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‘Largest ever’ ivory shipment worth \$9 million seized in Hong Kong

The shipment, weighing about 7.2 metric tonnes, could be the world's largest seizure of ivory tusks over the past 30 years, authorities say.



The tusks had been shipped from Malaysia in a container falesely labelled as containing only "frozen fish". Image: Hong Kong customs authorities via Mongabay.com

The customs inspectors discovered the tusks inside a 40-feet Malaysian consignment declared as “frozen fish”.

Following an initial investigation, the authorities have arrested the owner and two staff members of a trading company in Tuen Mun, Hong Kong.

By Shreya Dasgupta, Mongabay.com

Monday 10 July 2017



POLICY & FINANCE

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Hong Kong Customs seized "about" 7.2 tonnes of Ivory tusks. Image: Hong Kong customs authorities via Mongabay.com

“Hong Kong Customs are to be warmly congratulated on this important seizure, but it is vital for a full and thorough investigation to take place in the aftermath to find out who was orchestrating this massive movement of contraband,” Yannick Kuehl, TRAFFIC’s Regional Director for East Asia, [said in a statement](#).

Under CITES guidelines, large-scale ivory seizures, of at least 500 kilograms (0.5 metric tonnes) point towards the participation of organised crime.

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And this large seizure moving from Malaysia to Hong Kong highlights the role of the two countries as smuggling hubs of ivory, TRAFFIC added.

“No doubt Hong Kong’s geographic location coupled with the currently relatively lenient penalties in place for anyone convicted of wildlife crime are reasons behind the shipment coming through the port—the case for increasing penalties has never been stronger,” Kuehl said.

In December last year, Hong Kong government announced a three-step plan to phase out domestic ivory trade by the end of 2021.

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