



THE AGRI-FOOD & VETERINARY AUTHORITY AND IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

ILLEGALLY IMPORTED CORALS SEIZED

Issued on 3 April 2017

On 30 March 2017, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) seized an illegal import of corals at an importer's premises. The importer is assisting AVA with investigations.

2 Acting on a tip-off on the illegal import of hard corals, AVA and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) worked with a logistics company to follow up on an imported consignment of corals from Philippines, which had been declared as "plastic aquarium ornaments". At the importer's premises, AVA officers seized 75 hard corals and 5 soft corals wrapped in plastic bags lined with paper and concealed in ceramic mugs. The corals are now under the care of the Resorts World Sentosa, while the case is being investigated.

3 Singapore is a signatory of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and hard corals are a protected species under CITES. CITES permits are required for any import, export and re-export of CITES species, including their parts and products. Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, offenders can be fined up to S\$50,000 per scheduled species (not exceeding a maximum aggregate of S\$500,000) and/or up to 2 years imprisonment upon conviction.

4 While soft corals are not protected by CITES, they were also seized as they had been falsely declared as “plastic aquarium ornaments” and were bundled together with the illegal shipment of hard corals.

Public advisory


5 The Singapore Government has zero tolerance on the use of Singapore as a conduit to smuggle endangered species. 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 cargo, passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contrabands. AVA will continue to cooperate and collaborate with partner local and international enforcement agencies to curb wildlife trafficking. AVA will take enforcement action against any person or company that smuggles wildlife into or through Singapore.

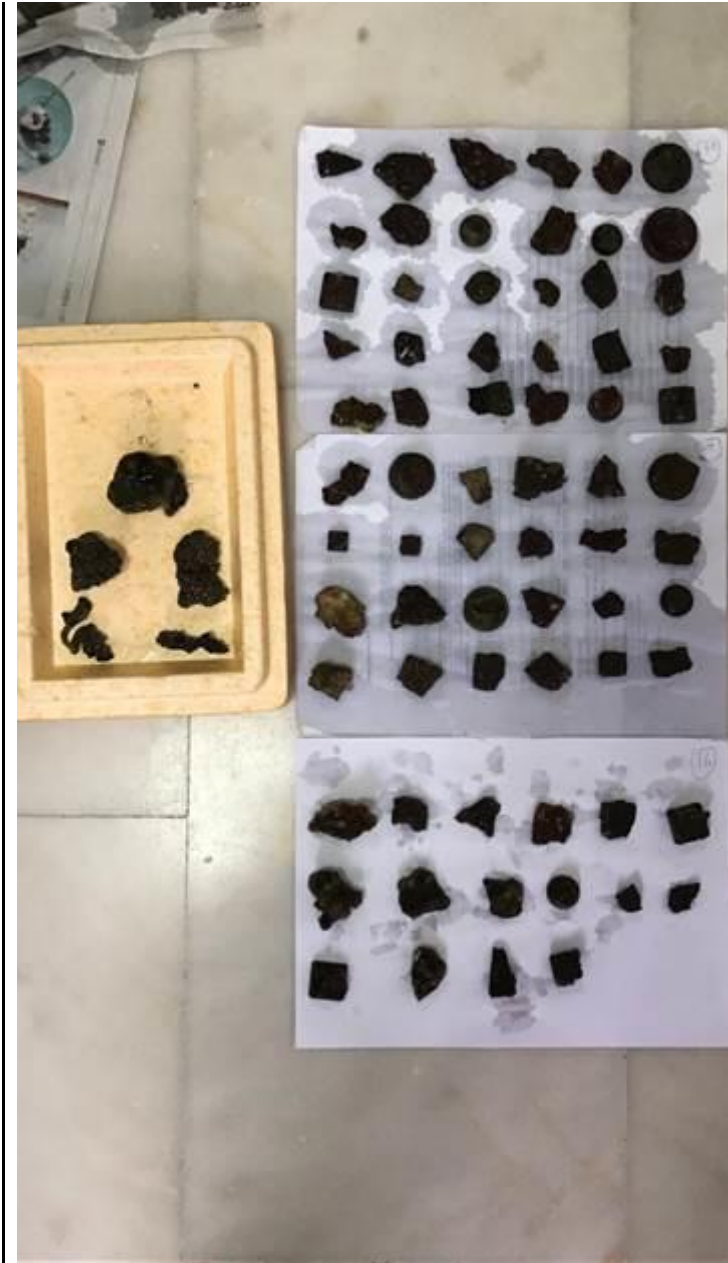
6 The ICA and AVA would like to remind travellers against bringing live animals, birds and insects into Singapore without a proper permit. The public can refer to AVA's website or download AVA's mobile app, SG TravelKaki (available free-of-charge from [iTunes](#) and the [Google Play store](#)), for more information on bringing back animals from overseas. Members of the public with information on illegal wildlife activities may contact AVA at 6805 2992 or via AVA's [online feedback form](#). All information shared with AVA would be kept strictly confidential.

Issued by the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority and Immigration & Checkpoints Authority

3 April 2017

Photographs

Image	Caption
 A photograph showing a collection of 75 small, white, irregularly shaped objects, identified as hard corals, arranged in a grid on a newspaper. Above the grid are five ceramic mugs of various colors (white, blue, brown) and designs, which were used to conceal the corals. The newspaper has some text and images, including a small portrait of a person.	<p>AVA officers found 75 hard corals and 5 soft corals, which had been falsely declared as “plastic aquarium ornaments”, wrapped in plastic bags lined with paper and concealed in ceramic mugs.</p>



5 soft corals (left in box) and 75 hard corals (right), which had been illegally imported, were detected.



Close up of the smuggled hard corals.