



# DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Acting United States Attorney Billy J. Williams  
District of Oregon

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## **‘OPERATION PONGO’ LEADS TO ARREST OF TWO MALAYSIAN MEN ON FEDERAL CHARGES OF SMUGGLING WILDLIFE INTO THE U.S.**

PORTLAND, Ore. – Two Malaysian nationals have been arrested on federal wildlife smuggling charges after they allegedly used mail parcels to illegally smuggle orangutan skulls and parts of other protected wildlife into the United States.

Eoin Ling Churn Yeng, 35, and Galvin Yeo Siang Ann, 33, both Malaysian citizens, were arrested without incident, on Friday afternoon, December 4, by special agents with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Ling and Yeo were arrested soon after arriving in Portland to meet with an associate.

Ling and Yeo are charged in a criminal complaint that alleges multiple counts of illegally importing wildlife into the United States, an offense that carries a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

According to the criminal complaint, the investigation into Ling and Yeo began in 2013, when a routine search of an international package revealed a helmeted hornbill mandible that was being shipped to a residence in Forest Grove, Oregon. Helmeted hornbills are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife agents initiated an undercover operation named “Operation Pongo,” which was inspired by the orangutan’s genus *Pongo*. The investigation revealed that Ling and Yeo were co-owners of an online business that regularly smuggled endangered wildlife into the United States from 2004 to 2015. The criminal complaint states that U.S. Fish and Wildlife reviewed records that indicate Ling and Yeo have sold wildlife items to multiple individuals and businesses in the United States. Undercover U.S. Fish and Wildlife agents communicated with Ling and Yeo and purchased three orangutan skulls, four helmeted hornbill skulls, one CITES-protected rhino hornbill head, one ESA-protected babirusa (wild pig) skull, one CITES-protected langur skull, and one ESA-protected dugong (marine mammal) rib.

Ling and Yeo are expected to make their initial court appearance in U.S. Magistrate Court today at 1:30 p.m.

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

Operation Pongo was conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which received assistance from the Office of International Affairs, Environmental Crimes Section of the Environment and Natural Resources Division, U.S. State Department, FBI Legal Attaché in Kuala Lumpur, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Bureau of Land Management, and the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ryan W. Bounds.

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