

Oregon man cited after trying to board plane with bear paws

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EUGENE, Ore. (AP) - Authorities say they have issued a citation to an Oregon man who tried to board an airplane with bear paws in his luggage.

The Transportation Security Administration agents discovered the bear paws earlier this month in plastic grocery bags in the luggage of Hong-Shiou Chiou at the Eugene Airport, the Eugene Register-Guard (<http://is.gd/iBZ6ia>) newspaper reported. He was cited for unlawful possession of game parts.

Chiou, who lives in Florence, Oregon, and was on his way to Taiwan, was also carrying a bottle containing bear gall, herbs and whiskey.

Chiou told detectives he is a hunter. He said he was taking the bear paws overseas to be made into a necklace for his housekeeper. He said the whiskey drink was medicinal and helped him sleep.

According to a search warrant, Chiou also told detectives he did not know where he got the paws, or whether or not they were his, because he hunts himself but also receives bear parts from other people. He said he stores bear meat and other parts in a freezer at his barn, which he offered to show police.

Chiou could face additional charges after the search warrant of Chiou's barn and home led police to find bear heads and bear hides in the man's freezer. Bear hunting requires a hunting tag in Oregon, which Chiou could not produce.

A trooper told detectives he had been investigating Chiou for the possible unlawful sale of bear parts.

According to a study published in 2008 for the Animal Legal and Historical Center of Michigan State University, bear bile is a prized ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine and there is a substantial illegal international trade of bear parts.

The bile, excreted by the liver and stored in the gallbladder, is said to cure fever, gallstones, liver problems, heart disease and eye irritation, according to the report. It sells for \$410 per kilogram in China and a whole gallbladder sells for \$10,000 in South Korea, according to the report.

Bear paws are also considered a delicacy, the report states. According to the organization Big Wildlife, one serving of bear paw soup can fetch \$1,400 in China.