

Man sentenced for possession and abetting sale of illegal wildlife

19 July 2017: 28-year-old Aaron Hosea Albert, was fined \$6,600 for three charges of possession of illegal wildlife and abetting the sale of illegal wildlife. However as he was unable to pay the fine, he would be serving the default sentence of four weeks and three days.

2 AVA was alerted to a case of alleged online sale of illegal wildlife in January 2017. We investigated and conducted a sting operation on 9 February 2017 during which two red-footed tortoises and a hedgehog—were seized. The animals were subsequently placed under the care of Wildlife Reserves Singapore.



Two red-footed tortoises and one hedgehog were seized during the sting operation (Photo: AVA)

3 During our questioning, Albert denied being the seller of the animals and only admitted to being commissioned by an online seller to deliver the animals. While our investigations concluded that the animals had been imported illegally, there was no evidence or leads on the seller.

Public advisory

4 The keeping and selling of wild animals, such as tortoises and hedgehogs, are not allowed in Singapore. Demand for such animals would fuel illegal wildlife

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trade. Wild animals are not suitable pets as they may transmit zoonotic diseases to humans and can be a public safety risk if mishandled or if they escape into our dense urban environment. If mishandled, the wild animal may also face unnecessary suffering. In addition, wild animals that are non-native to Singapore may also be a threat to our bio-diversity if released into the environment.

5 In Singapore, it is an offence to illegally import/export, possess, sell, offer/advertise for sale or display to public any illegal wildlife species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna or Flora (CITES). This includes online sales and abetting sales of illegal wildlife. An example of a CITES-protected species is the red-footed tortoise. Offenders shall be liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$500,000 and/or 2 years imprisonment, and to the forfeiture of the wild animal. It is also an offence to keep, sell or offer for sale wild animals not protected by CITES, such as hedgehogs. Offenders shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 and to the forfeiture of the wild animal.

6 While AVA continues to ensure that regulatory measures against illegal trade, possession and sale of live animals and wildlife are in place and enforced, the public can play their part too. We need the cooperation of the public to report suspected cases of illegal wildlife pet ownership or trade, and provide information, such as the suspected person or company involved, type of animals alleged to be smuggled or offered for sale, and locations. Should members of the public have information on illegal wildlife activities, please contact AVA at 6805 2992 or via our [online feedback form](#) to make a report. All information shared with AVA will be kept strictly confidential.

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Page 2 of 2