

**AGRI-FOOD & VETERINARY AUTHORITY
OF SINGAPORE AND
SINGAPORE CUSTOMS
JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**



AVA and Singapore Customs seize shipment of illegal ivory and pangolin scales

17 December 2015

The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) and Singapore Customs have been working closely to detect and intercept shipments of illegal wildlife and wildlife products smuggled through Singapore. On 12 December 2015, Singapore Customs intercepted an air shipment of illegal ivory and pangolin scales at the Changi Airfreight Centre. The 0.8-tonne shipment, labelled as “complete wigs of synthetic textile materials”, originated from Lagos, Nigeria, and was en route to Vientiane, Laos, via Singapore.

A closer inspection of the shipment by Singapore Customs and AVA officers revealed 255 pieces of raw elephant tusks weighing about 505kg and pangolin scales weighing about 324kg. The shipment, worth an estimated S\$1.3 million, was seized. This is the fifth largest seizure of illegal ivory by Singapore authorities since 2002. A freight forwarding company in connection with the shipment is assisting AVA with the investigations.

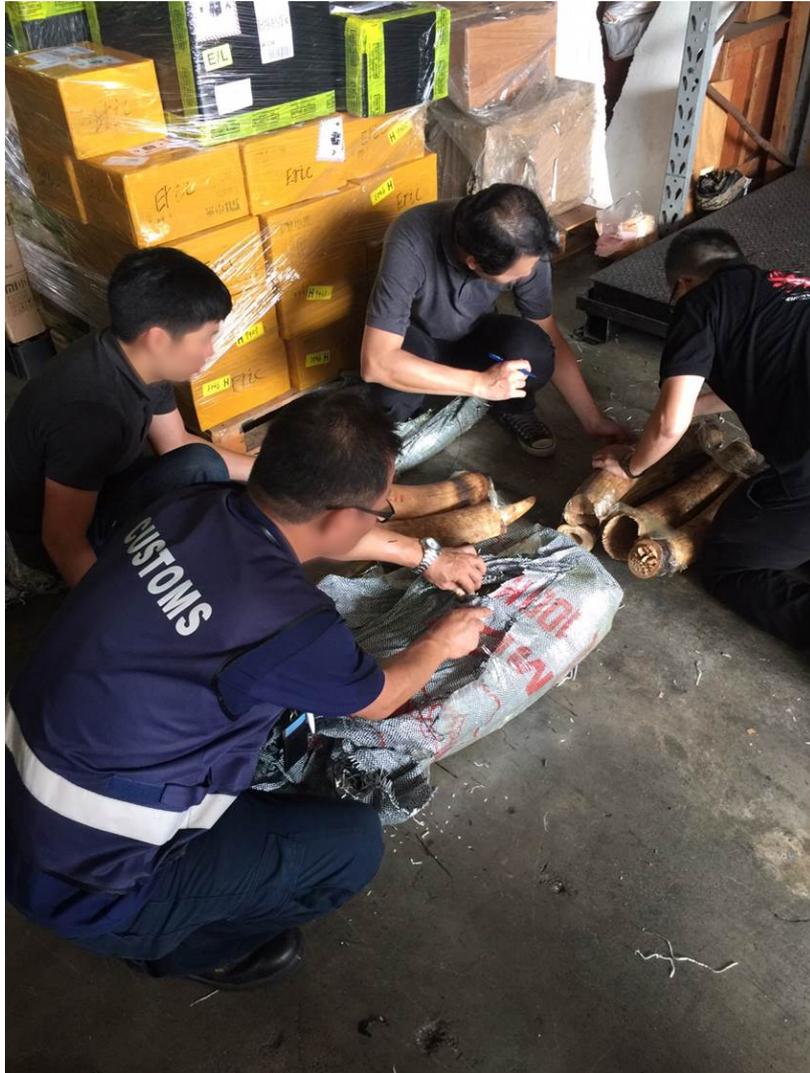
“We have zero tolerance on the use of Singapore as a conduit to smuggle endangered species, their parts and products,” said Mr Chua Teck Hui, Head of Air Checkpoints Branch, Singapore Customs (新加坡关税局航空通关处处长蔡德辉). “We will continue to collaborate with other national and international enforcement agencies to curb wildlife trafficking.”

Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to which Singapore is a signatory, elephants and pangolins are endangered species. International trade in ivory and pangolin scales is prohibited without CITES permits.

Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, a CITES permit is required for any import, export or re-export of CITES wildlife and their parts and products. The maximum penalty for the illegal wildlife is a fine of S\$50,000 per scheduled specimen (not exceeding an aggregate of S\$500,000) and/or imprisonment of up to two years. The same penalties apply to any transit or transshipment of CITES specimens through Singapore without proper CITES permits from the exporting/importing country.

“The logistics industry plays a vital role in protecting the endangered species and tackling the illegal wildlife trade. AVA would like to remind all shipping, transport, logistics and freight forwarding companies to be prudent and exercise caution when accepting shipping and freight assignments to ensure that their companies are not implicated in wildlife trafficking,” said Ms Lye Fong Keng, Deputy Director, Quarantine & Inspection Group (Wildlife Section), AVA.

Anyone with information on illegal wildlife trade can contact AVA on 6805-2992 or provide information through the online feedback form on AVA's website (www.ava.gov.sg). All information provided to AVA will be kept in strict confidence.



Joint inspection of the ivory and pangolin scales by AVA and Singapore Customs officers.



Illegal elephant tusks seized by AVA and Singapore Customs.



Illegal pangolin scales concealed in the shipment declared as “wigs”.