



## **Singaporean man jailed nine weeks for smuggling birds and for animal cruelty**

Issued on 17 October 2015

A Singaporean man was sentenced yesterday to nine weeks in jail for illegally importing nine live birds into Singapore. 43-year-old Leong Kay Cheong was also sentenced to three weeks in jail for the charge of animal cruelty as the illegally-imported birds were subjected to unnecessary suffering or pain. Both sentences will run concurrently.

2 On 10 April 2014, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) was notified by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) on the detection of live birds kept inside Leong's luggage during routine checks at Singapore Changi Airport. Leong had arrived on a flight from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Physical examinations revealed a total of nine birds, of which six were identified as Melodious Laughing Thrush birds (*Garrulax canorus*) and the other three as White-Rumped Shama birds (*Copsychus malabaricus*). The Melodious Laughing Thrush bird is a protected species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

3 The birds were individually concealed in customised PVC tubes with perforated holes on both ends. Each tube was wrapped with aluminium foil, with an additional layer of concealment using black trash bags. There was no food and water provided for the birds. Seven of them were found dead on arrival and the two remaining ones died a few days later.

# MEDIA RELEASE

4 Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (ESA), CITES permits are required for any import, export and re-export of CITES species, including their parts and products. It is also an offence under the ESA if the CITES species or their parts and products are not accompanied by proper CITES permits when they are in transit or being transhipped through Singapore. Penalties for infringing the Act include fines of up to SGD 50,000 per scheduled species (not exceeding a maximum aggregate of SGD 500,000) and/or up to 2 years imprisonment.

5 In addition, under the Animals and Birds Act, any person who neglects to supply the animals with food and/or water or subject them to unnecessary suffering and distress, shall be guilty of animal cruelty and shall be liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding S\$10,000 and/or imprisonment for a term up to 12 months.

6 “To date, Singapore is one of the few countries in the region to remain free from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), or bird flu. For trade and public health purposes, it is important that the Republic maintains its bird flu-free status through strict import regulations and enforcement, and by working closely with partner enforcement agencies to deter illegal import across borders. We will not hesitate to take stern enforcement actions against any person flouting our laws,” said Mr Gerald Neo, Senior Executive Manager, Quarantine & Inspection Group (Wildlife Section), AVA.

7 Anyone with information on animal smuggling may contact AVA at 6805 2992 or via AVA’s [online feedback form](#). All information shared with AVA would be kept strictly confidential.

-END-



**Issued by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore**

17 October 2015

**MEDIA RELEASE**

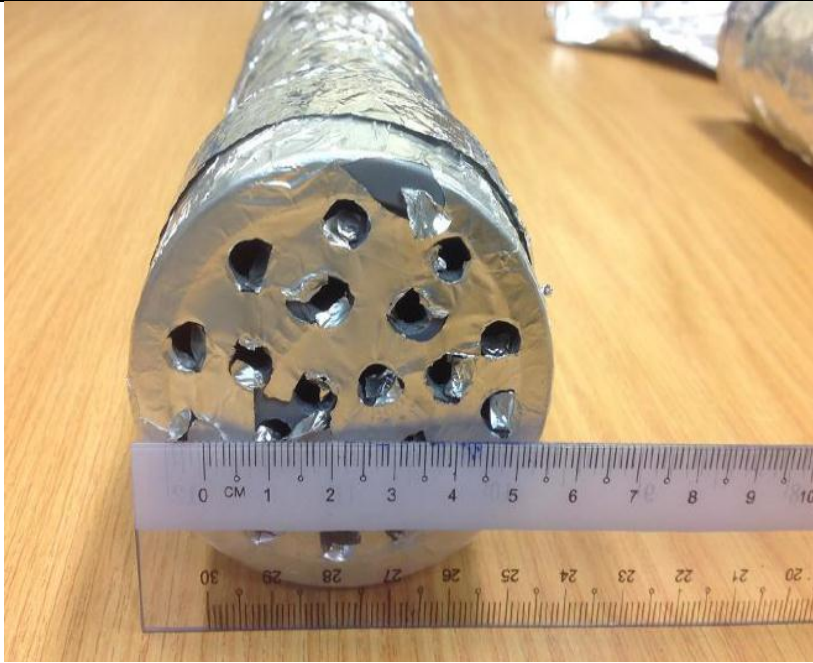
Page 2 of 4

**ANNEX**

	<b>Photo</b>	<b>Caption</b>
1		Luggage bag containing PVC tubes, each lined with aluminium foil and further concealed with black trash bags
2		The seven dead birds retrieved from the PVC tubes

**MEDIA RELEASE**

3



A customised PVC tube that was used to conceal the birds, with perforation at both ends. One bird was found in each tube.

# MEDIA RELEASE