

African land snails found in luggage at Michigan airport

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Six [giant African land snails](#) have been found in the luggage of a traveler who flew to Michigan from the west African country of Ghana.

The [mollusks](#), which can carry diseases that affect humans, were discovered and seized March 9 during an agriculture inspection at Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Romulus, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Friday.

The man transporting the snails is a resident of Ghana and said they were to be eaten. He was released without further actions.

"It is not uncommon for travelers to bring [food items](#) from their native countries, which underscores the importance of the inspection process upon arrival to U.S. ports of entry," Customs and Border Protection spokesman Steven Bansbach said. "This allows CBP officers and agriculture specialists the opportunity to determine whether these goods are permissible or not, while mitigating the potential for [public health](#) or environmental issues."

Giant African land snails are [prohibited](#) in Michigan and the rest of the United States. They eat at least 500 different types of plants, along with plaster and stucco on buildings.

They grow as long as 8 inches (20 centimeters) and carry a parasite called the rat lungworm that can cause meningitis in humans. They also can produce up to 1,200 eggs a year.

"Our CBP officers and agriculture specialists work diligently to target, detect, and intercept potential threats before they have a chance to do harm to U.S. interests," Port Director Robert Larkin said.

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