International Wildlife Trade and the Pacific Rim: Law and Reality

By Mr Bryan Christy

DATE & TIME: 20 JANUARY 2009, TUESDAY, 2.00PM
VENUE: LEE SHERIDAN CONFERENCE ROOM, EU TONG SEN BUILDING

ABOUT THE SPEAKER
Bryan Christy is a lawyer, author, and Fulbright Scholar. He was educated at Pennsylvania State University, Cornell University Graduate School, Tokyo University Law School, and the University of Michigan Law School. As a lawyer he specialized in international trade and investment and his writings on these topics have been used in law school curricula in the United States. He has worked as a lawyer on topics including U.S.-Japan supercomputer trade, Norwegian whaling, and the sale of light water nuclear reactors to North Korea. A former certified public accountant as well as a lawyer, he has worked in the Executive Office of the U.S. President (Office of the U.S. Trade Representative) and is today a freelance writer for National Geographic.

He is the author of a new book, The Lizard King: The True Crimes and Passions of the World's Greatest Reptile Smugglers, which tells the true story of America's biggest reptile smuggler, Mike Van Nostrand, and the federal agent who risks his career to stop him. Van Nostrand's company, Strictly Reptiles of Hollywood, Florida, is the world's largest reptile import-export company, selling hundreds of thousands of snakes, lizards, frogs, turtles, scorpions etc to zoos and pet stores each year.

ABSTRACT
Illegal trade in critically endangered and protected species threatens their viability around the world. In the United States and East Asia this trade has been treated largely as an environmental issue, and not a criminal issue. As a result, penalties are insufficient to deter wildlife traffickers, and national budgets to finance and manage anti-trafficking efforts are inadequate. What is needed is a new legal framework for addressing wildlife crime, one that places less emphasis on 'environment' and more emphasis on 'crime.'

This Seminar examines some major wildlife smuggling cases, drawing from the history of one of the world's most unusual laws, the American Lacey Act, and adding in modern concepts of organized crime and how to combat it. It suggests a new paradigm, in which the word "wildlife" is removed from the issue of wildlife trade, and the word "criminal" is added.

REGISTRATION
If you wish to attend this seminar, please email to lawmaksy@nus.edu.sg. There is no registration fee for this seminar but seats are limited. All are welcome. For enquiries, please contact Ms Shirley Mak at Tel: 6516 6246. Directions to the NUS Law School may be found at http://law.nus.edu.sg/faculty/Location.htm.