



Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Energy

SPEECH

Total words: TBC
Speech length: 4-5 minutes

Operation BLIZZARD

CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER MONICA COLLINS

***Acknowledgement of Country:** I wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on today; the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people. I wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture, and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. I also acknowledge and welcome any other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are here today.*

Good morning. My name is Monica Collins and I'm the Chief Compliance Officer at the Department of Environment and Energy.

I'm proud to be here today to share with you the significant outcomes of Operation Blizzard – an international INTERPOL campaign expressly designed to target and disrupt the illegal trade in reptiles, both within Australia and globally.

Operation Blizzard shows what can be achieved when our federal, state and territory agencies work collaboratively to disrupt wildlife crime.

Australia is home to over 860 different reptile species. Three out of the four orders of reptiles found in Australia are unique to this country and are not naturally found anywhere else in the world. Ironically, it is also their very uniqueness that places many of our reptiles at risk of poaching and illegal trade.

It's one of the duties of my Department – as with the state and federal agencies represented here today - to ensure that our reptiles are well-protected under our laws.

Our native reptiles are highly sought after on the overseas black market as exotic pets or breeding stock in Europe, Asia and north America.

Many of our snakes and lizards are most prevalent in the more arid and isolated areas of our expansive country.

This makes them vulnerable - easy targets for opportunistic criminals, who often treat the animals with cruelty and flout our environmental laws as they callously pluck animals out of their home environments purely for financial or personal gain.

Other speakers here today include Iain Bruce, the Director of Investigations at Victoria's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

He will speak to you about his agency's contributions to several joint operations targeting organised criminals engaged in this illegal trade.

You'll also hear from Ric Longmore from the ACT Herpetological Society. Ric has over 30 years' experience dealing with Australian reptiles.

He'll tell you about the impacts that illegal reptile trade has on our biodiversity and animal welfare, including some of the cruel methods used to package the reptiles and send them to foreign buyers and organised-crime groups.

An INTERPOL initiative, Operation Blizzard involved 14 countries participating in a coordinated, three-week campaign to disrupt illegal reptile trade in their jurisdictions. The campaign ran from 22 April to 12 May this year.

In Australia, the Operation, I'm sad to report, was an incredible success.

My branch - the Office of Compliance - and ten other wildlife agencies from every state and territory in Australia, worked together to produce some amazing results over the 15 days of the operation. We:

- Inspected a total of 1,116 baggage items across five international flights
- Carried out a total of 51 wildlife inspections, including at commercial and private properties.
- Of these inspections, 17 incidences of non-compliance were detected.

- Our Australian contingent seized 69 reptiles including Shinglebacks, Blue-tongued lizards, a central bearded dragon, and a variety of snakes including coastal taipans, western brown snakes and Tiger snakes.
- We executed seven search warrants across three states
- Progressed 13 ongoing criminal investigations.
- And conducted educational activities through the Department of Home Affairs Border Watch program.

All the while, my Department was coordinating and swapping intelligence with INTERPOL and international colleagues in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Canada in a bid to shut down this criminal activity.

Wildlife officers across the country took part in some fantastic operations during the campaign. There are too many to share all of them today, but I would like to share a few highlights.

- In Tasmania, wildlife rangers executed two search warrants, seizing 25 live and dead animals, including a very large carpet python.
- Northern Territory wildlife rangers investigated the suspected poaching of a threatened python species under Northern Territory law.
- In Queensland, officers executed five search warrants with assistance from Queensland Police. The raids resulted in the seizure

of thirteen animals. Queensland authorities expect to lay numerous charges as a result.

- Meanwhile, our biosecurity authority, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, continues to monitor for illegal importations that pose a significant risk to Australia's biosecurity, such as a recent attempt to import nine live turtles into Sydney, wrapped in plastic and concealed in a mail parcel.
- Wildlife rangers in Western Australia were busy, attending thirteen inspections and one police warrant. Rangers seized two live pythons and a bearded dragon, which was successfully returned to the wild. Officers issued two infringement notices totalling \$5000.
- Officers from across New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the ACT also undertook a comprehensive program of wildlife inspections – a coordinated effort to ensure that those who hold permits to keep or breed reptiles are complying with the conditions of their permits.
- Additionally, an Australian Border Force team engaged with local community groups who can help thwart criminal activity.
- Officers from the Border Watch program spoke to post office staff, local police, and other groups to raise awareness and encourage stakeholders to provide valuable reports of suspicious behaviour.

The public can help protect our environment by reporting illegal or suspicious activities to my Department or to Border Watch. My Department can be contacted on 1800 803 772, or via email at compliance@environment.gov.au.

There are severe penalties for wildlife trafficking in Australia. The maximum penalty for importing or exporting a regulated specimen without authorisation is imprisonment for 10 years, a fine of \$210,000, or both.

My Department issues permits for the export of certain Australian native animals for scientific and other purposes; however, the export of reptiles for commercial purposes is prohibited.

Finally, I would like to thank and congratulate all the state, territory and Commonwealth agencies that participated in this operation.

My Department will continue to work with our partners to coordinate operations and share intelligence to disrupt the criminals involved in this illegal trade, and ensure that the outcomes we have achieved during Operation Blizzard are sustained into the foreseeable future.

Thank you for your time today. I am happy to take questions on Operation Blizzard.

Q&As

If asked about...

Question	Answer
What species of lizards and snakes are most frequently smuggled out of Australia?	Shinglebacks, blue-tongues and various snake species including pythons.
Why are these traffickers not being jailed?	Federal and state enforcement and compliance agencies are responsible for detecting and deterring illicit reptile trade and activity. We are also involved in the preparation of prosecution cases against offenders. However, it is the judiciary that decides sentencing. We have every confidence in our legal system.
Why are you sad about the results of Operation BLIZZARD?	It is sad to see from this operation that our wildlife is treated as a commodity.
How much are the lizards worth on the black market?	Australian authorities have been asked by CITES not to attribute monetary values to individual species. This is because it encourages criminal activity. Profits derived from wildlife trafficking may be subject to proceeds of crime confiscation. In the end, wildlife trafficking is an activity that does not pay off.
Which other countries participated in Operation Blizzard?	New Zealand, Canada, the United States, South Africa, Israel, and a number of European countries including the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, and others.

<p>What does the term 'biosecurity' mean?</p>	<p>The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources works to protect our economy, environment and people from the introduction of harmful, exotic pests and diseases.</p> <p>Illegal reptile imports pose a significant biosecurity risk, and we work closely with the the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to manage these risks.</p>
<p>What happens to the reptiles/animals that are seized?</p>	<p>We work closely with our partners to re-home any reptiles seized during our operations.</p>



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

MEDIA RELEASE

28 May 2019

Blitz on reptile smuggling nets great results

The Australian arm of a three-week, international operation targeting the illegal trade of reptiles, involving surprise raids, compliance inspections and random airport checks, resulted in the seizure of 69 reptiles.

Australia and 13 other member countries participated in Operation Blizzard, an INTERPOL-coordinated campaign to increase enforcement and surveillance activities around suspicious reptile trading. The operation ran from 22 April to 12 May. Further details of the international results for this operation are forthcoming.

Wildlife authorities executed seven search warrants against suspected illegal traders across Australia, and conducted 51 wildlife compliance inspections resulting in 17 detections of non-compliance.

Operation Blizzard was coordinated by the Department of the Environment and Energy's Office of Compliance. The operation involved the Australian Border Force, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, and environmental agencies from every state and territory in Australia joining forces to combat wildlife trafficking at a national level.

The Department of the Environment and Energy's Chief Compliance Officer, Monica Collins, said, "Operation Blizzard shows what can be achieved when our federal, state and territory agencies work collaboratively to disrupt wildlife crime. Officers from all agencies are working tirelessly to thwart this illicit trade."

In Tasmania, wildlife rangers from the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment executed two search warrants, seizing 25 live and dead animals, including a large carpet python.

The Queensland Police Major and Organised Crime Squad (Rural) worked closely with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to jointly tackle reptile crime throughout the state. Queensland authorities executed five search warrants resulting in the seizure of 13 animals.

"This operation has sent a clear message that the Queensland Government has a zero tolerance approach to the illegal trade of wildlife. We take this type of crime very seriously and we will continue to work in conjunction with federal authorities beyond the conclusion of this operation", said a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service spokesperson.

In South Australia, wildlife officers from the Department for Environment and Water undertook inspections of commercial licence holders. Australian Border Force officers in South Australia engaged with local community groups to raise awareness and encourage reporting of suspicious behaviour.

Media contact: 02 6275 9880

Victoria's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) are committed to tackling the illegal wildlife trade head on. This involves swift action on identified illegal exports or proactive inspections of licenced collections. As part of Operation Blizzard, DELWP focused on inspections of commercial and private licence holders to ensure the legal trade in Victoria is monitored appropriately.

DELWP continue their investigations, working collaboratively with other agencies, into five unsolved cases, where 12 live lizards were posted to China late last year. The suspects have been captured on CCTV, but to date have not been identified.

At Melbourne airport, Australian Border Force officers arrested a 27-year-old Japanese national with 17 shinglebacks and two blue-tongued lizards concealed in her checked-in luggage. The woman is suspected of being involved in an international wildlife trafficking syndicate. The animals were seized and are currently being cared for by DELWP.

Awaiting comment from ABF

In Western Australia, wildlife officers conducted thirteen inspections and attended a WA Police warrant. Officers from the Western Australia Parks and Wildlife Service seized two live pythons and a bearded dragon that was successfully returned to the wild. Officers issued two infringement notices totalling \$5000.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is investigating the detection of nine live turtles in an international mail parcel imported from Hong Kong.

"Illegal reptile imports pose a significant biosecurity risk, as they could introduce pests and diseases that can impact on human and animal health, as well as the environment," said Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer at the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Ian Thompson. "The department works closely with other agencies to manage these risks at our international airports and mail centres."

In the Northern Territory, wildlife officers from the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory are looking into a number of allegations, including a case involving the alleged poaching of Oenpelli pythons, a threatened species.

Investigators from the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment conducted compliance inspections of private wildlife collections [awaiting input from NSW]. Meanwhile, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service are busy with ongoing investigations, including caring for 27 native pythons and three pygmy bearded dragons seized from a residence.

"We're pleased to be invited to take part in Operation Blizzard. Throughout the operation we conducted multiple inspections on both private and commercial reptile licence holders. We welcome any opportunity to educate licence holders and the wider community on the importance of reporting animals being taken from the wild or the keeping of unlicensed reptiles so that we can help combat the illegal wildlife trade and protect the biodiversity of the ACT," said an ACT Parks and Conservation Service spokesperson.

Wildlife trafficking is a serious crime and is driving the decline of many species around the world. The maximum penalty for wildlife trade offences under Australian law is 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of up to \$210,000 for individuals, or up to \$1,050,000 for corporations.

Australia is a signatory to CITES and implements the Convention under its national environment law.

It is an offence to import a CITES specimen without the appropriate documentation, and to be in possession of an illegally imported specimen. Any information about trade in illegal wildlife or wildlife products should contact wildlifetrade.compliance@environment.gov.au or 02 6274 1900.

For more information: media@environment.gov.au

BACKGROUND

Operation Blizzard was led by the INTERPOL Environmental Security Programme (ENS) and arose from INTERPOL's 29th meeting of its Wildlife Crime Working Group (WCWG) in London in October 2019. At that meeting, the world's wildlife enforcement agencies agreed to continue investigative and operational actions to combat the cruel and growing trade of reptile smuggling.

Key INTERPOL objectives for Operation BLIZZARD were to:

- Identify criminals involved in the illegal killing and transboundary shipment of reptiles
- Strengthen communication and enforcement capacity to combat wildlife crime, more particularly reptile trade at both the national and international levels
- Coordinate cross-agency law enforcement efforts in order to detect and deter reptile trade
- Improve communication, cooperation, and coordination between wildlife enforcement authorities

Australia participated in Operation BLIZZARD alongside 13 other INTERPOL member countries across Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania. Participating countries included New Zealand, the United States of America and Canada.

Australia's participation

Eleven Commonwealth, state and territory wildlife enforcement agencies across Australia participated in the operation. Agency participation in Operation BLIZZARD involved undertaking targeted compliance and enforcement activities relating to the reptile trade during the operational phase of 22 April to 12 May 2019.

The following Australian agencies participated in Operation BLIZZARD:

- Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy
- Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- South Australian Department of Environment and Water
- Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
- New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment
- Western Australia Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
- Australian Capital Territory Parks and Conservation Service
- Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory
- Australian Border Force (ABF) – South Australia Regional Command.

FINAL REPORT: INTERPOL OPERATION BLIZZARD

22 April – 12 May 2019

Australia

MAY 2019

INT132\P

Produced by: Department of the Environment and Energy

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Purpose

1. This report outlines the final operational results and outcomes arising from Australia's participation in Operation BLIZZARD, an international INTERPOL operation targeting reptile crime over the period 22 April to 12 May 2019. It highlights opportunities for ongoing collaboration among Australian wildlife enforcement s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
2. This report is intended for distribution to the INTERPOL Environmental Security Programme and all Australian agencies that participated in Operation BLIZZARD.
3. Media activities and outcomes for Operation BLIZZARD, at the time of release of this report, have not yet occurred and are outside the scope of this document. These will be reported separately in a media evaluation report by the Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) External Communications Team.

Key Outcomes

4. Key outcomes achieved through Operation BLIZZARD include:
 - a. Significant compliance actions and outcomes against illegal reptile trade targets
 - b. A visible demonstration of collaboration and a 'united front' among Australian wildlife enforcement agencies, including alignment with INTERPOL and other INTERPOL member countries
 - c. Enhanced visibility of illegal reptile trade issues among senior executive officers within Australian environmental agencies
 - d. Actionable intelligence shared by Australia with INTERPOL and its member countries
 - e. Strengthened relationships between wildlife enforcement officers as a basis for enduring collaboration and operational coordination between state, territory and Commonwealth jurisdictions
 - f. Increased public awareness of illegal reptile trade and its impacts on Australia's biodiversity (to be evaluated in separate media report).

Background

INTERPOL

5. Operation BLIZZARD was the first INTERPOL operation targeting the illegal reptile trade since Operation RAMP in 2010.
6. Operation BLIZZARD was proposed by s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group (WCWG) as one of its inter-sessional activities. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

7. During the 29th meeting of the Wildlife Crime Working Group held in London in October 2018, the project group, including Australian delegates, identified a period of three weeks in 2019 to target for coordinated inspections.

8. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

10. The INTERPOL objectives for Operation BLIZZARD were to:

- a. Identify criminals and criminal organisations involved in the illegal killing and transboundary shipment of reptiles
- b. Strengthen communication and enforcement capacity to combat wildlife crime, more particularly reptile trade at both the national and international levels
- c. Coordinate cross-agency law enforcement efforts in order to detect and deter reptile trade s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
- d. Improve communication, cooperation, and coordination between illegal reptile exporting countries and Reptile destination countries

e s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

11. Australia participated in Operation BLIZZARD alongside at least 13 other INTERPOL member countries across Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania. The final number of participating countries is likely to exceed 20. Participating countries included New Zealand, the United States of America, Canada, South Africa and Israel, together with a number of European countries coordinated by EUROPOL. These included Spain, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic.

Australia's participation

12. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

The stated operational aim for Australia was to generate a united national effort to disrupt illegal reptile trafficking.

13. Eleven Commonwealth, state and territory wildlife enforcement agencies across Australia participated in the operation. All states and territories participated.

14. Agency participation in Operation BLIZZARD involved undertaking targeted or business-as-usual compliance and enforcement activities relating to the reptile trade during the operational phase of 22 April to 12 May 2019. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[Redacted] s 33(b), s 47E(a)

16. The following Australian agencies participated in Operation BLIZZARD:
- a. Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE)
 - b. Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR)
 - c. Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
 - d. South Australian Department of Environment and Water (DEW)
 - e. Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE)
 - f. New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)
 - g. Western Australia Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)
 - h. Queensland Department of Environment and Science (QLD DES)
 - i. Australian Capital Territory Parks and Conservation Service
 - j. Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory
 - k. Australian Border Force (ABF) – South Australia Regional Command.

Results Summary

17. Australian wildlife enforcement agencies reported a number of significant compliance and enforcement activities, outcomes and ongoing cases during the Operation BLIZZARD period.
18. Results are organised below according to each jurisdiction. A final summary of results is listed below:

For Official Use Only

- a. A total of **51** wildlife compliance inspections, resulting in the detection of **17** non-compliances
- b. **Two** infringement notices issued for a total of \$5000
- c. The seizure of **69** live and dead reptiles
- d. **Two** court outcomes
- e. Progression of **13** ongoing investigations
- f. Examination of **1116** items of passenger baggage on five flights

g s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

h. Execution of **seven** search warrants against high priority targets

i. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

Activity	Total	QLD	NSW	ACT	VIC	TAS	SA	WA	NT	DOEE	ABF	DAWR
Inspections - commercial premises	26			10	14		2					
Inspections - residential	24		1	2	7			13	1			
Inspections - zoo	s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)											
Inspections - total	51											
Non-compliances detected	17		1		2		1	13				
Reptiles seized	69	13				25		3			19	9
Search warrants	7	5				2						
Infringement notices	2							2				
Baggage examinations	1116										1116	
Arrests	0											
Court outcomes	2								1		1	
Ongoing cases/investigations	13	2		3		5		1	2			
Intelligence Operations	1									1		
Joint Operations	2				1						1	
Intelligence Products	5									5		
Education / outreach activity (premises visited)	16											16

Commonwealth

§47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

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- [Redacted list item]
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s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

25. **Other coordination activities.** DoEE undertook a number of coordination and capability development activities prior to and during the operational period. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

26. On 24 April 2019, nine live turtles were detected by the Australian Border Force in an international mail parcel imported from Hong Kong s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is current investigating this matter.

Queensland

27. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) QLD DES officers executed search warrants on five residences s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) with Queensland Police Service assistance, seizing 13 animals,

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

[Redacted]

New South Wales

29. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) NSW DPE investigators conducted an inspection at a private residence. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

[Redacted]

[Redacted] DPE officers detected minor non-compliance with licensing records, s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

Australian Capital Territory

31. ACT Parks and Conservation Service officers undertook 12 wildlife compliance inspections at private residences and commercial pet stores during the operational period. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) Nil instances of non-compliance were detected.

32. ACT wildlife officers were involved in three cases relating to the ongoing care of un-licenced live reptiles:

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

Victoria

33. Victoria DELWP wildlife officers undertook seven compliance inspections at private residences, and 14 inspections of commercial premises during the operational period, detecting two instances of non-compliance.

34. On 21 April 2019, a s47F Japanese national was arrested with 19 reptiles (17 shinglebacks and two blue tongue lizards) concealed in her checked-in luggage at Melbourne Airport. A bail hearing was held on 24 April 2019. The person of interest is suspected of involvement in an international wildlife trafficking syndicate. This outcome was the result of a joint operation between Victoria DELWP, DoEE and ABF, s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

35. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

Tasmania

36. Tasmanian wildlife rangers undertook ongoing criminal investigations into the following offences:

- a. Possess Restricted (special purpose) wildlife
 - b. Import Restricted (special purpose) and Take/Possess protected Wildlife
 - c. Sell protected wildlife
 - d. Possess Restricted (special purpose) wildlife
 - e. Possess controlled and protected wildlife.
37. On 6 May 2019, Tasmania DPIPWE rangers executed a search warrant s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
 Rangers detected five instances of illegal possession and seized 25 live and dead animals, including:
- a. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
38. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

South Australia

39. South Australia DEW wildlife officers undertook inspections of two commercial reptile dealers. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

Australian Border Force

40. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
41. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) a Home Affairs Border Watch coordinator engaged with various local government agencies and businesses in s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) South Australia. The main purpose of this visit was to promote the Border Watch program to external stakeholders, s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
42. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Western Australia

44. Western Australia DBCA wildlife officers undertook 13 compliance inspections at private residences and detected 13 instances of non-compliance.

- a. Inspections resulted in the seizure of one Western Bearded Dragon s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
The animal was successfully returned to the wild.

45. A \$2500 infringement was issued by DBCA wildlife officers s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
[Redacted]

46. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
[Redacted]

47. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
[Redacted]

Northern Territory

s47F

48. On 23 April 2019, s47F [Redacted] pled guilty to three wildlife charges in the Northern Territory (NT) Supreme Court:

- a. Attempt to export CITES specimens under the EPBC Act
- b. Attempt to export Protected Wildlife out of the NT contrary to the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act
- c. Possess Protected Wildlife without authorisation contrary to the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act

49. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)
[Redacted]

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

50. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

51. s47F [redacted] was previously convicted in 2017 in the NT to 368 separate wildlife and associated firearm charges under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act and received a 10 month suspended sentence.

Other cases

52. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

54. Northern Territory wildlife officers undertook a compliance inspection at the residence of s47E(d), s

Findings

55. Operational results of Operation BLIZZARD highlight the following aspects of the illegal reptile trade.

a. The comprehensive operational results outlined above occurred in a brief period of time, providing some insight into the current extent of reptile crime occurring within Australia.

b. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)

- c. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Recommendations

Future operations

56. Operation BLIZZARD participants outlined the following opportunities for improved planning and execution of future targeted operations:

- a. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) [Redacted]
- b. The duration of the operation could be extended to allow for additional operational planning.
- c. s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) [Redacted]

s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b) [Redacted]

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FOI 191002
Document 5

Operation BLIZZARD: INTERPOL Anti-reptile crime operation – Australian Results

What: INTERPOL Operation BLIZZARD

When: 22 April – 12 May 2019.

Why: A united national and international effort to disrupt illegal reptile trade.

How: Participating agencies undertook targeted compliance and enforcement activities during the operational period.

Who: Participating agencies:

- Dept. of the Environment and Energy
- Dept. of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Australian Border Force
- VIC Dept. of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- SA Dept. of Environment and Water
- TAS Dept. of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
- WA Dept. of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- QLD Dept. of Environment and Science
- Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

Australia participated alongside 21 other countries across Europe, North America, Asia and Oceania.



s47E(d), s37(1)(a)

s47E(d), s37(1)(a)

Statistics Summary

- 51 wildlife licence inspections
- 17 non-compliances detected
- 2 infringement notices issued (\$5000)
- 69 live and dead reptiles seized

- 1116 baggage inspections across five flights
- 7 search warrants executed
- 2 court outcomes
- 13 ongoing investigations
- 16 education and outreach visits

s37(1)(a), s47E(d)

s47E(d), s37(1)(a)

Operation BLIZZARD - Final Results - Australia

Activity	Total	QLD	NSW	ACT	VIC	TAS	SA	WA	NT	DOEE	ABF	DAWR	Notes
Inspections - commercial premises	26			10	14		2						
Inspections - residential	24		1	2	7			13	1				
Inspections - zoo	s47E(d), s37(1)(a), s37(2)(b)												
Inspections - total	51												
Non-compliances detected	17		1		2		1	13					
Reptiles seized	67	13				25		1			19	9	
Search warrants	7	5				2							
Infringement notices	2							2					\$5000 for two infringements
Baggage examinations	1116										1116		
Arrests	0												
Court outcomes	2								1		1		
Ongoing cases/investigations	13	2		3		5		1	2				
Intelligence Operations	1									1			
Joint Operations	2				1						1		
Intelligence Products	5									5			Products disseminated internationally
Education / outreach activity	16										16		16 premises visited