GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730
Official Government Website:
https://gov.vg

Importing Black Fish into the Virgin Islands is Prohibited

Release Date: 31 October, 2025



IMPORTING BLACKFISH INTO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS IS PROHIBITED

The Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change notifies the Virgin Islands community that the importation of whale meat sometimes referred to as “blackfish” into the Territory is prohibited.

Trade in whale meat and other whale-derived products is controlled by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which is enforced locally by the Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Act, 2020.

Persons found guilty of the illegal importation of “blackfish” or any other CITES-controlled species, are liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to USD $10,000 or imprisonment for up to one year or both.

Environment Officer in the Ministry, Ms. Argel Horton, said “whale meat, sometimes referred to as ‘blackfish’ has been reported circulating in the Territory for sale”.

Ms. Horton noted that the Virgin Islands has a rich mix of cultures, some of which harvest marine mammals as part of their cultural heritage. She emphasised, that such practices are not permitted in the Virgin Islands.

She further said, “Whales and other marine mammals play a vital role in the health and balance of our ocean ecosystems and are fully protected under Regulation 29 of the Virgin Islands Fisheries Regulations, 2003 which states that, *“No person shall take, kill, damage or fish for any marine mammal or any species of marine mammal in the fishery waters.* Importation of marine mammals for sale would contradict our policy of full protection of these important animals and contravene our obligations under CITES. As a Territory, we abide by the international measures extended to us, ensuring continued protection for these species and our wider marine environment”.

For more information or to report suspected illegal importation of wildlife products please contact the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change at 468-2147.

About: The Virgin Islands remains committed to upholding the conservation measures established under Virgin Islands Fisheries Regulations and Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Act, 2020.

For Additional Information Contact:

Berta Mckelly Adams

Information Officer

Department of Information and Public Relations

Telephone: 468-2730

Email: bmckelly@gov.vg