013. AVA has also seized 45 tonnes of red sandalwood since 2013. AVA has also received reports about other countries intercepting ivory and pangolins in shipments bound for Singapore. It has been brought to our attention that shipping & logistics companies, declaring agents and freight forwarders are often implicated in such illegal wildlife cases. AVA views violation of CITES seriously and would like to take this opportunity to remind shipping & logistics companies, declaring agents and freight forwarders to exercise vigilance and prudence when accepting jobs from customers or companies, and adopt internal security measures to prevent your company and staff from being implicated in the smuggling of CITES species.

4 Please feel free to contact AVA at Tel: 6805 2992 or the undersigned at Tel: 6805 2844 if you have any further queries on this matter. You may also visit the CITES ([www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)) and AVA ([www.AVA.gov.sg](http://www.AVA.gov.sg)) websites for more information.

Yours faithfully

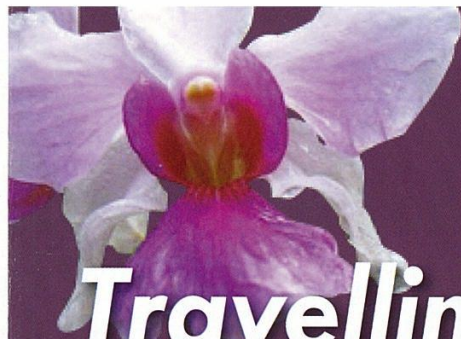


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# ENDANGERED SPECIES

*what you need to know?*



## Travelling abroad?

Please do not bring home endangered species or their products which you cannot legally import. This guide will help you to buy wisely to avoid contributing to the illegal trade in endangered species.

Many species of wild animals and plants are threatened with extinction because of loss of habitats and over-exploitation for international trade. Beware when you are shopping for souvenirs in overseas tourist markets as you may be tempted to buy live animals or exotic products made from endangered species. The import and export of many endangered species (including their parts, related products or derivatives) require permits from the government.

## CITES



The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement to ensure that trade does not threaten wildlife species with extinction. CITES regulates international trade in endangered species of animals and plants (including their parts and derivatives) through a worldwide system of permits which must be presented before specimens leave or enter a country.

CITES has a membership of more than 175 parties. Singapore became a signatory to CITES on 30 November 1986 and implemented the Convention on 9 February 1987.





# Protected

# species



## Controlled parts, products and derivatives

All endangered species are listed in the CITES Appendices as follows:

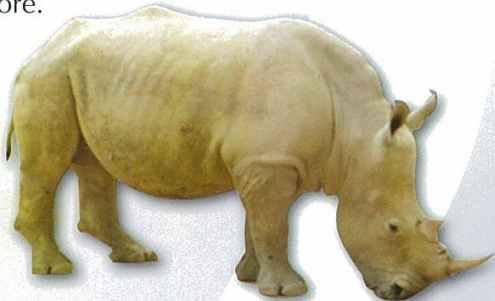
### Appendix I

**Appendix I lists highly endangered species which are threatened with extinction.**

Commercial import/export is not allowed. Movement of these species may be authorised only under certain circumstances (eg. zoological gardens, bird parks, research institutions, museums, etc).

### Examples

**Elephants, Rhinoceroses, Tigers, Sea Turtles, Whales, Bears, Wild big cats, many Apes and Monkeys, some Macaws, Dragon Fish, Lady's Slipper Orchids** and many more.



### Appendix II

**Appendix II includes species which may become endangered if trade in these species is not regulated.** Trade is allowed if specimens are accompanied by proper CITES permits.

### Examples

**Crocodiles, Monitor Lizards, Pythons, Tortoises, some Freshwater Turtles, most Parrots, hard Corals, Bird-Winged Butterflies, Sturgeons, Giant Clams, some Sharks, Seahorses, American Ginseng, some Orchids, Agarwood, Pitcher Plants** and many more.

### Appendix III

**Appendix III are not considered endangered but are protected in certain countries.** They can be traded with a certificate of origin or export permit.

### Examples

**Walruses, some Deer, Cranes, Pheasants, some Finches, Rosewood** etc.

**CITES permits are required to import and export endangered species (live, dead, parts, products and derivatives).** Wildlife parts and products include ivory, skin, horn, bone, shell, scale, teeth, egg, gall bladder, hunting trophies, medicinal preparations that contain endangered species (eg rhinoceros horn, tiger bone, musk, bear gall, etc), wildlife souvenirs, wood chips, roots, bulbs, seedlings and many more.





# The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act



The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act is our national legislation that gives effect to CITES to control import and export of endangered species in Singapore.

Under the Act, it is an offence for anyone to import or export an endangered species without a permit. Control under this Act applies to all import and export of endangered species undertaken by commercial organisations, scientific institutions, zoological and bird parks, tourists, pet owners and the general public.



## Where do I obtain a CITES permit?



You must obtain all necessary permits before importing and exporting any endangered species, including their parts, products and derivatives.

### Foreign CITES permits

If you purchase a CITES species or product in another country, you must obtain a CITES export permit from the local CITES authority which is usually a government for conservation of wildlife, forestry, fisheries or environment.

You will also require a CITES import permit from the CITES office in Singapore. Please contact the AVA listed on the back of this leaflet for more details before going abroad.

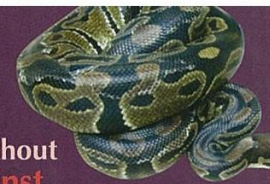
### Singapore CITES permits

Singapore CITES import and export permits are issued by the AVA.

Submission of application for an import permit must be supported by a CITES export permit issued by the relevant CITES authority in the exporting country.

If you are bringing overseas an endangered species which you have purchased in Singapore, you need to have a CITES export permit. Application for the permit must be substantiated with documentary proof of legal import, purchase or acquisition of the specimens.

It is an **OFFENCE** to import or export any endangered species without a permit. It is also **against the law to possess an endangered species that has been illegally imported into Singapore.**



Failure to obtain a CITES permit may result in the confiscation of your purchases. Severe penalties will be imposed on persons or companies infringing the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act. The penalties under this Act for anyone convicted of illegal import, export and re-export of endangered species are fines of up to S\$50,000 per scheduled species (but not to exceed in the aggregate S\$500,000) and/or jail up to two years.

Be cautious when you purchase any wildlife or wildlife products. Ensure that they are accompanied by the necessary permits to avoid contributing to the illegal wildlife trade.

### Overseas Shopping Checklist

International trade in the following items is prohibited without a permit:

- Raw ivory, ivory carvings, figurines, trinkets
- Sea turtle products (eg turtle shell jewellery, ornaments, stuffed turtles, eggs, etc)
- Game trophies of bears, wild cats, antelopes, zebras, deers, reptiles, etc
- Furskins and pelts of large cats (eg tiger, lion, cheetah, leopard, etc)
- Giant clam shells and ornaments
- Hard corals
- Whalebone products
- Butterfly (eg. birdwing), scorpion and spider collections
- Medicines containing derivatives of endangered species (eg. musk, saiga antelope horn, bear gall bladder)
- Live/stuffed animals and birds
- Live plants
- Dragon fish
- And ..... many more!

Exemptions may apply to personal effects for a limited type of items. Please check with the CITES authorities before you travel.





***Singapore crushed 7.9 tonnes of seized elephant ivory***

13 June 2016 – The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) crushed 7.9 tonnes of seized elephant ivory, estimated to be worth about S\$13 million, today. This sends a strong signal of Singapore’s zero tolerance on the use of Singapore as a conduit to smuggle endangered species and their parts. This is the first time AVA is crushing seized ivory (see Annex A for details on the seizures). The seized ivory was pulverised by an industrial rock crusher and incinerated at an eco-waste incineration plant. The ashes would subsequently be used as landfill at Pulau Semakau (see Annex B for infographic on the process).

2 Mr Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Home Affairs, who witnessed the crushing, said, “The public destruction of ivory sends a strong message that Singapore condemns illegal wildlife trade. By crushing the ivory, we ensure that it does not re-enter the ivory market. Tackling this illicit trade requires close international cooperation, and also the assistance of the public and NGOs. We will continue our enforcement efforts, to prevent Singapore from being used as a transit point.”

3 The crushing event was also witnessed by foreign diplomats from the British High Commission and the US Embassy to Singapore, and representatives from enforcement partner agencies (Singapore Customs and Immigration & Checkpoints Authority), Lee Kong Chian National History Museum, Wildlife Reserves Singapore and wildlife conservation groups.

**The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**

4 Singapore is a party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which is an international

**MEDIA RELEASE**



agreement to ensure that trade does not threaten wildlife species with extinction. As the CITES authority in Singapore, AVA has been working to ensure that the Convention is upheld and enforced (see Annex C for details on AVA's role).

5 Mr John E. Scanlon, CITES Secretary-General said, "Today's important event serves to raise local, national and global awareness about the devastating impacts of illegal trade in elephant ivory and of the unwavering determination of Singapore and the global community to put an end to it. Destruction of confiscated elephant ivory will not in itself put an end to the illegal trade in elephant ivory. However, when coupled with enhanced enforcement and demand reduction efforts, it sends a very powerful message that Singapore does not and will not tolerate this illegal trade, and illegal traders now face significant risks along the entire illegal supply chain – in source, transit and destination States."

**Advisory: The public can play a part**

6 Tackling the illegal wildlife trade requires concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including the public. Ms Tan Poh Hong, AVA's CEO, urged the public to play their part. "Demand is the impetus for poachers of endangered animals. The public can help reduce demand by not buying such products. When demand falls, poaching will naturally fall too. AVA will continue to ensure that regulatory measures against illegal wildlife trade are enforced," she said.

7 Anyone with information on illegal wildlife trade can contact AVA at 68052992 or provide information through the feedback form on AVA's website ([www.ava.gov.sg](http://www.ava.gov.sg)). All information provided will be kept in strict confidence.

*Issued by the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority*

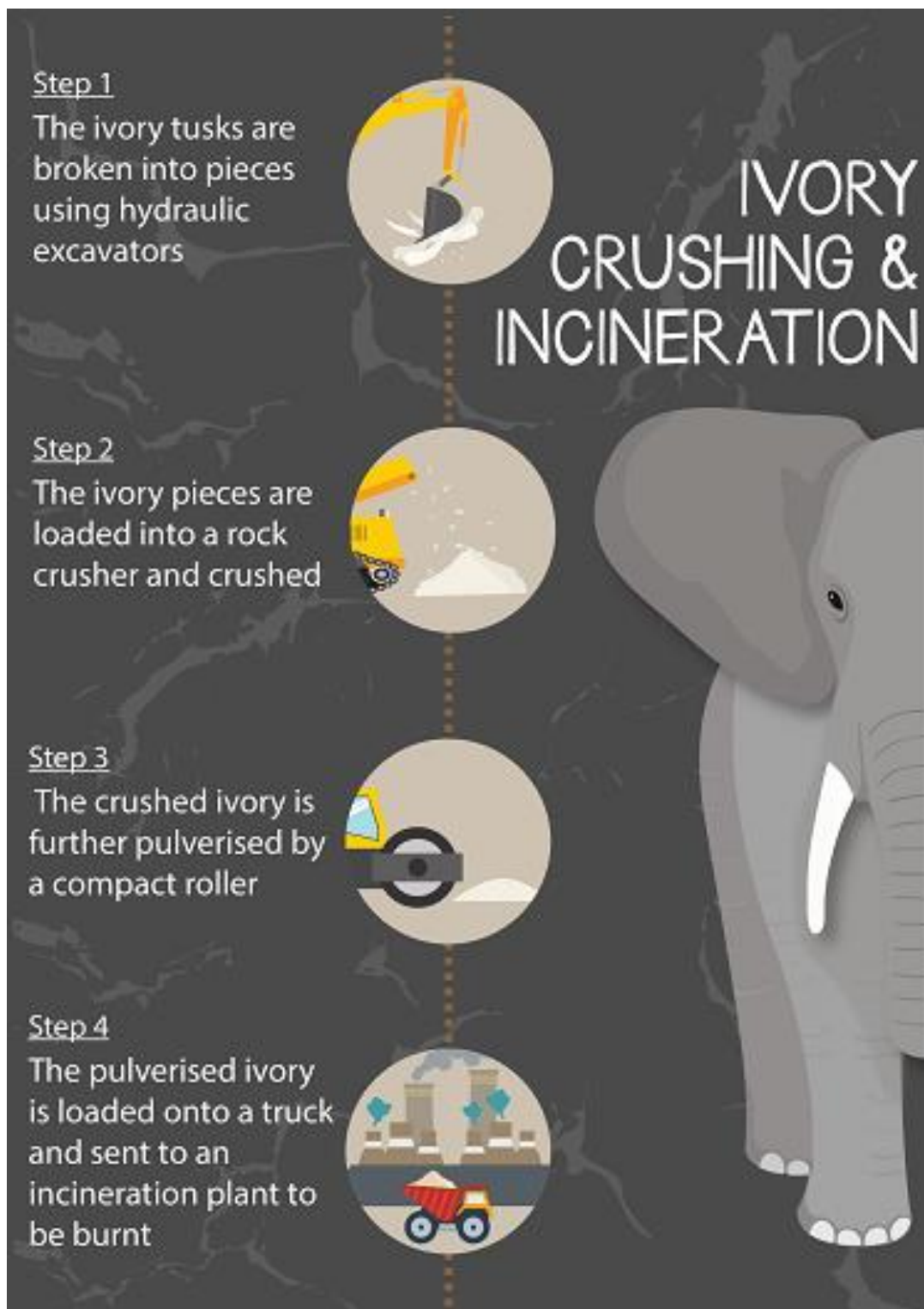
*13 June 2016*

**MEDIA RELEASE**

#	Case details
1	<p>In January 2014, two Vietnamese travellers were arrested at Changi Airport for smuggling elephant ivory (13 ivory tusks, 16 ivory bangles and 109 ivory cubes), estimated to be worth about S\$65,000, from Africa en route to Laos.</p> <p>The ivory was detained and the travellers were sentenced to 16 months imprisonment. Upon conclusion of our investigation, 10 bangles and 109 ivory cubes were donated to the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum for educational purposes. The remaining ivory was crushed on 13 June 2016.</p>
2	<p>In March 2014, a shipment declared as 'coffee berries' from Uganda en route to Vietnam, was intercepted and detained by Singapore authorities. The shipment was found to contain elephant ivory (106 ivory tusks, approximately 1 tonne), estimated to be worth about S\$2 million.</p> <p>The freight forwarder was issued a warning for facilitating the transportation of the shipment. Upon conclusion of our investigation, 2 tusks were donated to the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum for educational purposes. The remaining ivory was crushed on 13 June 2016.</p>
3	<p>In May 2015, a shipment declared as 'tea leaves' from Kenya en route to Vietnam, was intercepted and detained by Singapore authorities. The shipment was found to contain illegal wildlife parts, including elephant ivory (1,783 ivory tusks, about 4.6 tonnes), estimated to be worth about S\$8 million.</p> <p>The freight forwarder was compounded \$5,000 for failure to exercise due diligence to ensure shipment does not contain contraband. The whole consignment was crushed on 13 June 2016.</p>
4	<p>In December 2015, six shipments declared as 'hair wigs' and 'personal effects' from Nigeria and Democratic of Congo, en route to Laos, were intercepted and detained by Singapore authorities. The shipments were found to contain illegal wildlife parts, including elephant ivory (851 ivory tusks, about 2.25 tonnes), estimated to be worth about S\$3 million.</p> <p>The two freight forwarding companies were compounded \$5,000 each for failure to exercise due diligence to ensure shipment does not contain contraband. The whole consignment was crushed on 13 June 2016.</p>

# MEDIA RELEASE





# MEDIA RELEASE

AVA adopts a multi-pronged approach to weed out illegal wildlife trade in Singapore, including:

- Upstream measures:
  - o Regulation of trade
  - o Public education on CITES and endangered species, including working closely with website administrators of online classifieds forums to post warning messages on possession and sales of illegal wildlife on their platform, and engaging stakeholders and industry players to educate and update about CITES regulations and listing of new species on CITES
  - o Conducting regular in-house sharing sessions with partner enforcement agencies to enhance their knowledge on CITES.
- Downstream measures:
  - o Routine monitoring of retail outlets (e.g. aquarium shops and Traditional Chinese Medicine stores) and online sources for sale of illegal wildlife and wildlife parts/products
  - o Conducting regular, unannounced checks on retail outlets
  - o Conducting 100% inspections on CITES shipments including those from high risk countries at ports of entry/exit
  - o Collaborating with international, regional and national enforcement agencies on border inspections and investigations
  - o Taking enforcement action and imposing penalties including jail sentences and fines to deter would-be offenders.

Any illegally acquired or imported products that contain or purport to contain endangered species detected will be seized. Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, it is an offence to import, export and re-export CITES-listed specimens, including its parts and products without a permit from AVA. Penalties for infringing the Act include fines of up to \$50,000 per specimen (not exceeding an aggregate of \$500,000) and/or up to 2 years' imprisonment. The same penalties apply to species in transit.

# MEDIA RELEASE





Mr Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Home Affairs, placing a piece of ivory into the excavator bucket to start the ivory crushing event.

MEDIA RELEASE



In Singapore's first ever ivory crushing event, the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore crushed a total of 7.9 tonnes of seized elephant ivory, estimated to be valued at \$13 million.

From Left: Mr. Scott Wightman, British High Commissioner to Singapore, Ms. Tan Poh Hong, CEO, Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore, Mr. Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Home Affairs

# MEDIA RELEASE



The ivory is loaded onto a rock crusher, where it will be crushed into small pieces before it is incinerated.

# MEDIA RELEASE