



## NEWS RELEASE

**Sandra R. Brown**

Acting United States Attorney  
Central District of California

For Immediate Distribution

**May 2, 2017**

---

Thom Mrozek, Public Affairs Officer

[thom.mrozek@usdoj.gov](mailto:thom.mrozek@usdoj.gov)

(213) 894-6947

[www.justice.gov/usao-cdca](http://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca)

@CDCANews

### **Fountain Valley Man Arrested for Attempted Smuggling of Nearly 100 Asian Songbirds from Vietnam – Most of which Died in Transit**

LOS ANGELES – Federal agents this morning arrested a Fountain Valley man on federal animal smuggling charges that allege he illegally brought to the United States 93 Asian songbirds on a flight from Vietnam – most of which died in transit or soon after arriving at Los Angeles International Airport.

Kurtis Law, 49, who also maintains a residence in Vietnam, was arrested pursuant to a federal criminal complaint filed yesterday afternoon.

The complaint alleges that Law attempted to smuggle 93 Asian songbirds into the United States on March 24.

According to the affidavit in support of the complaint, investigators found several species of protected songbirds in Law's luggage, including Bali Mynas birds (*Leucopsar rothschildi*), Chinese Hwamei birds (*Garrulax canorus*), Silver-eared Mesia birds (*Leiothrix argentauris*), and Red-billed Leiothrix birds (*Leiothrix lutea*). These species are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The complaint alleges that the birds were placed in Law's suitcases in a way "that allowed each bird little or no movement," and all but eight of the 93 birds ultimately died as a result of the smuggling.

Law is expected to make his initial appearance this afternoon in federal court in downtown Los Angeles.

*A complaint contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty in court.*

Law is specifically charged with smuggling goods into the United States, a felony offense that carries a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison.

The investigation in this case is being conducted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations.

The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorneys Dennis Mitchell and Erik M. Silber of the Environmental and Community Safety Crimes Section.