



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

**Man jailed for illegally importing hard corals**

7 March 2018: A 39-year-old man, Cheng Yee Yong, was sentenced to two months imprisonment by the Court today for illegally importing hard corals.

2 Acting on a tip-off on the illegal import of hard corals, the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) worked with a logistics company to follow up on an imported consignment of corals from the Philippines, which had been declared as “plastic aquarium ornaments”. At the importer’s premises, AVA seized 75 hard corals and five soft corals wrapped in plastic bags lined with paper and concealed in ceramic mugs (see annex A for photographs). The corals have since been placed under Resorts World Sentosa’s care.

3 All hard corals are protected species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and investigations found that they had been imported without a valid CITES permit. While the soft corals seized are not protected by CITES, they can only be imported with an AVA permit. The corals were also falsely declared as “plastic aquarium ornaments”.

4 In Singapore, the import and export/re-export of corals require AVA permits. If the corals are CITES species, additional CITES permits are required under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (ESA). Offenders who violate the ESA can be liable, on conviction, to a fine of up to \$500,000 and/or 2 years imprisonment, and to the forfeiture of the contraband.

5 The Singapore Government has zero tolerance on the use of Singapore as a conduit to smuggle endangered species and their parts and derivatives. 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 enforcement agencies to curb wildlife smuggling. Enforcement action will be taken against offenders.

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. The public has a role to play in tackling illegal wildlife trade. Consumer demand is the impetus for poachers of endangered animals. The public can help reduce demand by not buying wildlife parts and products. The public can also alert AVA 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). Members of the public can share such information with AVA via our [online feedback form](#) or call us at 6805 2992. All information shared with AVA will be kept strictly confidential.

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Photographs of the seized corals

Caption



AVA officers found 75 hard corals and five soft corals, which had been falsely declared as “plastic aquarium ornaments”, wrapped in plastic bags lined with paper and concealed in ceramic mugs.



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



Close up of the smuggled hard corals.