



Bird trade in Singapore FAQ

1 Is there a law protecting bird species in Singapore?

There are three pieces of legislation protecting birds and other wild animals in Singapore.

The first, involving international wildlife trade, is the [Endangered Species \(Import and Export\) Act 2006 \(ESA\)](#) which prohibits the importation, exportation and re-exportation of certain animals and plants without a valid permit from the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA). The possession or sale of such specimens without the appropriate permits is illegal.

The second is the [Animals and Birds \(Amendment\) Act 2014](#) that regulates the keeping, breeding and feeding of animals and birds through a licence and permit system.

The third, the [Wild Animals and Birds Act 2000](#), prohibits the killing, taking or keeping of any wild animal or bird in Singapore (other than House Crows, feral pigeons, Purple-backed Starlings, Philippine Glossy Starlings, Common Mynas and White-vented Mynas) without a licence.

2 What are the fines for violating the laws?

If convicted of any violation of the ESA, offenders can be fined between SGD 50 000 – SGD 500 000 (USD35 000 – USD350 000) per species or imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years

If convicted of any violation under the Animal and Birds (Amendment) Act 2014, offenders can be fined up to SGD 40 000 (USD28 000) or imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years or both.

If convicted of any violation under the Wild Animals and Birds Act 2000, offenders can be fined up to SGD 1000 (USD700) and made to forfeit the bird.

3 Why is there a need for laws to protect bird species?

Wildlife trade rules are put in place as a safeguard.

The law prohibits trade where it involves species that are highly threatened. In addition, they are also meant to regulate trade, where permitted, within sustainable levels, in order to prevent species becoming threatened or in some cases even extinct in the wild, due to overexploitation. This also applies to species whose survival may not necessarily be severely threatened at present, but may become so in future unless trade is strictly regulated and enforced.

Those convicted of breaking laws are punished, which also serves as a deterrent for other would-be offenders.

4

If a species is endangered, should trade not simply be banned to protect threatened species?

Trade regulations exist to protect species from over exploitation, although well-managed sustainable trade can contribute to the survival of a species by providing value and therefore economic incentives to local people and governments to help protect them.

5

How do I know which birds are protected by law? / How do I know if the birds I am keeping are legally obtained?

Before you purchase a bird, the first step is to check whether the species is protected under national legislation (access to [link](#)).

Further, please find out if the species you are buying is of international conservation significance and has international protection and regulation. Check if the bird is a CITES-protected species by entering the species name (scientific name) of the bird in the CITES species database: <http://www.speciesplus.net/>. If the species is listed, the details of the listing will appear in the search result. In that case, make a request to the seller for an AVA permit to show that the bird was imported legally. The permit should include its CITES status (Appendix I, II or III) and its source (wild-caught/captive bred). If the bird is claimed to be captive-bred, ask the seller for more information about the facility where the bird is bred and was sourced from; he/she should be able to provide this.

If in doubt, do not buy!

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What if the trader does not have a permit for the bird I want to buy?

Do not buy. Report it to AVA Contact Centre at 6805 2992 or click [here](#) to submit the report.

7

How can I exercise responsible purchasing?

- a. If the bird is a listed species, ask traders if they have an import permit to sell the bird you are interested in buying.
- b. Ask sellers/traders if you yourself need a permit to keep the bird
- c. Avoid buying wild-caught birds. [Here's why](#).

8

If I suspect that illegal activity is happening, what can I do?

Report the suspected crime directly to AVA (6805 2992), or through the [Wildlife Witness App](#), which can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play for free.

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How do I find information on threatened species?

The [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#) provides updated information about the conservation status of numerous species.