

Press Release



Taiwan Pingtung District Prosecutors Office

Date of Issue: June 24, 2025

Issued by: Chief Prosecutor

XU, YU-QUAN

Contact Number:: 08-7535211

This office has concluded its investigation and formally initiated public prosecution against a senior fishing vessel captain for the illegal capture of dolphins used in bait production, in violation of wildlife conservation laws.

Prosecutor Lai Yi-Hsiu of this office directed a joint task force comprising the Eighth Division of the Seventh Special Police Corps of the National Police Agency, the Pingtung Specialized Operation Brigade of the National Immigration Agency, the Ocean Conservation Administration of the Ocean Affairs Council, the Fifth Coastal Patrol Division of the Southern Branch of the Coast Guard Administration, and the Fisheries Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture (hereinafter referred to as "the task force") to investigate a major case involving the illegal hunting of dolphins aboard the distant-water fishing vessel "Lien ○ Fa." The investigation has recently concluded, identifying the vessel's senior captain, surnamed Wu, and seven Indonesian crew members as suspects in the unlawful capture and slaughter of protected wild dolphins, in violation of Article 41, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph 1 of the Wildlife Conservation Act. This office has formally initiated public prosecution against Captain Wu. As for the seven Indonesian crew members, deferred prosecution has been granted.

According to the investigation, the senior captain of the distant-water fishing vessel "Lien ○ Fa," surnamed Wu, employed seven Indonesian crew members. In June 2024, while operating in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean at latitude 39°56'N and longitude 154°55'E, the crew faced a shortage of bait. Despite knowing that dolphins are classified by the Ocean Affairs Council as rare and valuable protected wildlife—specifically listed as Category II protected species—Captain Wu instructed the crew to use fishing gear to hunt two dolphins. The dolphins were slaughtered and dismembered to be used as bait for catching sharks and tuna. The remaining dolphin carcasses and skins were discarded into the open sea.

This illegal activity was captured through aerial surveillance conducted by Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which recorded video evidence and compiled a written report. The findings were reported to Taiwan's Fisheries Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture, prompting this office to direct a joint task force to conduct a full investigation and gather evidence. With the facts clearly established, this office has lawfully initiated public prosecution.

The prosecutor noted that the defendant, Captain Wu, as a senior fishing vessel captain, should have been fully aware of marine conservation regulations. Nevertheless, driven by profit, he instructed Indonesian crew members to illegally slaughter dolphins. Once exposed by the media, the incident sparked public outrage and negatively impacted Taiwan's international reputation. The prosecution respectfully requests that the court impose a heavier sentence in accordance with the law, and depending on the defendant's expression of remorse-consider granting probation with appropriate conditions as a warning and deterrent.

This office emphasizes that protected wildlife resources are invaluable, and the preservation of marine ecosystems depends on the collective efforts of all citizens. Those who damage natural resources will be investigated and prosecuted under the principles of "swift and strict enforcement," demonstrating our unwavering commitment to safeguarding the ocean's ecological integrity.