



CITES Enforcement in Singapore

Dr Anna Wong

Director, Import & Export Regulatory Department

Quarantine Inspection Group

Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority

5 June 2018

What is CITES?

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Fauna
- International agreement
- Ensure international trade in wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival
- Listing of species
- Legally binding
- Trade is regulated through issuance of permits

CITES (from 1975.....)

- Imposing bans by listing species in Appendix I
- Does trade ban reduce or eliminate demand?
- Understand social behaviour– ownership of rare species a way to show off
- Drive prices up
- Black market trade, smuggling and fuel poaching
- Misdeclaration of wild caught species as captive breed
- Stimulation of illegal wildlife trade?
- Compromise sustainability, conservation and welfare
- No oversight of the trade data
- Burden on law enforcement

**Can a well managed regulated
trade help curb illegal wildlife
trade?**



Who should enforce?

- More responsibility placed on source and destination countries
- Enforcement efforts should be stepped up
- Roles of other actors e.g. shipping companies
- Not aware of items in the shipment
- Members of United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce Buckingham Palace Declaration



"I'm disappointed. If anyone should have seen the red flags, it's you."

www.pinterest.com

How to enforce?

- Kenya's Wildlife Minister plans to fast track capital punishment for wildlife crimes
- *"Capital punishment is counterproductive, ineffective and wrong"*
- *"green violence"*
- CITES re-tweeted Kenya's proposed death penalty and hashtag #SeriousAboutWildlifeCrime
- Does CITES support or not?
- *"As a global authority on protecting biodiversity, CITES's position matters. It's ambiguous stance is worrying because how poaching is tackled is a hugely divisive issue with growing calls for countries to move beyond an enforcement focussed approach."*

Wildlife
farming

Allow sale of
stockpiles to
flood market

Is enforcement focussed approach the way to go?

Private rhino owners are rich white farmers wanting to profiteer

What drives the poachers? \$\$\$\$



What drives the consumers?

*Ivory and rhino
horn will make me
look rich and cool
since it is so rare*

Allowing stockpiles sales will fuel more poaching and illegal trade

Outline

- Singapore and CITES
- Legislative framework
- Enforcement efforts
- International Cooperation
- Update on activities



Singapore and CITES

- Singapore acceded to CITES on 30 Nov 1986 and the CITES entered into force for Singapore on 28 Feb 1987
- Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) is the CITES authority of Singapore
- We adopt a whole of government approach in implementation & enforcement of CITES
- Comprehensive, multi-pronged 'network'
 - National law enforcement agencies
 - Regional and international partners
 - Members of the public



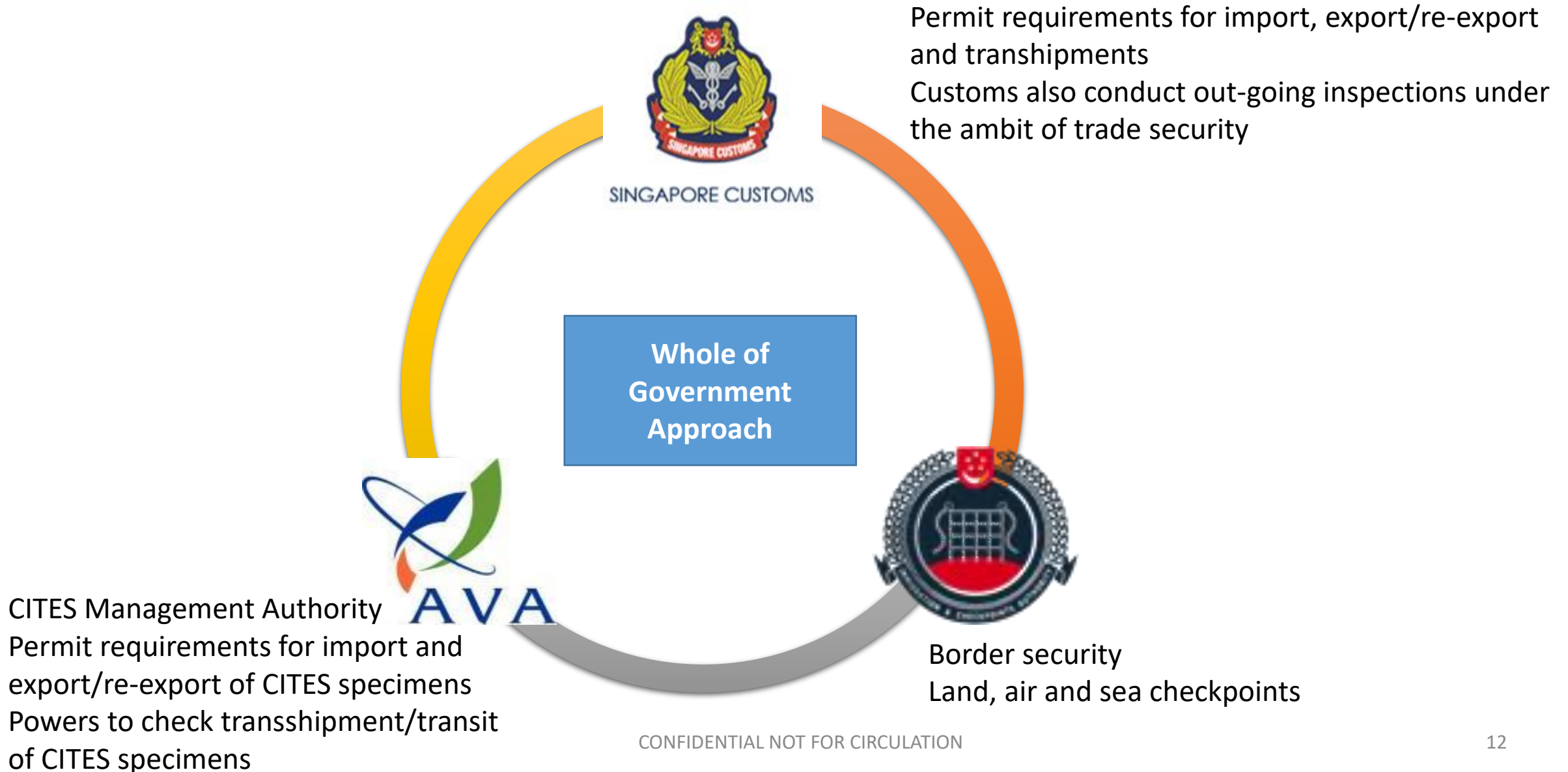
Legislative Framework

- The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (ESA) is the principal legislation that gives effect to CITES
- ESA is recognised by CITES as Category 1 legislation (CoP 17 Doc 22 Annex 3 Rev.1) ie. meets all CITES requirements
- Annual updates of the ESA
- Regular review of penalties under the ESA

Endangered Species Act [ESA]

Review	ESA [Cap.92A] (before 1 Mar 2006)	ESA 2006 (after 1 Mar 2006)
Increased penalties	\$5,000 per scheduled specimen; up to 1 year jail term	\$50,000 per scheduled specimen; jail term up to 2 years (up to max. of \$500,000)
More enforcement powers	No control of species in transit	Enable authorized officers to check and seize species in transit
Refinements to definitions	No provision to take action on sale of non-CITES products claimed to be real specimens	Penalties imposed on such offences

Regulatory and Enforcement Agencies



Enforcement Measures



Risk Assessment Framework

- Receive and process trade information through AVA e-Licensing System and Singapore's National Single Window
- Through the CITES permit applications, consignments are flagged for targeted and thorough checks, based on risk assessment.
- New risk profiles and indicators developed and refined regularly, leading to successful seizures

Inspections of CITES specimens

- Strict inspections of travelers and cargo
- For import of CITES species, a CITES export permit from the exporting country is required before the CITES import permit is issued.
- For export/re-export of CITES species, a CITES export/re-export permit from Singapore is required.
- All imports and exports of CITES species are subject to 100% inspections.
- For transshipment of CITES species, we will verify the authenticity of the CITES export permit with the exporting country before we approve the transshipment permit.
- CITES permit applications and consignments that do not comply with CITES will be rejected or detained for investigations.

Interagency Cooperation



- Established point of contact for reporting and information sharing
- Regular meetings
- Officers are trained in CITES legislation, requirements and identification of species

Extensive International Cooperation

- Curbing illegal wildlife trade requires the extensive cooperation at bilateral, regional and international levels.
- Participation in international forums and law enforcement efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade eg. Operation COBRA, Operation PAWS etc.
- Cooperation eg. with University of Washington, to use wildlife forensics to trace origin of illegal wildlife and poaching hotspots in source countries



Alleged wildlife smuggling kingpin Gakou Fodie is believed to be involved in several cases, including the shipment of 6 tonnes of pangolin scales to Asia. He has been arrested and, just a few days ago, extradited to Tanzania.

They all led to one syndicate and Gakou Fodie, a suspected major smuggler involved in several cases, including the shipment of 6 tonnes of pangolin scales to Asia. An international cast of law enforcement and Customs agencies, including AVA and Freeland, went into overdrive.

Arrests were made in Africa last year and early this year, related to the seizures in Thailand and Vietnam. The behind-the-scenes cooperation, which also involved Interpol and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, culminated in the arrests of seven key players who were allegedly behind the shipment to Singapore.

By the numbers

A rhinoceros is killed every seven hours, according to Freeland, a counter-trafficking organisation based in Bangkok.

Rhinoceros are prized for their horns and bones as they are used in traditional medicine or for decorative purposes.

Even more frequently, an elephant is killed every hour.

Each year, an estimated 20,000 elephants are killed for their tusks, which can fetch about US\$2,000 (S\$2,760) per kg in the

And between April and this month, the authorities in Africa moved in on Fodie, arresting him near the Kenya-Uganda border before he was extradited just a few days ago to Tanzania, where the case against him is stronger.

In a telephone interview with The Straits Times, Mr Steven Galster, 55, founder of Freeland, commended AVA officials. "The Singapore officials were some of the first to say 'yes' to (the joint investigation). They did not need any prompting from us. They did that on their own."

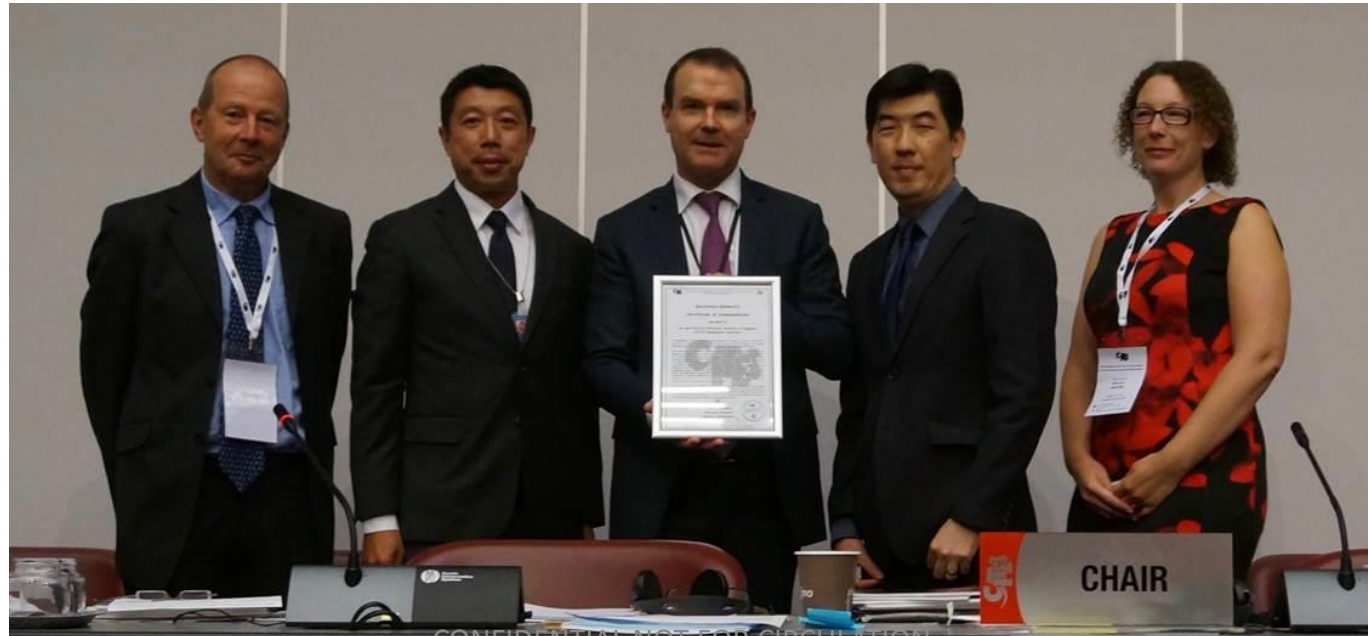
CONFIDENTIAL NOT FOR CIRCULATION

Intelligence

- Strong network with foreign law enforcement authorities, CITES focal points, international organisations (WCO, INTERPOL)
- Receives and shares intelligence with partners
- Assesses every intelligence report or tip-off
- Acts upon every credible and actionable intelligence or tip off
- Access to ENVIRONET (WCO secured platform) to exchange enforcement info

Certificate of Commendation

- Singapore received Certificate of Commendation from the CITES Secretary-General on 22 July 2017
- Recognising Singapore authorities' exemplary enforcement actions, great perseverance
- Successful convictions for the illegal shipment of CITES-listed rosewood (*Dalbergia spp.*).



CONFIDENTIAL NOT FOR CIRCULATION

Reporting

- Publicise all ivory seizures
- No government ivory stockpiles
- All confiscated ivory has been destroyed
- Utilize various reporting mechanisms to report wildlife seizures, eg. ETIS, Eco-messages

Public awareness

- Publish significant wildlife seizures or wildlife-related events on mainstream media, social media etc.
- Posting infographics to educate public on illegal wildlife trade and how they can play their part to assist the Authorities.
- Regular engagement with the stakeholders and the public via dialogue sessions, forums, seminars, talks, symposiums, lectures etc.
- Distribution of CITES advisories and brochures to heighten awareness.

Public Awareness



Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA)

21 September · 🌐

#WWW – SAY NO TO SMUGGLING

They may be cute, cuddly and adorable, but smuggling them into Singapore is a big No-No! This week on #WedsWithVets, we take a look at why we should not smuggle animals into Singapore, and the dangers of doing so.

#ResponsiblePetOwnership #NoToSmuggling



Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA)

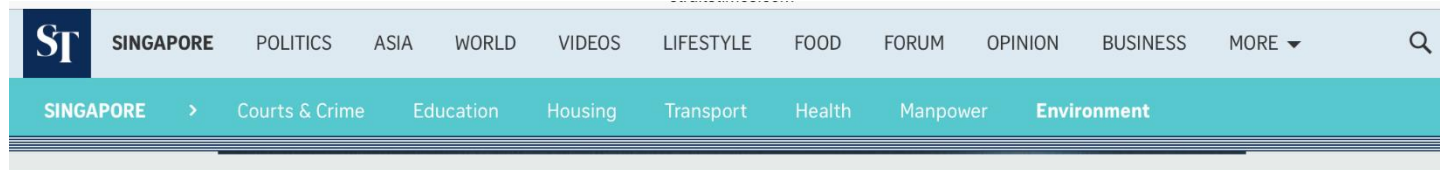
19 May 2015 · 🌐

ILLEGAL IVORY SEIZED: Our officers, with the support of Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, have seized a container shipment of illegal ivory, rhinoceros horns and the teeth of big cats for further investigation. The shipment, with a street value estimated at S\$8 million, originated from Kenya, and was transiting through Singapore for Vietnam. Read more at: <http://bit.ly/1Ahx9fM>

Photos below: 1,783 pieces of raw ivory tusks, 4 pieces of rhinoceros horns and 22 pieces of canine teeth believed to be from African big cats were concealed among bags of tea dust.



Public awareness



AVA inspectors share tales of hunting down illegal wildlife owners



ST VIDEOS



::Caught and Jailed!::

The two Singaporean men who attempted to smuggle two spotted doves and three sugar gliders into Singapore have been sentenced to two and three months jail.

Our investigations revealed that the animals – sourced from Johor, Malaysia – were imported into Singapore without the relevant import licences. The smuggled animals were also transported in a manner that subjected them to unnecessary suffering or pain.

For more information please go to <http://goo.gl/qTmMrb>



Summary

- Firmly committed to combating the illegal trade in ivory and wildlife and is determined not to be a conduit for such illegal trade.
- Singapore adopts a comprehensive range of measures to combat illegal trade.

Thank you

