

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin  
n°38. Events from the 1<sup>st</sup> October to the 31<sup>th</sup> December, 2022



Quarterly information and analysis report on endangered  
animals poaching and smuggling  
Published on October 9, 2023  
Original version in French

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

**Publication Director :** Charlotte Nithart

**Editors-in-Chief :** Jacky Bonnemaïns and Charlotte Nithart

**Writing :** Jacky Bonnemaïns, Gaëlle Guilissen,

Elodie Crépeau-Pons, Jean-Pierre Edin and Natalie Allen

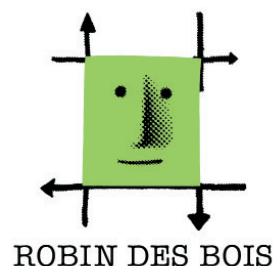
**Research, Assistant Editor :** Jean-Pierre Edin, Gaëlle Guilissen, Elodie Crépeau-Pons,  
Irene Torres Márquez, Elisabeth Lavarde, Christine Bossard and Lise Contant

**Cartography :** Dylan Blandel, Gaëlle Guilissen and Elodie Crépeau-Pons

**Cover :** Palette surgeonfish (*Paracanthurus hepatus*) © uwkwaj (CC BY-NC)

**English translation :** Brian Chasanoff, Cora Funke, Natalie Allen, Elisabeth Lavarde,  
Emerson Damiano and Gaëlle Guilissen

**Carried out by Robin des Bois (Robin Hood) with the support of  
the Franz Weber Foundation, the Brigitte Bardot Foundation and  
of the Ministry of Ecological Transition, France**



"On the Trail" gets sponsorship from the Séché Environnement group



Previous issues in English :

<http://www.robindesbois.org/en/a-la-trace-bulletin-dinformation-et-danalyses-sur-le-braconnage-et-la-contrebande/>

Previous issues in French :

<http://www.robindesbois.org/a-la-trace-bulletin-dinformation-et-danalyses-sur-le-braconnage-et-la-contrebande/>

## **Robin des Bois**

Non Governmental Organization for the Protection of Man and the Environment

Since 1985

14 rue de l'Atlas 75019 Paris, France

tel : 33 (1) 48.04.09.36

[www.robindesbois.org](http://www.robindesbois.org)

[contact@robindesbois.org](mailto:contact@robindesbois.org)

# NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

"On the Trail", the defaunation magazine, aims to get out of the drip of daily news and to draw up every three months an organized and analyzed survey of poaching, smuggling and worldwide market of animal species protected by national laws and international conventions. "On the Trail" also relates ongoing trials and the evolution of regulations and sanctions.

• A single event may refer to several species (e.g. simultaneous seizure of ivory, bear bile and snake skins); it is then analysed in the "Multi-species" chapter, with the exception of events that bring together the following species and which have their own chapter:

- Pangolins + elephants / rhinos
- Elephants + rhinos / hippos / felines
- Marine and freshwater multispecies (simultaneous seizure of several aquatic species)
- Multi-species reptiles (simultaneous seizure of several reptile species)

• Geographic regions at the continental scale are based on the UN classification.

• The US\$ conversion rates used are those applicable during the month of the event.

• The main sources are indicated at the end of each event. Each event reported and/or analysed is from a recension of one or more articles or press releases. This critical review eliminates inconsistencies in date, price and quantity if necessary, and if possible mistakes or looseness about the description of the species. The original source(s) are enriched by cross-checking and additional information from previous issues of "On the Trail", by Robin des Bois' investigations and archives, and by international bibliography and iconography. Details of the sources are available on request by email to [contact@robindesbois.org](mailto:contact@robindesbois.org) indicating the "On the Trail" issue number, chapter and reference of the event.

Robin des Bois thanks the Species Survival Network, the NGO Save the Elephants and the Eagle Network for their alerts which enrich the daily monitoring carried out by the "On the Trail" team.

• When a species is CITES-listed at the time of the event, the Appendix is specified after its scientific name.

## CITES APPENDICES

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (182 Member States).

**Appendix I** : species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and under import and export permits.

**Appendix II** : export permit required in order to avoid utilization incompatible with the species survival. Import permit if required by national law.

**Appendix III** : species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade. In the case of trade from a State that included the species in Appendix III, an export permit of that State is required.

## PICTOS



**Human death.** Guard, ranger, policeman, poacher... by firearm or other means.



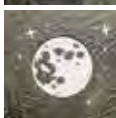
**Judgment and sanction.** Condemnation, acquittal, fine...



**Trapping.** Poaching by jaw trap, snare, net ...



**Poisoning.** By chemicals, pesticides and medicines: cyanide, carbofuran, diclofenac, M99 ...



**Full moon.** Moonlight poaching

## ACRONYMS

**EAGLE** : Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement

**ENV** : Education for Nature – Vietnam

**IBAMA** : Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis

**KWS** : Kenya Wildlife Service

**LAGA** : Last Great Ape Organization

**PROFEPA** : Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

**SAPS** : South African Police Service

**SPCA** : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

**SSB** : Sashastra Seema Bal

**SVW** : Save Vietnam Wildlife

**SWT** : Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

**USFWS** : United States Fish and Wildlife Service

**WCCB** : Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

# CONTENTS

3	NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS
5	ON THE FRONT LINES
7	PANGOLINS
15	PANGOLINS, ELEPHANTS / RHINOS
16	ELEPHANTS
37	MAMMOTHS
38	ELEPHANTS, RHINOS / HIPPOS / FELINES
40	RHINOCEROSSES
48	FELINES
68	WOLVES, PAINTED DOGS, FOXES, FENNEC FOXES AND HYAENAS
75	BEARS
83	ANTELOPES, WILD GOATS, GAZELLES, IBEXES, SAIGA ANTELOPES, PRONGHORNS ...
88	GIRAFFES AND OKAPIS
91	ZEBRAS AND DONKEYS
94	GAURS, NILGAIS AND BISONS
95	DEER, MUSK DEER, ELKS AND ROE DEER
103	VICUNAS AND GUANACOS
104	PRIMATES
119	ARMADILLOS AND PACAS
120	BATS
121	OTHER MAMMALS
124	BIRDS
170	VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES
173	TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES
180	SNAKES
186	MONITOR LIZARDS, GECKOS, IGUANAS, CHAMELEONS ...
191	CROCODILES, ALLIGATORS AND CAIMANS
194	AMPHIBIANS
195	INSECTS, ARACHNIDS AND ANNELIDS
199	MULTI-SPECIES
217	VARIOUS MARINE SPECIES
220	CORALS
221	CRUSTACEANS
221	CLAMS, CONCHES, GOOSENECK BARNACLES, DATE MUSSELS ...
224	ABALONES
228	SEA URCHINS AND SEA CUCUMBERS
230	SEAHORSES
231	MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH
248	MARINE TURTLES
251	MARINE AND FRESHWATER MAMMALS



## AFRICA

### CAMEROON

**October 17, 2022**

#### **Maroua, Far North Region, Cameroon**

Enyang Julius Ayuk, head of the Maroua III forestry and hunting control post, was attacked by illegal loggers and poachers armed with knives and shotguns. He died from severe injuries in the Maroua hospital.

For more on poaching and trafficking in Maroua, see "On the Trail" n°3 p.64, n°11 p.19 and n°17 p.112. Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, October 17, 2022; Cameroon Radio Television, October 20, 2022; Koaci, October 20, 2022.<sup>1</sup>



### ETHIOPIA

**October 19, 2022**

#### **Mago National Park, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, Ethiopia**

Isho, a guard at Mago National Park for 8 years, was killed on duty. The suspects have not been identified. Since the park's inception in 1979, 15 rangers have died.

Elephant poaching in Mago National Park, see "On the Trail" n°29 p.24.

Death of a ranger in Mago National Park, see "On the Trail" n°37 p.5.

Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, October 20, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



### KENYA

**November 3, 2022**

#### **Baringo County, Kenya**

The bullet-riddled body of 52-year-old schoolteacher Luka Kiplagat, half-eaten by scavengers, was discovered at the borders of Baringo, Laikipia, and Samburu counties, in an area inaccessible by any means other than walking. According to the initial investigation, Kiplagat was the victim of a settling of accounts between poachers. A certain Auta Tikalin Lokitulia is accused of the murder and the attempted concealment of the corpse. He was arrested in possession of an AK47 and an ivory tusk on November 3, and detained for 14 days in Kabarnet. A third man is on the run. The teacher had left his home and family on the morning of Saturday October 29 "to go shopping," promising to return on Sunday evening.

Nation (Africa), November 16, 2022.<sup>3</sup>



### MALAWI

**October 20, 2022**

#### **Majete Wildlife Reserve, Southern Region, Malawi**

Bendius Amasi, a guard at the Majete Wildlife Reserve, died one night while on patrol with a teammate. According to initial reports, he was beaten with an axe on Thursday night. This incident comes not long after a ranger named Given Gondwe was nearly lynched in April 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.5). African Parks rangers are particularly vulnerable to this poaching epidemic.

Malawi 24, October 22, 2022.<sup>4</sup>



© African Parks

### UGANDA

**December 5, 2022**

#### **Kidepo Valley National Park, Northern Region, Uganda**

Okawa Charles died after working for the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) for 14 years. He was on duty in the Kidepo Valley Conservation Area when unidentified poachers suddenly ambushed his patrol of 12 rangers. After they exchanged fire, a poacher was killed and one of Charles' teammates was wounded and taken to the Kitgum hospital. Charles leaves behind a widow and 7 children.

"On the Trail" has already mentioned the Kidepo Valley National Park on several occasions: in January 2016, a pastor's son was arrested for orchestrating a leopard poaching operation (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.51); in October 2018, a member of the Local Defense Unit was killed in an elephant attack provoked by poaching (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.119); in February 2021, 3 men were arrested after capturing a pangolin (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.11).

Uganda Wildlife Authority, December 6, 2022; Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF), December 7, 2022.<sup>5</sup>



© UCF

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**December 23, 2022**

**Virunga National Park, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with Uganda and Rwanda.**

The park confirmed that guards Mahomet Meddy Kengu, 29, and Benoit Hakizimana Ndamira, 31, have died. According to the preliminary investigation, they were killed by suspected members of the Mai-Mai militia while on patrol in Chondo, the center of the park. Africa Green Media, December 24, 2022; Virunga National Park, December 26, 2022.<sup>6</sup>



## TANZANIA

**December 2, 2022**

**Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania**

The High Court has sentenced 11 people to death by hanging found guilty of having, between July 1 and the evening of August 16, 2017, organised and participated directly or indirectly in the murder of Wayne Lotter (see "On the Trail" n°18 p.87 and n°27 p.4), co-founder of the NGO PAMS, which specialises in the fight against elephant poaching and reducing conflict between elephants and human activities. PAMS worked closely with the National and Transnational Serious Crimes Investigation Unit (NTSCIU) and contributed to its funding. The arrest in October 2015 of Yang Feng Clan, nicknamed the Ivory Queen, is to the credit of the NTSCIU (see "On the Trail" n°11 p.71). The 11 people sentenced to death are Rahma Almasi Mwinyi, born in 1978 or 1981, Nduimana Ogiste, who admitted being the gunman,



and Habonimana Augustin Nyandwi, both from Burundi, Godfrey Peter Salamba, Chambie Juma Ally, a taxi driver, Allan Elikana Mafue, presented as the coordinator and funder of the attack, a food trader and presumed manager of an exchange office, Ismail Issah Mohamed, one of the plot's organisers, Leonard Philipo Makoi, a pharmacist, Ayoub Seleman Kiholi and Abuu Omary Mkingie, motorbike couriers, and Michael Daud Kwavava, the taxi driver on the day of the murder who admitted, before recanting, that he had had Wayne Lotter and "a white woman" as customers since 2009. The woman in question is Krissie Clark, co-founder of PAMS and, like Wayne Lotter, originally from South Africa. She was spared on the evening of the crime near Julius Nyerere International Airport at the junction of Haile Selassie and Kaole avenues in the Masaki district. The taxi driver, who had been informed of the impending ambush - his vehicle was suddenly blocked and immobilised by the manoeuvring of a van - was supposed to drop off the 2 pro-elephant activists at the Baobab hotel and they were both due to have a meeting with the NTSCIU headquarters the following day. The death penalty is still enshrined in Tanzania's Penal Code, but it has not been applied for over 10 years. Daily News (Tanzania), December 3, 2022; The Citizen (Tanzania), December 3, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

## ZAMBIA

**End of October 2022**

**Bangweulu Wetlands, Northern Province, Zambia**

A ranger was violently killed in the 6,000-km<sup>2</sup> wetlands, whose title translates to "where the water meets the sky." The area is known for its rich biodiversity. A total of 9 cheetahs have been reintroduced there between 2020 and 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.65).

Department of National Parks & Wildlife, October 25 2022; UK in Zambia, October 25 2022; African Parks.<sup>8</sup>





# PANGOLINS



Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*). Photo Edward

All 8 species of pangolins are listed under CITES Appendix I: the 4 African species (the giant pangolin *Manis gigantea*, the Temminck's ground pangolin *M. temminckii*, the long-tailed -black-bellied- pangolin *M. tetradactyla* and the white-bellied pangolin *M. tricuspis*) and the 4 Asian species (the Indian pangolin *Manis crassicaudata*, the Philippine pangolin *M. culionensis*, the Sunda pangolin *M. javanica* and the Chinese pangolin *M. pentadactyla*).

**On the Trail n°38**  
**Value on the black market according**  
**to media or official sources**  
**The values were estimated at the time of the seizures**

## 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Nigeria	5,760	2 (2022)

## 1 pangolin alive

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	South Africa	3,530	26 (2022)

## WESTERN AFRICA

### NIGERIA

**August to October 2022**

**Bauchi, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, Borno, Plateau, Benue, Gombe and Nasarawa States, Nigeria**

165 kg of pangolin scales were seized during various control operations by customs in Zone D. Nigerian Tribune, October 10, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

#### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**October 21, 2022**

**Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria**

Seizure by the NCS (Nigeria Customs Service) of 376.4 kg of pangolin scales. Arrest of a 70-year-old man and his son. Two accomplices are wanted. "Campaigns and education against pangolin poaching must be intensified since they play a dominant role in the ecosystem thereby protecting the forest from the ravages of termites and other insects," says Mohammed Sani Yusuf, coordinator of the special customs unit. The Zone A NCS also has 100 cartons of red wine, 40 kg of Indian hemp, 58 bales of second-hand clothing, and dozens of jerry cans of petrol on its hit list. The scales are valued at 2.169 million US\$, or 5,760 US\$/kg.

Stephen Carmody, October 25, 2022; The Sun (Nigeria), December 7, 2022; Militainment News, December 9, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

### SIERRA LEONE

**End of November, 2022**

**Regent, Western Area, Sierra Leone**

Getting Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, a caretaker was not empty-handed. He had saved from petting a young white-bellied pangolin. After a brief health check, the pangolin was set free.

Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, November 23 and 24, 2022.<sup>3</sup>



© Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary

## CENTRAL AFRICA

### CAMEROON

**October 4, 2022**

**Limbe, South-West Region, Cameroon**



© Limbe Wildlife Center

LWC (Limbe Wildlife Centre) staff rescued a white-bellied pangolin. The juvenile male specimen weighed 615 grams. Dehydrated but in good condition, he was transferred to the Tikki Hywood Foundation in the Méfou National Park. Two weeks later he weighed one kilo.

Limbe Wildlife Centre, October 19, 2022; Tikki Hywood Foundation Cameroon, October 19, 2022 and February 1, 2023.<sup>4</sup>

**October 6, 2022**

**Yaoundé, Central Region, Cameroon**

Sentencing of Abasse Bah and Paul Eloi Wandji, found guilty of trafficking 386 kg of scales in April 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.10), to 13 months' imprisonment, jointly and severally to pay 290,650 CFA francs (440 US\$) in legal costs, 581,300 CFA francs (880 US\$) in fines and 10 million CFA francs (15,170 US\$) in damages. Camer.be, July 28 2022; LAGA, October 2022.<sup>5</sup>



**October 15, 2022**

**Yaoundé, Central Region, Cameroon**

Seizure of 66 kg of giant pangolin scales. Two arrests. They had traveled 75 km from Ntui to sell the scales in the capital.

EAGLE, October 15, 2022; LAGA, October 17 and October 2022.<sup>6</sup>



**October 29, 2022**

**Yaoundé, Central Region, Cameroon**

Arrest of 2 traffickers. Seizure of 180 kg of giant pangolin scales. The 2 men came from Lomié, 350 km from Yaoundé. The bags of scales were hidden in the trailer of a truck among bags of pepper and fruit. The intervention of the authorities was supported by the NGO LAGA. EAGLE, October 29, 2022; LAGA, October 2022.<sup>7</sup>



**December 15, 2022 and February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

**Nanga Eboko, Centre Region, Cameroon**

Seizure of 120 kg of scales by Haute Sanga Forestry and Wildlife officers. Christine Andinga Nanga and Pierre Lafleur Ovandana are sentenced to 10 days in prison and fined 830 US\$. LAGA, December 2022 and February 2023; Alwihda, February 19, 2023.<sup>8</sup>



**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

**Mid-November, 2022**

**Equateur Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

A pangolin is rescued from a trafficker and immediately released. Adams Cassinga, November 14, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**EASTERN AFRICA**

**KENYA**

**October 14, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

Four kg of pangolin scales are seized and one arrest made. Big Life Foundation, October 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**MALAWI**

**October 31, 2022**

**Salima, Central Region, Malawi**

Sentencing of Manison Anania Msokwa to 5 years in prison with hard labour. The army veteran had been arrested on December 15, 2020 in the parking lot of a Total gas station in Salima Boma, in flagrante delicto for attempting to sell a pangolin. The career soldier's defense had called for a suspended sentence. "His 31 years of service are beyond reproach. He has strictly observed the conditions of his provisional release on bail with no criminal record in the period that he



served, and he risks losing his pension rights which he needs to support his 7 children." In passing the sentence, the judge stressed that Msokwa, by virtue of his profession, had to set an example in all circumstances. "The convict's actions encourage poaching and the depletion of protected species in Malawi, which discourages tourists and consequently affects the economy." Nyasa Times, November 1, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**November 28, 2022**

**Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi**

This Monday morning, Alick Phiri was ambushed by would-be buyers of a live pangolin. Detectives arrested the villager from Nanthuko. Malawi 24, November 29, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**December 26, 2022**

**Blantyre, Southern Region, Malawi**

Arrest of Luka Chiputeni and Federico Vinti, aged 64 and 36 respectively. Seizure of a live pangolin captured in Mozambique. Malawi 24, December 29, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**December 30, 2022**

**Chiwembu, Southern Region, Malawi. Border with Mozambique.**

Seizure of a live pangolin in the hands of Elson Kachulu, resident of Chikoleka, a village in Malawi, and Zakalia Labias, resident of Potchera, a village in Mozambique, by the Mwanza police. Mwanza lies on the edge of the border with Mozambique. Nyasa Times, January 2, 2023.<sup>14</sup>

**December 30, 2022**

**Sande, Southern Region, Malawi**

Arrest of Cecilia Katunga and Christopher Wilson. They were trying to sell a live pangolin purchased in Mwanza, where Wilson is originated from. Malawi 24, December 31, 2022; The Maravi Post, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.<sup>15</sup>



**MOZAMBIQUE**

**Year 2022**

**Gorongosa National Park, Sofala Province, Mozambique**

In 2022, 21 pangolins were saved from traffickers and 9 were handed over. All were released after making a health recovery. Gorongosa National Park, February 18, 2023.<sup>16</sup>



## ZAMBIA

**October 2022**

### **Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia**

Six years' imprisonment with hard labour for Justin Kabasungu, Brian Kapoba, Lameck Nkwanga, and Nyambe Nalupe, who on January 25, 2021 were caught in possession of a live pangolin in Lusaka. Zambia is home to 2 species of African pangolin, Temminck's ground pangolins and white-bellied pangolins. They are on the brink of extinction.

Kalembe, October 12, 2022.<sup>17</sup>



**November 2022**

### **Monse, Southern Province, Zambia**

Hamaambo Brethwait Choona, age 42, and David Chisangano, age 60, are school teachers by profession, and for some years had been playing hooky while poaching pangolins. But as Kalembe writes, "everything that has a beginning has an end," and the 2 educators, along with a 28-year-old businessman, were caught in possession of a live pangolin in January 2021. They were sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment with hard labour.

Kalembe, December 9, 2022.<sup>18</sup>



## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**October 2022**

### **Tzaneen, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

A 12-kg pangolin was locked in a cage without food or water for over a week and found covered in wounds. Three individuals were arrested, and the pangolin is now under the care of the Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre.

Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre, October 12, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

**October 2022**

### **Gaborone, Southeast District, Botswana. Border with South Africa.**

A man in possession of a live pangolin was arrested. No further details have been released in order to protect the ongoing investigation.

Sunday Standard (Botswana), October 16, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

**October 8, 2022**

### **Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

In a joint operation by SAPS (South African Police Service), the Transfrontier Africa dog squad, Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre and Phalaborwa community police, a pangolin was seized and 8 individuals arrested.

Glen Thompson, October 8, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

**October 8, 2022**

### **Boksburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Patrick Halawa, age 61, and Viller Petros Mathe, age 67, supplemented their retirement pensions with wildlife trafficking. Together with Phillip Chauke, age 30, they were arrested on Saturday in the middle of an attempted transaction in possession of a Temminck's ground pangolin. The hostage was at the bottom of a bag in the retirees' Polo. The operation is credited to the Benoni Flying Squad, the Serious Organised Crime Investigation Unit, CNI Domestic Drug Trafficking, IUCN experts, the Pangolin Specialist Group and the Hawks, the elite SAPS troop. Mathe was released on bail for 3,000 rand (166 US\$), while the other 2 remain in custody pending information on their financial profiles.

Benoni City Times, October 11, 2022; SAPS, October 11, 2022; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, October 20, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

**October 19, 2022**

### **Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Seizure of a live pangolin in poor condition from 2 traffickers from the Northern Cape Province, ages 27 and 34. The operation is credited to the Hawks, the Benoni and Tshwane dog squads, the GDARD (Gauteng Department of Agricultural and Rural Development), SAPS, the Cullinan STES (Stock Theft and Endangered Species) Unit, and the Pangolin Specialist Group, whose coordinator, Alexis Kriel, estimates that only 10% of pangolins caught and placed on the black market are seized. The female pangolin was handed over to the care of the Johannesburg Veterinary Clinic. The defense of the 2 pangolin thieves is doing its utmost to obtain their release on bail, as South African law allows for first-time offenders. The Johannesburg vets' prognosis is guarded. The animal is emaciated and dehydrated. In Pretoria, South Africa's seat of government, pangolin traffickers defy authority.

Glen Thompson, October 19, 2022; Rekord, October 26, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**October 24, 2022**

### **Louis Trichardt, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Two Temminck's ground pangolins have been confiscated and their traffickers arrested. The male spent 7 days in confinement without food or water and is in feeble condition. The female was in critical

condition after reportedly spending 3 weeks without food or water, and was also injured during her capture. She was put down as a result.

Provet Animal Hospital, October 25, 2022; Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre, November 30, 2022.<sup>24</sup>



**November 28, 2022**

**Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

A "handsome male," weighing over 12 kg, was extracted by SAPS and the Black Mambas from a bag in which 2 suspects had been holding him for several days, putting him at risk of asphyxiation and being stunned. He was released into the care of Provet Animal Hospital and its head vet Debbie English. The Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre sends a huge thank you to all involved in saving "this amazing boy."

The news is good. At the end of December, Provet Animal Hospital announced that after 3 weeks in between life and death, the boy was relearning to live in the wild.

The Black Mambas anti-poaching brigade is made up exclusively of women. For more information, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.64.

Glen Thompson, November 28, 2022; Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre, December 4, 2022; Provet Animal Hospital, January 17, 2023.<sup>25</sup>

**December 10, 2022**

**Zeerust, North West Province, South Africa**

The live pangolin, who was in the car of 6 men aged 28, 30, 30, 31, 38 and 49, is estimated by SAPS to be worth 60,000 rand, or 3,530 US\$.

SAPS, December 14, 2022.<sup>26</sup>

**December 11, 2022**

**Alberton, Gauteng province, South Africa**

"The suspects were spotted by our officers as they prepared to sell the pangolin. The suspects were approached, and the law enforcement officials introduced themselves and asked for permission to search for what was in their bag," says SAPS spokesman Ramotshela. And at the bottom of the bag was a live pangolin. Two arrests.

Southern Courier, December 13, 2022.<sup>27</sup>

**Mid-December 2022**

**Centurion, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Five suspects. A pangolin in the boot of the car. Admitted to the veterinary clinic in Johannesburg, which benefits from reinforced protection, Temminck's pangolin turned out to be a female carrying a future baby pangolin. The veterinarians hope to release her as soon as possible in a suitable, secret habitat, so that gestation can take place in the best possible conditions.

African Pangolin Working Group, December 13, 2022; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, December 30, 2022.<sup>28</sup>



**NAMIBIA**

**October 11, 2022**

**Oshakati, Oshana Region, Namibia**

Michael Kambata was arrested in possession of a live pangolin.

Informanté, October 19, 2022; Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), October 20, 2022.<sup>29</sup>

**October 12, 2022**

**Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.**

Kosmas Matias was arrested in possession of a live pangolin.

Informanté, October 19, 2022; Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), October 20, 2022.<sup>30</sup>

**November 17, 2022**

**Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia**

Ndango Nicolaus, an Angolan national, was arrested in possession of a pangolin armour.

The Namibian, November 23, 2022; Namibian Sun, November 24, 2022.<sup>31</sup>

**November 27, 2022**

**Gobabis, Omaheke Region, Namibia.**

Petrus Kakoko, 34, and Hamuyera Jeremia, 37, were arrested in possession of a pangolin armour.

Informanté, November 29, 2022.<sup>32</sup>

**EASTERN ASIA**

**CHINA**

**October 2022**

**Gusu District, Suzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China**



- Five innkeepers sentenced to 7 months in prison for buying live pangolins, killing them with their own hands, cooking them, and selling them to customers.

- Hu and Lu (not their real names) had bought 2 dead pangolins. They had heard that eating pangolin cured cancer. Three months in prison.

Gusu Evening Newspaper, November 3, 2022.<sup>33</sup>

**SOUTHEASTERN ASIA**

**INDONESIA**

**November 2, 2022**

**Sibolga, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**



R.R. and M.M. have fallen into a trap. They delivered 15 kg of scales to plainclothes policemen in the lounge of a resort hotel. Sellers and buyers had been in contact for several days via Facebook.

Antara News, November 5, 2022; Directorate General of Nature Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, November 7, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**  
**West Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia**

facebook

The suspect claims to have spotted a dead pangolin by the side of a flooded road. He picked him up, took him home and stripped him of his scales before trying to sell them via Facebook. The scales are now on the premises of the local branch of the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam), and the small-scale trafficker has pledged not to touch the pangolins again.

Klikkalteng.id, November 8, 2022; Tribun Kalteng, November 8, 2022.<sup>35</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**  
**Jalan Jamin Ginting, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**

Seizure of 16 kg of scales. Arrest of 2 men on motorcycles. They are in breach of the 1990 Law on the Conservation of Natural Resources and their Ecosystems and the 2018 Law on Protected Plant and Animal Species, which specifically mentions Sunda pangolins in its 84<sup>th</sup> Schedule. D.P. and J.S. come from the provinces of Simalungun and Bandung, which are 130 and 2,000 km from Jalan Jamin Ginting. They were reported by someone close to them.

Kumparan, November 9, 2022; MedanBisnisDaily, November 10, 2022.<sup>36</sup>

**December 2022**  
**Dente Makmur, Tulang Bawang Regency, and Bandar Lampung, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**

- Seizure of a dead pangolin, 2 live pangolins and a motorcycle. Arrest of R.I., aged 23.
- Seizure of 33 kg of scales. Arrest of K.F., 37, R.I.'s accomplice.

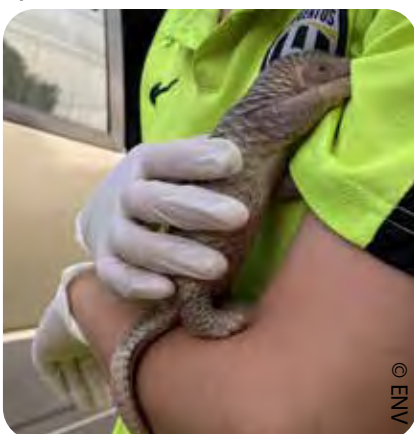
SINDOnews, December 22, 2022.<sup>37</sup>

**VIET NAM**

**Mid-October, 2022**  
**Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam**

A young pangolin listed for sale on the side of the road was purchased by a good samaritan. He was taken to Cuc Phuong National Park, thanks to ENV (Education for Nature – Viet-nam).

ENV, October 18, 2022.<sup>38</sup>



© ENV

**November 22, 2022**  
**Cao Bang province, Viet Nam. Border with China.**  
 In the pineapple bags were 200 kg of giant pangolin scales. Suong, age 25, is in trouble.  
 Nhân Dân, November 22, 2022.<sup>39</sup>

**December 10, 2022**  
**Hoa Thanh, Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam**  
 Seizure of a live Sunda pangolin in the luggage compartment of a bus bound for Dong Hoi from Hoa Thanh. Arrest of Tran Ngoc Son. He is placed under house arrest pending trial.  
 Quang Binh Provincial Police, January 12, 2023.<sup>40</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**  
**December 12, 2022**  
**Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam**

facebook

Tuan, the husband, was about to deliver a Styrofoam box at the request of Thao, the wife, without knowing, he said, what was inside. The Economic Crime and Drug Trafficking Squad discovered a live pangolin inside.  
 An Ninh Thủ Đô, January 3, 2023.<sup>41</sup>

**December 13, 2022**  
**Lao Bao, Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.**



© Thanh lộc

Acting on a tip-off, criminal police arrested a 55-year-old woman in a motel room. She was holding 4 live pangolins packed in bags.  
 Thanh Niên, December 13, 2022.<sup>42</sup>

**Mid-December 2022**  
**Cao Bang Province and Hai Duong, Hai Duong Province, Viet Nam. Border with China.**

Seizure of 22 Sunda pangolins in the trunk of a vehicle. The driver is Chinese. The festive season is approaching. Demand is high. Sales prices are on the rise.

Báo Điện tử VOV, December 22, 2022.<sup>43</sup>



## INDIA

**December 17, 2022**

**Tien Thuan, Tay Ninh Province, Viet Nam. Border with Cambodia.**

Sang was carrying a white plastic bag. He looked suspicious to the police. In the bag was a live pangolin that had been promised to a restaurant kitchen.

Báo Bao ve pháp luật, December 19, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

**December 21, 2022**

**Muong Xen, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.**

Xeo Van Khoi and La Kham Hung claim to have bought a live pangolin (7.5 kg) from a stranger, not for resale but to eat. The alibi of personal consumption allows them to escape the trafficking charge.

Bao Nghe An, December 22, 2022.<sup>45</sup>

**December 22-26, 2022**

**Nghe An Province, Viet Nam**

Successive seizures of 6 Sunda pangolins. Four of them are in serious condition. They were rushed to the Save Vietnam's Wildlife veterinary clinic in Cuc Phuong National Park (Ninh Binh province).

SVW, December 27, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**December 26, 2022**

**Dien Yen, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam**

Seizure in Nguyen Huu Phong's car of 6 pangolins, one dead and 5 alive, and 2.1 kg of scales. Phong had already been convicted of wildlife trafficking. He is believed to have links with accomplices in Laos. The end-of-year festivities are imminent. Demand is very high.

Nghe An TV, December 29, 2022.<sup>47</sup>

**December 29-30, 2022**

**Nghi Son, Thanh Hoa Province, and Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam**

At 7:30 a.m., a vehicle was intercepted. 7 pangolins were found and seized. It was very cold on the premises, and the local authorities had no means of treating the injuries caused by the capture and transport conditions. They were rushed to SVW's care and transported to the Cuc Phuong clinic, a hundred kilometers away. Among them are 2 Chinese pangolins and one Sunda pangolin. Tran Van Truong, the rescue coordinator, says that in 2 weeks, SVW has received and rescued 19 pangolins, lucky to be alive, thanks to the seizures. They have escaped the holiday meals.

Dân tri, December 29, 2022; SVW, December 30, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

**October 11, 2022**

**Macherla, Palnadu District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India**

The woman had a pangolin in her home. He was brought before the examining magistrate. He was then entrusted to a shelter. He was captured at Nalgonda in Telangana, 85 km from Macherla. He is injured. The woman, who was reported by someone close to her, has been taken into custody.

Deccan Chronicle, October 13, 2022.<sup>49</sup>

**October 12, 2022**

**Phulbani, Kandhamal District, State of Odisha, India**

They ranged in age from 26 to 70. Four of them shared 1.56 kg of scales. Phulbani foresters intervene.

Argus News, October 12, 2022; Pragativadi, October 12, 2022.<sup>50</sup>



**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**November 11 and 12, 2022**

**Khanduli, Jaintia Hills District, State of Meghalaya, India**

Interception at 2 p.m. of 3 men on a road on the border between Assam and Meghalaya. They were coming from West Karbi Anglong and had 1.20 kg of scales and a live female pangolin in their car.

The following day, the captive gave birth to a beautiful baby, who seems to be doing well. The green light from the courts for the release of 2 large Indian pangolins is eagerly awaited by local NGOs and foresters. They will be entrusted to the care of the Narpuh Wildlife Sanctuary (59.9 km<sup>2</sup>), a primeval forest home to leopards, hoolock gibbons, lorises, hornbills, monitor lizards, pythons, cobras, and Asian leaf turtles.

Syllad-The Rising Meghalaya, November 16, 2022.<sup>51</sup>

### **Night of November 22 - 23, 2022**

#### **Tirunelveli, Tirunelveli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

The bargain turned sour. P. Chinnaraja and B. Govindaraj, ages 35 and 22, bought 8 kg of scales for 50,000 rupees (606 US\$ or 75 US\$/kg) in Kerala and were about to sell them for 40,000 rupees/kg in Tamil Nadu. Their 2 vehicles and the mirage of 320,000 rupees (3,880 US\$) were seized.

DT Next, November 23, 2022.<sup>52</sup>

### **November 23, 2022**

#### **Brahmandihi, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India**

Kolkata-Chennai. That morning, Jayakrushna Tarai was driving along NH 16 when the STF (Special Task Force) ordered him to stop. Seizure of a live Indian pangolin. The local press recalls that the Indian pangolin is also known as the thick-tailed pangolin, the scaly anteater, or "bajrakapta" in the Odisha language. "It is a solitary, shy, slow-moving, and nocturnal mammal."

Kalinga TV, November 23, 2022; Odisha Bytes, November 23, 2022.<sup>53</sup>

### **November 24, 2022**

#### **Robertsganj, Sonbhadra District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Ajay Bharti and Jiut Kumar Bharti were arrested near the Lazeez Hotel. They were carrying the skin and scales of a pangolin and 4 wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) tusks. Their suppliers were said to be wood collectors in the Sonbhadra forests.

Jsnewstimes, November 24, 2022; WCCB, November 24, 2022.<sup>54</sup>

### **November 25, 2022**

#### **Bhajpuri, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India**

Seizure of 3.17 kg of scales and 3 motorcycles. Arrest of 6 Bazpur residents.

Vaibhav Singh, IFS, November 25, 2022; The Times of India, November 27, 2022.<sup>55</sup>

### **November 26, 2022**

#### **Chitradurga District, State of Karnataka, India**

Ramappa, age 60 and very close to the pangolins, used his nose and keen sense of observation to locate their dens and, with the help of 3 accomplices, flushed them out without a dog. 1.5 kg of scales seized. This is the third official case of pangolin poaching in the district in a month.

WCCB, November 28, 2022; The Times of India, December 1, 2022.<sup>56</sup>

### **December 2, 2022**

#### **Khordha, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India**

Seizure by the STF (Special Task Force) and forest officials of a live Indian pangolin in the hands of 3 men.

Indian News Diary, December 2, 2022.<sup>57</sup>

### **December 7, 2022**

#### **South Garo Hills District, State of Meghalaya, India**

Contrary to the photo, which makes you think the pangolin is dead or almost dead, the police say he has been rescued. Three arrests.

Highland Post, December 8, 2022.<sup>58</sup>

### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

#### **December 11, 2022**

#### **Koyalibeda, Kanker District, State of Chhattisgarh, India**

Five arrests. Rajendra Rajput, Devanand Kalipad, Dhanveer, Sahdu Ram and his wife Dasri were on their way to sell the pangolin. They wanted 10,000 rupees (122 US\$). They had caught him 5 days before and had been force-feeding him egg mush ever since. The Print, December 11, 2022.<sup>59</sup>

### **December 18, 2022**

#### **Junagadh District, State of Gujarat, India**



The Indian pangolin had been captured in the net protecting a farmer's plot on the edge of the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary from intruders. With the help of 10 accomplices living in 4 neighbouring districts, he tried to negotiate the best price for him. One day after the seizure, the pangolin died. He had been mistreated and had not eaten or drunk for several days.

The Indian Express, December 31 2022.<sup>60</sup>

### **December 19, 2022**

#### **Thukkuguda, Rangareddy District, State of Telangana, India**

Seizure of a live pangolin. He had been captured in the Allipur forest, Medak district. Five arrests.

The Hindu, December 19, 2022.<sup>61</sup>

## **PAKISTAN**

### **December 12-13, 2022**

#### **Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan**



Thanks to a confidential tip-off, a middle-of-the-night raid in an undisclosed location led to the rescue of 2 Indian pangolins, a female and her offspring. They were released in the Margallah Hills National Park.

The operation can be credited to the IWMB (Islamabad Wildlife Management Board) run by Abbas Sahab and Zaheer Khan.

Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, Dec.12 and 13,2022.<sup>62</sup>



# PANGOLINS, ELEPHANTS / RHINOS

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**November 18, 2022**

**Beitbridge Port of Entry, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Border with Zimbabwe.**

Two men from Zimbabwe cross the Limpopo River into South Africa at Beitbridge. On leaving their boat, they were picked up by SAPS, the Stock Theft and Endangered Species Unit and the South African National Defence Force. Seizure of a live pangolin and an elephant tusk.

Glen Thompson, November 18, 2022; SAPS, November 20, 2022; Polokwane Review, November 21, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### MALAWI

**December 9, 2022**

**Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi**

High Court upholds Yun Hua Lin's 14-year prison sentence. He had been arrested in August 2019 with 103 sections of horn equivalent to the poaching of 5 rhinos. He is considered to be the mastermind of a traffic in pangolin scales, carved ivories, hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) in action since the year 2017. The misdeeds of the Lin/Zhang gang, Lin's wife, and the convictions of Chinese and Malawian members are described in "On the Trail" n°25 p.104, n°26 p.101, n°29 p.20 and n°34 p.50.

Nyasa Times, December 10, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



## AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**Seattle, State of Washington, United States of America**



Herdade Lokua and his cousin Jospin Mujangi, as reported in "On the Trail" n°34 p.18, had shipped ivory by air to Seattle, USA, in 2020, painted black and mixed with ebony, and 2.5 kg of white rhino horn in May 2021. Confident in their contacts (police officers working undercover), they were arrested 4 months later in Washington State. They had come to set up a much larger ivory smuggling operation by sea, completed with pangolin scales. The scenario called for the goods to be smuggled in 20-foot containers full of corn or wood, with one or more transfers to an account in China. Lokua and Mujangi were big fish. As proof, thanks to information that HSI (Homeland Security Investigations) agents had gathered by "conspiring" with them, almost a tonne of ivory was seized in Kinshasa the day after their arrest. Big fish indeed, but sentenced like small fry to 20 months' imprisonment for Lokua and 14 for Mujangi.

U.S. Department of Justice - Office of Public Affairs, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, December 2022.<sup>3</sup>

# ELEPHANTS



African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). Photo Gigi Laidler

The African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) is listed in CITES Appendix I, the African savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) is listed in Appendix I, except populations from South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe which are in Appendix II. The Asian elephant, *Elephas maximus*, is listed in Appendix I.

**On the Trail n°38**  
**Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources**  
**The values were estimated at the time of the seizures**

**1kg of raw ivory**

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Kenya	970	19 (2017)
		960	22 (2020)
		165	29 (2022)
		973	40 (2016)
	Zimbabwe	180	60 (2022)
		170	61 (2022)

## NORTHERN AFRICA

### EGYPT

**Novembre 2022**

**November 2022**

**Cairo International Airport, Governorate of Cairo, Egypt**

Seizure of 3 ivory statuettes from a passenger disembarking a Royal Jordanian flight from Amman, and bound for Lebanon.

Masrawy, November 19, 2022; Arab News, November 20, 2022.<sup>1</sup>



## WESTERN AFRICA

### COTE D'IVOIRE

**October 28 and 31, 2022**

**Anyama and Abidjan, Autonomous District of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**

Arrest of 5 criminals and seizure of 3 raw ivory tusks in Anyama and Abobo, 2 districts of greater Abidjan. The tusks were allegedly stolen from a Lebanese businessman. The gang is said to have links with Burkina Faso. The operation is credited to the Unit to Fight Transnational Organised Crime (UCT) and the Directorate of Forest and Water Police, with the support of the NGO Eagle.

EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire, October 22 and October 2022; EAGLE, October 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**November 11 and 22, 2022**

**Korhogo, Savanes District, Côte d'Ivoire**

Three traffickers, including a local radio host and a jeweller, were transporting 26 kg of ivory tusks cut into 4 sections, which had been fraudulently imported from Mali. Stamps proved that the raw ivory had been seized in Mali and then stolen or diverted by corrupt officials.

The 3 men received a 12-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 300,000 CFA francs (440 US\$). Between 250 and 300 elephants remain in Mali. Elephant poaching and ivory seizures in and from Mali, see "On the Trail" n°1 p.32, n°2 p.66, n°5 p.83 and p.87, n°8 p.71, n°9 p.73, n°10 p.54, n°11 p.78, n°27 p.98 and n°33 p.23.

EAGLE Ivory Coast, November 2022.<sup>3</sup>



## TOGO

**November 12, 2022 and February 2023**

**Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo. Border with Ghana.**

The 3 men had 2 raw ivory tusks in their suitcase. They are from Benin and so are the tusks. They bear stamps proving that they were under surveillance in a government vault. The OCRTIDB (Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering) and the MERF (Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources) worked together and their alliance was crowned with success.



The 3 men were facing one to 5 years in prison but were sentenced to just 6 months, and NGOs consider this a failure of justice.

EAGLE, November 17, 2022; 24 Heures au Bénin, November 22, 2022; Les Pharaons, November 22, 2022; EAGLE Togo, November 2022 and February 2023.<sup>4</sup>



## CENTRAL AFRICA

### ANGOLA

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Lubango, Huíla Province, Angola**

The 2 men wanted to sell 4 tusks weighing 57 kg for 1.4 million kwanzas (57 US\$/kg). Is the price of ivory plummeting, or is the value intentionally underestimated? More than the increase in sanctions, the collapse in value is deterring traffickers. A kilo of ivory would sell for considerably less than a kilo of pangolin scales. Novo Jornal, October 11, 2022; TPA, October 12, 2022; Jornal de Angola, October 13, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**October 2022**

**Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport, Luanda Province, Angola**

Seizure of 84 kg of carved ivory in the luggage of 2 Vietnamese travelers.

Jornal de Angola, October 18, 2022; Novo Jornal, October 18, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**Début novembre 2022**  
**Beginning of November 2022**  
**Matala, Huíla Province, Angola**

A career soldier and 5 accomplices are locked up. They were in possession of a Russian-made semi-automatic weapon and 80 kg of ivory to be sold for 2 million kwanzas (53 US\$/kg), according to the SIC (Criminal Investigation Service).



In 2014, Esmond Martin and Lucy Vigne reported raw ivory in Luanda for sale at between 150 US\$ and 250 US\$/kg. "On the Trail" n°20 p.95 reported in February 2018 a seizure of raw ivory estimated to be worth 3,500 US\$/kg also in Luanda. Esmond Martin and Lucy Vigne (2014). "Luanda-the largest illegal ivory market in southern Africa". Pachyderm, n°55, p.30-37; Novo Jornal, November 7, 2022; Angola National Police, November 11, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**December 2, 2022**  
**Belas, Luanda Province, Angola**

Four arrests, 2 Angolans of Congolese origin sold raw and carved ivory from the Democratic Republic of Congo to 2 Vietnamese for 8 million kwanzas (15,560 US\$). The Vietnamese allegedly intended to sell the ivory in Dubai. This operation follows the arrest the previous day at Quatro de Fevereiro airport of a Vietnamese subject attempting to fly away with carved ivory (see p. 38 of this issue). Jornal de Angola, December 3, 2022; Na Mira do Crime, December 3, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## **GABON**

**October 17, 2022**  
**Koulamoutou, Ogooué-Lolo Province, Gabon**

Mr. Nguembe Diyembou, parliamentary attaché to the National Assembly, handed over to the police 6 raw tusks weighing a total of 45.7 kg. He claims to have found them while restoring the house of his elder brother, who died 6 years ago. Conservation Justice, October 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**November 11, 2022**  
**Inguendja, Ogooué-Maritime, Gabon**

Fabrice Verlance Mavoungou Mbouity, in possession of 2 tusks weighing a total of 11 kg, was arrested by the province's Water and Forests Department and the General Research Department. He was transferred to Libreville. The NGO Conservation Justice is supporting the government services. Conservation Justice, November 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**December 2, 2022**  
**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

Dame Hortense Motombi Massande is sentenced to 36 months in prison, 18 of which will be suspended, and a fine of 4.2 million CFA francs (6,640 US\$) for attempting to sell 4 elephant tusks weighing a total of 8.4 kg in a hotel room in Fougamou, Ngounié Province, on November 2.

Conservation Justice, November 5, and December 2, 2022.<sup>11</sup>



**December 2022**  
**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

A Gabonese man named Jean Baptiste Mezeme Mba and a Filipino man named Alexander Abao Amitrosso were arrested in September 2021. Both were employees at the Chinese company Mont Pelé Bois and were found with 4 tusks in their company vehicle. Mba was recently acquitted while Amitrosso was sentenced to 12 months in prison (6 months suspended) and fined 2,662,500 CFA francs (4,200 US\$). Conservation Justice, December 2022.<sup>12</sup>



**December 2022**  
**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

Théophile Bessan, Juldas Mondjo and Jean-Pierre Nziengui were sentenced to 3 years in prison, including one suspended, fined 6.075 million CFA francs (9,600 US\$), of which half is suspended, and ordered to pay jointly 5 million CFA francs (7,900 US\$) in damages. They were arrested in September 2022 when Bessan was trying to sell 24.03 kg of tusks. Mondjo and Nziengui were his accomplices. Conservation Justice, December 2022.<sup>13</sup>





## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**October 1 and 4, 2022**

**Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with Rwanda and Burundi.**

Dismantling in 2 phases of a network by the national police in collaboration with "an NGO partner of ICCN":

- 12 kg of ivory seized, 2 traffickers arrested.
- 30 kg of ivory seized, 5 traffickers arrested, including a woman.

Already in April 2022, 4 traffickers had been arrested with 100 kg of ivory in Bukavu (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.20).

Desknature, October 5, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**October 24, 2022**

**Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The ICCN (Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature), police and the NGO Conserv Congo jointly confiscated 50 kg of raw ivory. Four suspects were arrested, including one woman.

ICCN, October 24, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**November 25, 2022**

**Matadi, Central Kongo Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with Angola.**



Seizure of 75.5 kg of raw ivory by customs with the assistance of the Matadi prosecutor and ICCN (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature).

Association Internationale des Douaniers Francophones, December 5, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**December 9 and 10, 2022**

**Uvira, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with Burundi.**

484 kg of raw ivory seized by ICCN and the police from the boot of a pick-up truck in a hotel car park. In accordance with the February 2014 law on nature conservation, "in addition to the criminal penalties provided for in Articles 71 to 81 of this law and without prejudice to the legislation on firearms, specimens and products as well as objects that have been used to commit offences against this law shall be confiscated and entrusted to the public body responsible for conservation". May this ivory mine remain in good hands. A further 200 kilos of ivory were reportedly seized during a search of the home of one of the suspects. Two men were brought before the prosecutor in Bukavu. The ivory is in the custody of the PNKB (Kahuzi-Biega National Park).

Parc National de Kahuzi-Biega, December 15, 2022; L'interview.cd, December 18, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

## REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**December 6, 2022**

**Pointe-Noire, Department of Pointe-Noire, Republic of the Congo**



Six men were arrested in January-February 2021 with 4 tusks cut into 9 sections, carved ivories (20 baguettes, 15 pendants, 6 bracelets) and ammunition (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.24). They were each fined 500,000 CFA francs (790 US\$) and ordered to pay 3 million CFA francs (4,740 US\$) in damages to the Ministry of Water and Forests. Only 2 received prison sentences: Detri Presley Ndembe, a gendarme, was sentenced to 3 years, and Adam Brice Loemba to a year and a half. The State has appealed the suspended prison sentences handed down to Jimmy Moriath Ndembi Tchiamia, Cheryl Tsoho, Prudence Nguengue Manguima, a soldier, and Brice Mavoungou. EAGLE, December 2022; Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), December 2022.<sup>18</sup>

## EASTERN AFRICA

### KENYA

**October 2022**

**Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

From ivory trafficking to attempted murder. On August 25, 2017, Otieno was charged with possession of 34 kg of raw ivory worth 3.4 million shillings (32,965 US\$ or 970 US\$/kg) at the time. He is now charged with attempting to steal a policewoman's gun and shooting her during the conflict. Joyce Chepkirui was taken to hospital where she regained consciousness. The Star (Kenya), October 18, 2022.<sup>19</sup>



**October 2 and 14, 2022**

**Rukinga Ranch, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya**

- The veteran is a female, an old lady of unknown age and infinite tusks. She had an arrow stuck in her head. The prognosis is favourable, but further immobilization after human aggression would not be practicable. It took her a long time to wake up and stand up, and it was necessary to support her for several minutes before she set off.

- The big male was limping. He was in a bad mood near a leafless tree, away from his family. Anaesthesia was administered from the rescuers' Land Rover. He had a deep penetrating wound, most likely caused by a bullet, on the carpal joint. The bullet was not found. The wound was thoroughly washed, disinfected, sprayed with antibiotics and filled with clay. The prognosis is guarded.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2022; SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2022.<sup>20</sup>

**October 4, 2022**

**Greater Mara, Narok County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania.**

26 kg of raw ivory in the trunk of a car. Two arrests. Mara Elephant Project, October 15, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

**October 5, 2022**

**Kitale, Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. Border with Uganda.**

Martin Mukesa Juma was sentenced to a fine of one million shillings (8,330 US\$) or, in the event of non-payment, to one year in prison. He was arrested by the KWS on April 10, 2020 in Trans-Nzoia county with 4 kg of raw ivory in his car. He was released on bail for 200,000 shillings and a surety bond for the same amount. Juma pleaded not guilty. He said he did not know the origin of the ivory and that the tusks, weighing a total of 4 kg and worth an estimated 400,000 shillings (960 US\$/kg), had been put in his vehicle without his knowledge. Ivory seizure in Kitale, see "On the Trail" n°30 p.24 and n°31 p.21.

Nation (Africa), October 6, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

**October 8, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

An elephant was reportedly wounded by a spear. Rangers at the Big Life Foundation tried following his blood trail but the elephant had already rejoined his herd.

Big Life Foundation, October 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**October 12 and 26, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

- 2.8 kg of raw ivory confiscated. One suspect arrested, 2 accomplices on the run.

- 8 tusks weighing over 50 kg confiscated. Two suspects arrested.

Big Life Foundation, October 2022.<sup>24</sup>



**October 13, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 22, 2022**

**Olarro Conservancy, Mara Triangle, Ol Kinyei Conservancy, Lemek Conservancy and Mara North Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya**

- The elephant collapsed 8 minutes after the anaesthetic was injected, but he was on the wrong side and had to be turned over with the help of the team and the Land Rover's winch. A job for slave labourers and nurses. The wound on his left flank was purulent and deep. A spear had passed through it. The prognosis was favourable.

- The elephant left in peace with the 2 spear wounds healed and protected with clay. Favourable prognosis.

- The nursing team had hard work with a 10 cm-deep spear wound and 5 arrow wounds, plus a sixth wound that could be the result of a fight between elephants. Favourable prognosis.

- The heads of the arrows were embedded in the left flank in one case, and in the auricle in the other. In the region of the spinal cord, a spear thrown from a tree was deeply embedded, and after treatment and recovery, the elephant stood up on his own with no mobility problems. Favourable prognosis.



© SWT/KWS Sky Vet program

- He too had received the double punishment of an arrow and a spear. Antibiotic ointments and green clay were applied. The entire operation lasted 20 minutes. Favourable prognosis.

- First the wounds on the right flank and trunk were treated, then the patient was turned over and the left flank was attended to. Almost all wounds were due to conflicts with human activities. Favourable prognosis.

.../...

- Two arrows and a spear on the right flank. Men with their invasive activities struck again with ancestral weapons. After the antidote, the elephant did not wake up. After 4 minutes, death was pronounced. Mara Elephant Project, October 2022; SWT/KWS Sky Vet program, January 2023.<sup>25</sup>

#### **October 21, 2022**

##### **Kimanjo, Laikipia County, Kenya**

It took 17 mg of etorphine and 6 minutes to put him to sleep. A bullet was extracted from his left hind leg. Hydrogen peroxide, iodine, and green clay were applied to the wound. It took 200 mg of naltrexone and 5 minutes to wake him up. SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2022.<sup>26</sup>

#### **October 22, 2022**

##### **Vinyunduni, Kwale County, Kenya**

The herd was looking for food and water and heading for a dam reservoir. A straggler was reported by lookouts. He was limping. During surgery under anaesthetic, the wound on the left front leg was washed and treated, and a cracked joint was suspected. The prognosis is guarded. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2022.<sup>27</sup>

#### **October 26, 2022**

##### **Greater Mara, Narok County, Kenya**

A man was arrested in possession of 2 tusks, cut into 4 sections (10.5 kg in total). The man dug them up to sell them. Mara Elephant Project, October and November 5, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

#### **November 1, 2022**

##### **Maili Tisa, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya**

Sammy Kipng'etich, Bonface Kwemoi, and Julius Kipmosong used to transport ivory from elephants poached in Mount Elgon National Park to Kitale, Eldoret and other towns. They were arrested in possession of 2 tusks on the road between Kitale and Eldoret. The 42 kg of ivory are valued at one million shillings (8,600 US\$ or 165 US\$/kg). The 3 men were detained for 14 days. Accomplices are being sought and the KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service) has launched a major anti-poaching operation in the park where, in addition to elephants, many buffaloes and antelopes are killed for their meat. Nation (Africa), November 3, 2022.<sup>29</sup>

#### **November 3, 2022**

##### **Oi Maisor Farm, Laikipia County, Kenya**

Three bullet holes in the baby elephant's right hind leg, 7 cm, 12 cm, and 17 cm deep. After surgery, the vets gave a guarded prognosis. SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2022.<sup>30</sup>

#### **November 5 and 21, 2022**

##### **Galana Ranch and Kulalu Ranch, Kilifi County, Kenya**



- The young male's neck was in danger of being gouged by the drag of a trap from which he had escaped. His delicate posture had been spotted the day before by an SWT air patrol. Favourable prognosis.

- The elephant recovered from the anaesthetic, and the operation to remove 2 arrows from the left flank and to treat wounds as big as tennis balls went off without a hitch. Favourable prognosis. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2022.<sup>31</sup>

#### **November 8, 2022**

##### **Olare Orok Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya**

The bull elephant was grazing in his corner with an oozing wound infected by a spear throw on his right hind thigh. Veterinary surgeon Ephantus Ndambiri intervened in good time. Successful surgery. Favourable prognosis.

With the calf isolated and a pack of lions marauding nearby, it was decided to transfer him to the SWT refuge near Nairobi.

Mara Elephant Project, November 2022; SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2022.<sup>32</sup>

#### **November 11, 15 and 24, 2022**

##### **Eselenkei, Kitenden, and Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**



- On Thursday November 10, the vet was alerted. A juvenile was dragging a trap and putting himself in danger. On Friday November 11, the team arrived, the hatchling was relocated, freed from the scrap metal and nursed back to health. Favourable prognosis. A classic operation combining the art of vets and the skill of handymen, anti-inflammatories, and wire cutters.

- Hard knocks. The elephant is magnificent but dead. The spear went right to the wall of the uterus. Inside, there was a one-month-old fetus.



- The spear had pierced the auricle of his left ear. The vet arrived at the park by KWS helicopter and the whole team arrived at the elephant's bedside in a Land Rover. Operation successful. After awakening, the patient rejoined his herd. Favourable prognosis. Big Life Foundation, November 2022; SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2022.<sup>33</sup>



**November 13, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

Two tusks weighing 10.15 kg were confiscated. The suspect was arrested.

Big Life Foundation, November 2022.<sup>34</sup>

**November 19, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

The carcass of a sub-adult elephant with 5 spear wounds is discovered. Rangers put the tusks in a safe place.

Big Life Foundation, November 2022.<sup>35</sup>

**November 21 and 26, 2022**

**Greater Mara, Narok County, Kenya**

- The elephant was treated by veterinary surgeon Ephantus Ndambiri with the assistance of the SWT flying squad in Nyakweri forest. The elephant had a spear wound on his flank. The operation went well, and a few days later he was seen in the company of 7 other elephants.

- A man running through the savannah with a spray of arrows intended to be used against elephants was caught by a Mara Elephant Project patrol. During the arrest, a ranger was injured and rushed to hospital.

Mara Elephant Project, November 2022.<sup>36</sup>

**November 2022**

**Greater Mara, Narok County, Kenya**

An individual was arrested in possession of 13 kg of raw ivory.

Mara Elephant Project, November 2022.<sup>37</sup>

**December 5, 14, 21, 26 and 30, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

Rangers at the Big Life Foundation report on anti-elephant-poaching operations in December:

- one suspect arrested with 2 pieces of ivory.
- 3 suspects arrested with 15 pieces of ivory (40 kg).
- 2 suspects on the run on motorcycles, 11 pieces of ivory (40 kg).
- 2 suspects arrested with 14 pieces of ivory (209 kg).
- 2 suspects arrested in possession of 30 kg of ivory.
- 2 suspects arrested in possession of 4 pieces of ivory (45 kg).
- 4 suspects arrested in possession of 16 kg of tusks and a 3.6-meter-long python skin (*Python* spp., Appendix II).

Big Life Foundation, December 2022.<sup>38</sup>

**December 14, 2022**

**Loisaba Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya**



Favourable prognosis for a female elephant suffering from an arrow wound to the right shoulder.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2022.<sup>39</sup>

**December 15, 2022**

**Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Thomas Muhoro Ngatia sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment for possession of 112 kg of ivory assessed to have come from 17 elephants and 2 years' imprisonment for attempted commercialization. The sentences run concurrently. Arrested in March 2016, he was released on bail of 2 million shillings (20,000 US\$) in May 2016. The value of the seizure under Ngatia's bed was estimated at 11 million shillings or 973 US\$/kg. Ngatia was a friend of James Muchina, who was shot 6 times at close range on January 7, 2016 (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.74). Justice was much more lenient with Ngatia than the ivory mafia was with Muchina.

SEEJ-AFRICA (Saving Elephants through Education and Justice), December 15, 2022.<sup>40</sup>



**December 18, 2022**

**Greater Mara, Narok County, Kenya**

Dr. Poghon, the veterinary surgeon, and his team rescued a male elephant with spear wounds to 2 legs. Favourable prognosis.

Mara Elephant Project, December 2022.<sup>41</sup>



**December 18, 2022**

**Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya**



A young elephant in the middle of a family of 14 elephants is being strangled by the noose of a steel wire. To treat the calf, the mother had to be anaesthetised and the other 12 members of the family had to be kept out of the way. The young elephant was disentangled under pressure. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Sky Vet program, October 2022 to January 2023.<sup>42</sup>



**December 24, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

The elephant, crippled by 2 spear wounds on his left hind leg, was elusive and always on the run from Kasala to Eselenkei to Amboseli. Finally, anaesthesia and surgery were performed. The prognosis is guarded.

Big Life Foundation, December 2022; SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2022.<sup>43</sup>

**End of December 2022**

**Kisumu, Kisumu County, Kenya**

Arrest of 3 men aged between 27 and 52, 2 Tanzanians and one Kenyan. Seizure of 16 kg of raw ivory cut into sections.

Directorate of Criminal Investigations (Kenya), December 26, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

**December 31, 2022**

**Oldonyo Waus, Kajiado County, Kenya**

He was suffering from a wound to the right shoulder, 4 cm wide, 8 cm deep, and from a 2<sup>nd</sup> near the spinal cord. The operations went well, but when the elephant woke up, he couldn't get back on his feet, despite the support of the whole team with ropes and the Land Cruiser's winch. After an hour of complications, it was decided to put an end to his agony.

SWT/KWS SkyVet program, October 2022 to January 2023; Big Life Foundation, December 2022.<sup>45</sup>

**MALAWI**

**OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

**October 3-30, 2022**

**Malawi**

Several tusks are confiscated from an Asian national's home thanks to Operation Thunder, organised by Interpol and the World Customs Organisation between October 3-30, 2022.

Interpol, December 6, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve, Northern Region, Malawi**



Rescue of 3 elephants, including a calf, with foot injuries caused by the remains of traps. All 3 prognoses are favourable.

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, November 15, 2022.<sup>47</sup>



**December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi**

Malambo, the Zambian trafficker, is sentenced to 15 years in prison with hard labour. He had been arrested in February 2021 with 65 kg of raw ivory (see "On the Trail" n°32 p. 30).

Nyasa Times, December 2, 2022.<sup>48</sup>



**MOZAMBIQUE**

**October 21, 2022**

**Tete, Tete Province, Mozambique**

Early morning arrest of Batuelo Campaundi Tsongola, age 55, in possession of 94 kg of raw ivory, which he claims came from the poaching of 4 elephants in Magoé National Park, 250 km from Tete, and in the Muzarabani District Reserve in Zimbabwe, 500 km from Tete.

Mozambique Bio, October 22, 2022; Club of Mozambique, October 23, 2022.<sup>49</sup>





## FAMILY AFFAIRS

**October 24, 2022**

### **Moatize, Tete Province, Mozambique**

Three men, including 2 teachers and a high-ranking civil servant, were caught in a raid by the SERNIC (National Criminal Investigation Service) while scheming to sell 12 kg of raw ivory. According to the Sernic spokeswoman, they wanted 22,500 meticaïs (360 US\$ or 30 US\$/kg). They claim not to be the owners of the tusks and that the 3 elephants were poached in Magoe National Park. Sernic was put on the case by the ANAC (National Administration of Conservation Areas).

Club of Mozambique, October 26, 2022; TV Miramar, October 26, 2022.<sup>50</sup>

## **OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

**October 31, 2022**

### **Chifunde District, Tete Province, Mozambique**

Three Mozambican nationals attempting to sell 4 tusks weighing 70 kg altogether were arrested. They claimed to have bought them from Malawian poachers.

Notícias, November 1, 2022; Club of Mozambique, November 2, 2022; Interpol, December 6, 2022.<sup>51</sup>

**November 18, 2022**

### **Beira, Sofala Province, Mozambique**

Arrest and seizure of 3 tusks. The man, a security guard by profession, had hidden them on the premises of a logging company he was guarding. Six years after the company went bankrupt, he regained possession of the raw ivory and was trying to sell it.

Green Savers (with Lusa), November 24, 2022; Club of Mozambique, November 25, 2022.<sup>52</sup>

**Mid-December 2022**

### **Pemba and Meluco District, Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique**

Arrest of a schoolteacher and a customs broker. Seizure of 2 tusks (16 kg). They present themselves as middlemen in the traffic. Busy with jihadist incursions, provincial authorities loosen surveillance in Quirimbas National Park, allowing poaching and smuggling networks to take advantage.

Club of Mozambique, December 16, 2022; Correio da Manhã, December 16, 2022; Carta de Moçambique, December 19, 2022.<sup>53</sup>

## **UGANDA**

### **REPEATED OFFENCE**

**October 20, 2022**

### **Kampala, Central Region, Uganda**

It's life imprisonment for 64-year-old Ochiba alias Osike. He had already been arrested and sentenced in 2017 to 18 months' imprisonment for trafficking in ivory and okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*) skin (see "On the Trail" n°18 p. 85) and 5 years later, he relapsed. He was in possession of almost 10 kg of raw ivory.

Uganda Wildlife Authority, October 21, 2022.<sup>54</sup>



**November 5, 2022**

### **Nansana, Central Region, Uganda**

It was a mess at the J- Smart hotel this Saturday evening at 8 p.m. near Entebbe International Airport when police arrived to arrest 2 police officers who were smuggling ivory. Many guests of the crowded J- Smart hotel fled as if they had something to blame themselves for. Only Katushabe and Ayesiga were handcuffed. Taking advantage of the weekend, they had both come from the Hoima District, 200 km north of Kampala, to sell 14 tusks. Mazima, November 7, 2022.<sup>55</sup>

## **TANZANIA**

**October 23, 2022 and February 3, 2023**

### **Burukeli and Babati, Manyara Region, Tanzania**

Lulu, age 42, and Safari, age 34, were caught possessing and transporting 2 tusks with an estimated value of 35.1 million shillings (15,200 US\$).

On Friday February 3, 2023, they were sentenced in the first instance to 20 years in prison.

Mwananchi, February 4, 2023.<sup>56</sup>



## **ZIMBABWE**

**Beginning of October 2022**

### **Victoria Falls National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

The steel rope ran from a large piece of metal embedded in the ground, twisted through the baby elephant's legs, up to his shoulders, and then back down again. The trap was perfect. The mother was anaesthetised as a priority. Favourable prognosis. ZimParks has alerted in good time.

Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust, October 4, 2022.<sup>57</sup>





**Beginning of October 2022  
Zambezi National Park, Matabeleland  
North Province, Zimbabwe**



A juvenile dragged a trap around his neck. Strangulation lay in wait. Rescuers arrived with a stun gun and wire cutters. The herd refused to move away. To ensure the safety of the operation, the hum of the 4x4's engine was used and the herd kept a safe distance, watching closely as the operation unfolded. Favourable prognosis. Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust, October 10, 2022.<sup>58</sup>



**October 7, 2022  
Guruve District, Mashonaland Central Province,  
Zimbabwe**

Arrest of 4 men from Zimbabwe on the Guruve-Mahuwe road, 70 km from the border with Mozambique. They are in possession of 30 kg of raw ivory. They are aged between 23 and 45 years old. Fauna and Flora Zimbabwe, October 10, 2022.<sup>59</sup>

**October 31, 2022  
Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

Gilda Chaziva, age 38, a policewoman from Chinhoyi, had gone down to Harare to sell 5 kg of ivory valued at 900 US\$ (180 US\$/kg). She was caught by men from the CID (Criminal Investigations Department). H-Metro, November 3, 2022; Bulawayo24, November 6, 2022; Fauna and Flora Zimbabwe, November 10, 2022.<sup>60</sup>

**November 12, 2022  
Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

Arrest of 2 young men ages 27 and 28 in the Nelson Mandela Street shopping center. They were holding 2 kg of raw ivory which they were trying to sell. The seizure is valued at 340 US\$ or 170 US\$/kg. ZimNews, November 15, 2022; H-Metro, November 16, 2022.<sup>61</sup>

**Bumi Hills, Mashonaland West  
Province, Zimbabwe. Border with  
Zambia.**



Rescue of a female elephant by the BHAPU (Bumi Hills Anti Poaching Unit). The left hind leg is cut by a steel wire. Anaesthesia, breathing monitoring, metal detection to make sure there are no steel strands left in the wound, injection of antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and B vitamins. Awakening.

Bumi Hills Anti Poaching Unit (BHAPU), December 30, 2022.<sup>62</sup>

**SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**Beginning of October 2022  
iSimangaliso Wetland Park, KwaZulu-  
Natal Province, South Africa**



The struggling elephant was spotted on a trap camera video. The encircling trap wound is visible on the right hind foot. Dr. Cooper of African Wildlife Vets and Orton Bosman, the pilot of Heligistix Helicopters, quickly mobilized. The prognosis is favourable.

African Wildlife Vets, October 11, 2022.<sup>63</sup>

**Mid November, 2022  
Kruger National Park, Limpopo and  
Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa**



A baby elephant whose left hind leg was cut by a metal snare is rescued.

Hope for Wildlife Helicopter Services, November 18, 2022.<sup>64</sup>

**November 18, 2022  
Saint Francis Bay, Eastern Cape Province, South  
Africa**

"In order to win the war against crime and render a professional service to our communities, it is crucial for the SAPS and private security companies to work together in tightening our grip on crime and criminals."

An alert about the use of a firearm in a Sea Vista home triggered a search by the Anti-Gang Unit, TRT (Tactical Response Team) and Saint Francis Bay police. A 35-year-old man was arrested and 2 rifles, a pistol and ivory were seized.

SAPS, November 20, 2022.<sup>65</sup>

**November 28, 2022**  
**Roodepoort, Gauteng Province, South Africa**



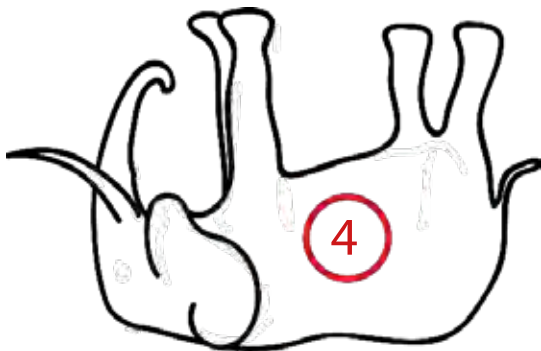
Seizure in the cases of 2 individuals considered suspicious by a crime prevention patrol of 2 tusk sections (1,011 grams and 1,112 grams) and 240 zipped bags of methamphetamine.  
Roodepoort Record, December 2, 2022.<sup>66</sup>

**November 30, 2022**  
**Cork Trust, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**  
Seizure by the Hawks of 2 elephant tusks in a private home.  
SAPS, December 1, 2022.<sup>67</sup>

## NAMIBIA

**October 11, 2022**  
**Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.**  
Katoyima Mukoya, 43, is arrested in possession of 2 tusks.  
Informanté, October 19, 2022; Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), October 20, 2022.<sup>68</sup>

**Year 2022**  
**Namibia**  
In 2022, 4 elephant poachings were officially recorded, compared to 10 in 2021, 12 in 2020, 13 in 2019.  
Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), January 13, 2023; The Brief, January 30, 2023; The Namibian, January 31, 2023.<sup>69</sup>



## NORTHERN AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 19 and December 2022**  
**Tyler, State of Texas, United States of America**



Bartlett, Garcia, and Caudill from Oklahoma wanted to sell 2 African elephant tusks for 350 US\$ and found no better buyer than an undercover agent from the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Texas. All 3 are charged in violation of the Endangered Species Act and organised smuggling between Oklahoma and Texas. David Bartlett, the mastermind of the gang, was booked in Gregg County jail in Texas. He pleaded guilty. Darryl Garcia was sentenced to 2 years of probation in December 2022. He pleaded guilty. Dusty Caudill also pleads guilty.  
KLTU, October 20, 2022 and February 10, 2023; CBS19 KYTX, October 21, 2022.<sup>70</sup>

## EASTERN ASIA

### CHINA

### SHANGHAI AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

**Beginning of November 2022**  
**Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China**



Seizure of 5 necklaces and 2 ivory statuettes in parcels coming from abroad. They were declared to contain "copper ornaments" and "copper bracelets".  
Total weight: 393.7 grams.  
Chinese Customs, November 16, 2022.<sup>71</sup>

**December 2022**  
**Shanghai Pudong International Airport,**  
**Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China**



A passenger returning from abroad had 10 bracelets, pendants and other carved ivories weighing 165 grams confiscated from their luggage. The items were concealed in a can of powdered milk -- a common disguise well known by traffickers and customs (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 95, n°8 p. 87, n°14 p. 72 and p. 90, n°17 p. 43, n°21 p. 11, n°21 p. 93, n°25 p. 80, n°26 p. 24 and p. 89, n°27 p. 105, n°28 p. 7, n°31 p. 30 and p. 174, n°32 p. 39, p. 202 and p. 260, n°33 p. 24, p. 230 and p. 247, n°34 p. 34, n°36 p. 33). Chinese Customs, December 22, 2022.<sup>72</sup>

**December 2022**  
**Shanghai Autonomous Municipality,**  
**China**



A company specializing in the sale of musical instruments was fined 220,000 yuan (30,700 US\$) and its 2 directors were given a one-year suspended prison sentence for importing 20 pianos whose keys were covered with a total of 5,308 grams of ivory.

Ivory piano keys in China, see "On the Trail" n°28 p. 109, n°29 p. 31, n°32 p. 36, p. 37, n°32 p. 42, n°33 p. 38, p. 39, p. 44, n°34 p. 37, n°35 p. 27 and n°37 p. 27.

Guangming Online, December 15, 2022.<sup>73</sup>

**December 2022**  
**Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China**  
 Seizure of ivory keys from a grand piano (212 grams).  
 Chinese Customs, December 27, 2022.<sup>74</sup>

**TIANJIN AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY**

**December 2022**  
**Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China**

An antiques company has a painting scroll with ivory tips seized from an imported collection of old handicrafts.

Chinese Customs, December 28, 2022.<sup>75</sup>

**GUANGDONG PROVINCE**

**October 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport,**  
**Guangdong Province, China**

Two passengers returning from abroad have the following items intercepted from their luggage:

- 9 carved ivories including 5 bracelets, 302 grams.
- 4 ivory bracelets, 132 grams.

Chinese Customs, October 27, 2022.<sup>76</sup>

**October 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport,**  
**Guangdong Province, China**

Two ivory bracelets are found inside the luggage of 2 passengers returning from abroad. Total weight: 168 grams.

Chinese Customs, November 1, 2022.<sup>77</sup>



**October 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport,**  
**Guangdong Province, China**

Two passengers returning from abroad have 4 ivory bracelets and 5 ivory pendants confiscated from their luggage. Total weight: 226 grams.

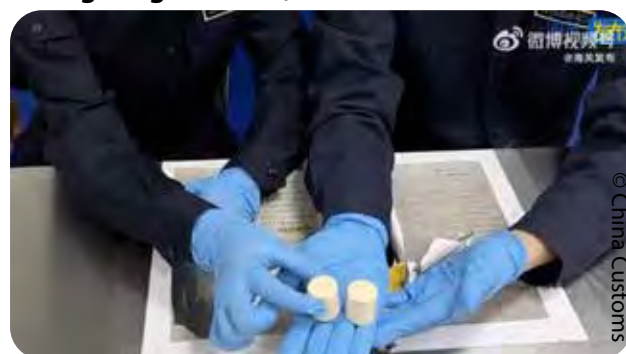
Chinese Customs, November 6, 2022.<sup>78</sup>

**November 4, 2022**  
**Shenzhen, Province du Guangdong, Chine**

A parcel containing 6 pieces of carved ivory is confiscated. Total weight: 14.94 grams.

Chinese Customs, November 8, 2022.<sup>79</sup>

**November 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport,**  
**Guangdong Province, China**



Upon opening a package said to contain paint, customs officials discovered 3 painting scrolls, one of which looked suspicious. Further inspection confirmed that the tips were made of ivory.

Chinese Customs, December 2, 2022.<sup>80</sup>



**November 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport,**  
**Guangdong Province, China**



A passenger from the Middle East has 53 pearls, combs and pendants made of carved ivory seized from his luggage. He concealed the pearls in 5 fishing rods and the rest in a tea tin. Total weight: 1,240 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, December 2, 2022; Guangming Online (with Xinhua), December 6, 2022.<sup>81</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport,**  
**Guangdong Province, China**

Three passengers collectively have 13 pieces of carved ivory seized from their luggage, including bracelets. Total weight: 246 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, December 12, 2022.<sup>82</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport,**  
**Guangdong Province, China**

Five passengers from abroad have 23 carved ivory bracelets, pendants and pearls confiscated from their luggage. Total weight: 545 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, December 14, 2022.<sup>83</sup>

**HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE**

**December 2022**  
**Harbin Taiping International Airport,**  
**Heilongjiang Province, China**

A fan with an ivory handle (180 grams) is seized inside a parcel shipped from abroad.  
 Chinese Customs, January 9, 2023.<sup>84</sup>

**HUBEI PROVINCE**

**December 5, 2022**  
**Wuhan, Hubei Province, China**

Five painting scrolls are seized. The tips are made of ivory. The parcel was coming from abroad. Weight: 100 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, December 13, 2022.<sup>85</sup>

**December 2022**  
**Wuhan, Province du Hubei, Chine**

A parcel from abroad containing a painting scroll with 2 ivory tips is intercepted. Total weight: 50 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, December 22, 2022.<sup>86</sup>

**HUNAN PROVINCE**

**October 2022**  
**Changsha, Changsha Prefecture, Hunan Province, China**

Three ivory bracelets are confiscated from inside a shipped package. Total weight: 60.6 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, October 24, 2022.<sup>87</sup>

**JIANGXI PROVINCE**

**November 21, 2022**  
**Nanchang, Nanchang Prefecture, Jiangxi Province, China**

A shipped parcel containing 24 bowling balls was intercepted. The balls were made of guaiac tree (*Guaiacum officinale*, Appendix II), a wood native to South America and the Caribbean. Eight of the balls had an ivory inlay.  
 Chinese Customs, November 28, 2022.<sup>88</sup>

**SHANDONG PROVINCE**

**November 7, 2022**  
**Qingdao-Jiaodong International Airport, Shandong Province, China**

Three ivory bracelets are seized inside a parcel sent from abroad. Total weight: 250 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, November 10, 2022.<sup>89</sup>

**November 10, 2022**  
**Qingdao-Jiaodong International Airport, Shandong Province, China**

Three ivory bracelets are found inside the luggage of a passenger from abroad. Total weight: 128 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, November 18, 2022.<sup>90</sup>

**December 19, 2022**  
**Qingdao-Jiaodong International Airport, Shandong Province, China**

An ivory bracelet weighing 43 grams is intercepted inside the backpack of a traveler from abroad.  
 Qingdao Customs, December 23, 2022.<sup>91</sup>

**SICHUAN PROVINCE**

**November 2022**  
**Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China**

Inside a passenger's luggage from abroad, officials confiscated cigarette packets concealing 26 carved ivory pieces including a necklace, an amulet, and pearls. Total weight: 190 grams.  
 Chinese Customs, November 23, 2022.<sup>92</sup>

## YUNNAN PROVINCE

**October 2022**

**Menglazhen, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.**

An ivory bracelet inside a passenger's luggage from abroad is confiscated: 40.04 grams. Chinese Customs, November 3, 2022.<sup>93</sup>

**November 2022**

**Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan Province, China**

Three passengers from abroad have 18 ivory jewels, bracelets, pearls and pendants confiscated from their handbags. Total weight: 875.3 grams. Chinese Customs, November 16, 2022; Kunming Customs, November 22, 2022.<sup>94</sup>

## ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

**November 2022**

**Hangzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China**



A painting scroll's ivory end-pieces are confiscated inside a parcel from abroad. Total weight: 498 grams. Chinese Customs, December 5, 2022.<sup>95</sup>

## INNER MONGOLIA AUTONOMOUS REGION

**November 2022**

**Hohhot Baita International Airport, Hohhot Prefecture, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China**

Two ivory statuettes are seized inside the luggage of a passenger returning from abroad. Total weight: 1,235.73 grams. Chinese Customs, December 2, 2022.<sup>96</sup>

## SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

### MALAYSIA

**Mid-December 2022**

**Bukit Piton Wildlife Safari, Lahad Datu, State of Sabah, Malaysia**



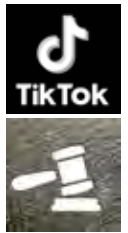
Three days after being anaesthetised, refreshed and fed, the baby elephant, whose left front leg had been cut by the noose of a trap, died of septicaemia, with only the deep sadness of veterinarian Nabila Sarkawi and her team to pay tribute.

New Straits Times, December 18, 2022.<sup>97</sup>

### THAILAND

**November 5, 2022**

**Khao Yai National Park, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand**



He was fined 5,000 baht (130 US\$) for traffic offences and elephant offences. On the road to Noen Hom through Khao Yai National Park, Mr. Arkom, after a bend, came face to face with a very calm elephant, stopped and explored him very closely from trunk to tail as a monument to, he says, make a video and show his children what an elephant is. The elephant's visit was even honoured by TikTok and drew the attention and reproaches of the park rangers and the Pak Chong district police chief, who had no trouble tracking down the culprit, the licence plate of his pick-up being part of the story. "Mr. Arkom's behaviour was irresponsible, dangerous to himself and harmful to the wild elephant and in many ways contrary to the park's internal regulations in force since 2019." Bangkok Post, November 7, 2022.<sup>98</sup>

**November 23, 2022**

**Khlong Takrao District, Chachoengsao Province, Thailand**



Electrocution of a wild elephant in the middle of the jungle. Found at midday with 4 feet in the air, he had touched an electric fence surrounding a jackfruit plantation. Jurisprudence is unclear. The use of electric current to defend property is authorized, but in some cases the courts have ruled manslaughter, with those responsible liable to between 3 and 15 years in prison under Section 290 of the Criminal Code. Elephanticide or the death of other wild animals are not included in this legal provision, but the location of the plantation and the strength of the current could bring the farmer to the bar of the courts.

In Thailand too, volts are moving into the jungle (see "On the Trail" n°10 p.63, n°21 p.99, n°22 p.101, n°29 p.36, n°30 p.35, n°32 p.46 and n°34 p.39). The Thaiger, November 24, 2022.<sup>99</sup>

## REPEATED OFFENCE

December 18, 2022

Huay Yang District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.



A female elephant seized at the border in the truck's trailer. The Thai driver, Phongsak Huakaew, 28, is known for his activities as a road transporter of timber and elephants. Domesticated elephants work as skidders in Burmese logging concessions. The passenger, 28-year-old Muytuya, is Burmese. In her thirties, the elephant was given emergency shelter by the WFFT.

Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand, December 20, 2022.<sup>100</sup>

## SOUTHERN ASIA

### BANGLADESH

End of October 2022

Paynashia Area, Cox's Bazar District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

"A wild elephant had been killed and buried in the ground as he came to the paddy field. After receiving the information, we conducted an operation and arrested Abul Shama," the local police official told Business Standard. This is not the first time in the country and in Cox's Bazar district that farmers have buried an electrocuted elephant in secret to avoid trouble with the law.

Burials of electrocuted elephants in Bangladesh, see "On the Trail" n°33 p.48 and n°34 p.39-40.

The Business Standard, October 23, 2022.<sup>101</sup>



## INDIA

October 3, 2022

Mashinakati Forest Reserve, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India



This is the third violent elephant death in the district. The forty-year-old super tusker had been wandering around Betanoti forest for several days with a trap rope severely gouging the foot of his left front leg. Alerted by witnesses from Dumapada, Khadishola, Kanchannagar, Mashinakhati, and Tungadhua, a team of vets from the NGO Wildlife Trust of India, Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, and Similipal Tiger Reserve arrived on the scene. The operation ended badly. The super tusker did not wake up. Experts suspect that the dose of the anaesthetic was incorrectly assessed without taking into account the elephant's age, weight, state of health, and ambient temperature. Orissa Post, October 4, 2022.<sup>102</sup>

October 4, 2022

Kalayarkoil, Sivaganga District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Discovery and seizure of 2 tusks weighing a total of 9.46 kg at the bottom of a water tank in the village. The police were well informed. Three arrests. Jayakumar, Ganesh Pandian, and Prabakaran say they bought the ivory in Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, 450 km from Sivaganga district. The car allegedly used for smuggling was also seized. The Hindu, October 5, 2022.<sup>103</sup>

October 7, 2022

Dimapur District, State of Nagaland, India

Officials confiscate 2 tusks and 3 spikes weighing 19 kg in total and arrest 3 traffickers.

WCCB, October 10, 2022.<sup>104</sup>

October 8, 2022

Baluhandar, Hojai District, State of Assam, India

Basudev Majumdar and Ranu Majumdar were caught by the police this Saturday. Each was hiding an elephant tusk weighing 2.5 kg at home.

India Today, October 9, 2022.<sup>105</sup>



**October 14 and 17, 2022**

**Mundapada, Angul District, State of Odisha, India**

Double tragedy in Mundapada.

- A dead elephant lies next to the village. Poisoning or electrocution are suspected.

- Dasaratha Nayak, age 56, dies by suicide. He swallows poison after being questioned by police about the elephant's death.

The New Indian Express, October 16 and 20, 2022.<sup>106</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**October 15 and 29, 2022**

**Periyathadagam, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

"The tusker [ivory-bearing bull elephant] was about 30 years old. The right tusk was torn from the carcass." This was the account given by forest officials after the discovery by farm workers on Saturday morning of the corpse of an elephant on the edge of the forest. On Saturday, October 29, the forestry police received vital information and dug up the missing tusk 140 meters from where the elephant's body had been found. Subsequently, Mr Kaliyappan and Mr Maruthachalam, 2 brothers ages 55 and 45, were arrested, charged with offences under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, and remanded to Coimbatore Central Jail. Investigations are continuing into the cause of the elephant's death. The Times of India, October 16, 2022; The Hindu, October 30, 2022.<sup>107</sup>

**October 19 and 20, 2022**

**Bania and Devmati, Korba District, State of Chhattisgarh, India**

Is it cause and effect? The local press is unquestioning, describing the violent death of a baby elephant and his secret burial in a rice field by Bania villagers, including miners, followed by a night raid by some 40 elephants on the neighbouring village of Devmati as a natural chain of events. "Elephant reprisals" are said to have killed a farmer and 3 cows. The victim's family received immediate compensation of 25,000 rupees (306 US\$), with the balance of 7,000 US\$ to be paid after verification of the facts and completion of formalities. According to a friend of the field's owner, the villagers of Bania are prepared to pay 800,000 rupees (nearly 10,000 US\$) to the forestry services to "compensate" for the death of the baby elephant and end the legal proceedings.

Outlook India, October 21, 2022; The Times of India, October 22, 2022; India Today, October 23, 2022; Newsweek, October 24, 2022.<sup>108</sup>

**November 7 and 15, 2022**

**Kuliapal, Kendujhar District, State of Odisha, India**

The 25-year-old elephant was fatally shot and pierced by an arrow from stomach to womb. As she lay dying, she delivered a stillborn baby elephant.

Odisha Bytes, November 8, 2022; The New Indian Express, November 8 and 16, 2022.<sup>109</sup>

**November 9, 2022**

**Labhar, Labhar District, State of Jharkhand, India**



The electrocution is indisputable. The makna, a tuskless male elephant in his thirties, has a 20 cm-long burn on his trunk. The 11,000-volt DC fence prevented the elephant from approaching a rice field. The farmer's wife and a relative were taken into police custody for 14 days. Sahadur Singh, the owner of the site, fled. In addition to the electric scarification, the forensic veterinary team responsible for the post-mortem discovered an old muzzleloader bullet that had been lodged in the flesh for several years. Mukesh Kumar, deputy director of the Palamu Tiger Reserve, says that the electrical trap was set up to kill. Grain farmers in Jharkhand are paid 1,600 rupees (20 US\$) per quintal of grain destroyed by elephants, and 20,000 to 40,000 rupees (240 to 480 US\$) per hectare of crop lost.

The Pioneer, November 9, 2022; Lagatar News, November 9 and 13, 2022.<sup>110</sup>

**November 16, 2022**

**Kumhartoli Area, West Singhbhum District, State of Jharkhand, India**



Seizure of 9 tusks or sections of raw ivory and another of what is presumed to be black tinted ivory. Five people arrested from Bihar, Odisha, and Jharkhand.

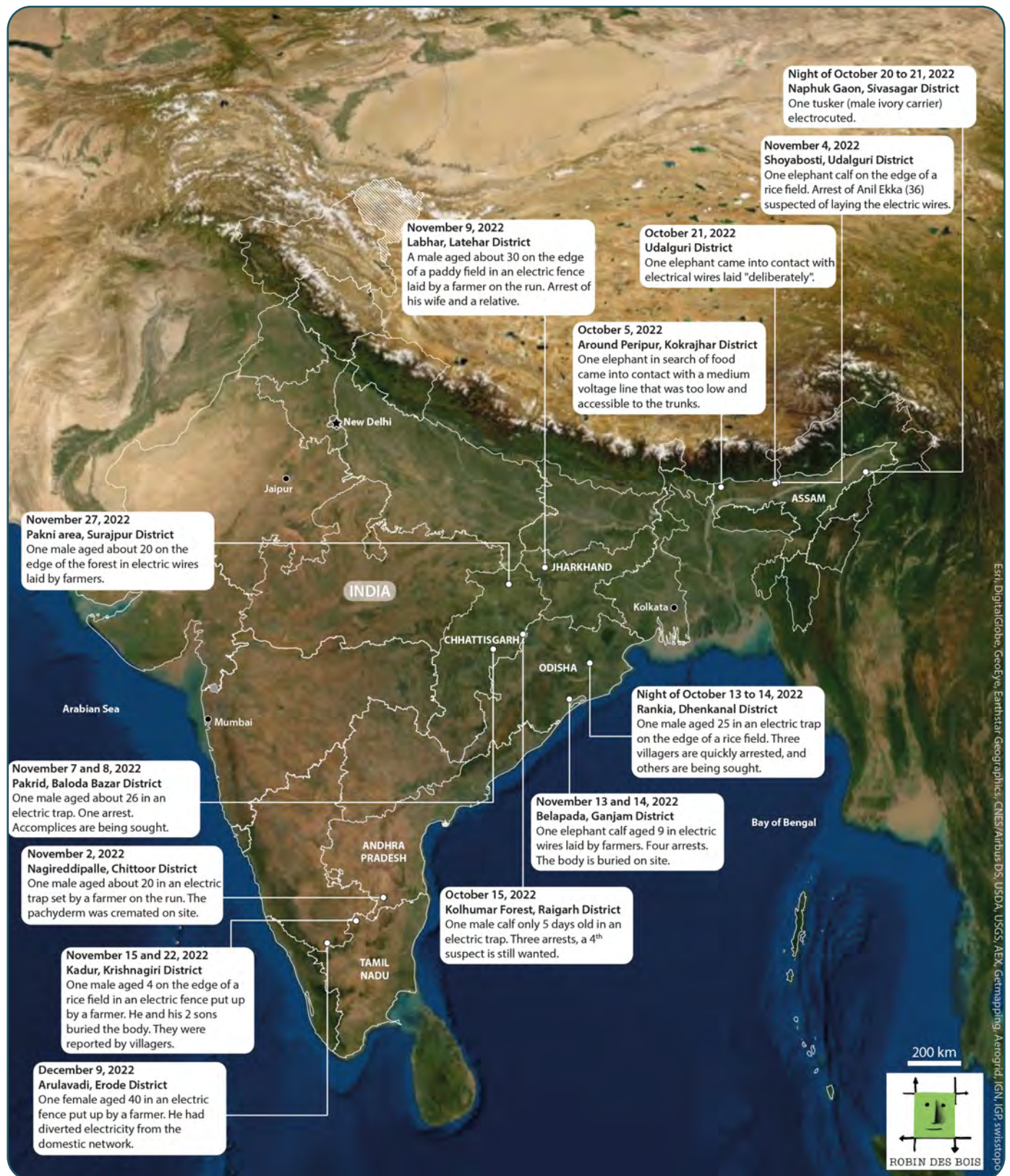
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), November 16, 2022; The Print, November 17, 2022.<sup>111</sup>

**November 19, 2022**

**Bengaluru, Bengaluru Urban District, State of Karnataka, India**

The CCB (City Crime Branch) of the capital (approx. 10 million inhabitants) seizes 7.5 kg of carved ivory, including canes, effigies, and bracelets. Four arrests. City Crime Branch of Bengaluru City, November 19, 2022; Hindustan Times, November 19, 2022.<sup>112</sup>

## Electrocution of elephants between Octobre 1 and December 31, 2022



Sources, see page 255





October 5, 2022  
Peripur Area, Kokrajhar District, State of Assam



October 21, 2022  
Udalguri District, State of Assam



November 15 and 22, 2022  
Kadur, Krishnagiri District, Tamil Nadu



November 2, 2022  
Nagireddipalle, Chittoor District, State, Andhra Pradesh

### **December 2, 2022 Athamallik Forest Division, Angul District, State of Odisha, India**

On Friday, December 2, an elephant who died several days earlier was discovered in the forest near Madhapur with a missing tusk. Poaching is suspected, or someone may have stolen the tusk after a mysterious death.

On Friday, October 28, an elephant was found dead near Shantipur.

On Tuesday, October 15, another ivory-bearing elephant was found dead near Mundapada.

Overly frequent elephant deaths in the Athamallik forest division have wildlife conservationists concerned. They believe forestry officers are either not taking their jobs seriously or not doing enough to prevent conflicts between elephant ranges and proliferating human activities.

Angul District, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.93, n°18 p.100, n°20 p.104, n°23 p.89 and 130, n°26 p.27, n°30 p.38, n°31 p.32 and p.162, n°32 p.246, n°33 p.50 and p.209, n°34 p.40, 41, 42 and 75, n°35 p.31, n°36 p.37 and 64 and n°37 p.30.

Orissa Post, December 4, 2022.<sup>113</sup>

### **December 6, 2022 T Sukkampatti, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Arrest of V. Kandhasamy, aged 48. He is suspected of being involved in the smuggling of 2 tusks (25 kg) seized in November 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°34 p. 43).

The Times of India, December 8, 2022.<sup>114</sup>

### **December 7, 9, 10, 16 and 22, 2022 Similipal Tiger Reserve, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India**



On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>, in Bakua, people reported seeing men in uniform burning an elephant carcass.

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup>, the headquarters of the park suspended 3 of its employees and found that the elephant had been burnt without his tusks. Similipal was home to 300 elephants in 2017, the date of the last census. They sometimes leave through corridors known to poachers. The tusks have been sawed off or removed with sulfuric acid.

.../...



On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>, members of the JTF (Joint Task Force) set up in August by the Kolkata High Court arrived on the scene. The foresters are suspected of having acted out of fear of being accused of negligence by their superiors, and out of solidarity with the local poaching community.

On Friday 16<sup>th</sup>, Turam Purty died in hospital. Poisoning is suspected. Purty was one of Similipal's subordinate staff. He was a lookout.

On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, Purty's widow and mother of 3 filed a complaint with the Jashipur police station. She accused the 3 foresters of violently intimidating her husband into keeping quiet about the affair, and ultimately forcing him to consume poison.



Hindustan Times, December 11, 2022; The New Indian Express, December 12, 2022; The Times of India, December 13, 17 and 20, 2022; Odisha Bytes, December 22, 2022; Pragativadi, December 22, 2022.<sup>115</sup>

#### **December 9, 2022**

##### **Gundlupet, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India**

The WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and Forestry Department jointly intercept 2 tusks weighing 10.95 kg in total and 3 traffickers. WCCB, December 10, 2022.<sup>116</sup>

#### **December 10, 2022**

##### **Basavapura, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India**

Interception of a car registered in Tamil Nadu. Seizure of 2 tusks and the vehicle. 5 people arrested. They live in villages more than 200 km away from Basavapura.

Star of Mysore, December 12, 2022; The Times of India, December 12, 2022.<sup>117</sup>

#### **REPEATED OFFENCE**

##### **December 12 and 13, 2022**

##### **Adukkamparai, Vellore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Seizure of a 21-kg tusk. The 2 men wanted 2.3 million rupees (28,160 US\$ and 1,340 US\$/kg) for it.

WCCB, December 15, 2022; DT Next, December 16, 2022.<sup>118</sup>

#### **December 13, 2022**

##### **Gohira Dam, Deogarh District, State of Odisha, India**



Seizure of 2 tusks cut into 6 sections. Easier to transport in motorcycle saddlebags. 11.164 kg in all. Pitter Tigga, 43, and Fagua Triobans, 27, are in police custody. They fell into the trap set by the police.

The New Indian Express, December 14, 2022.<sup>119</sup>

#### **Night of December 15-16, 2022**

##### **Alalur, Mysore District, State of Karnataka, India**

The mythical elephant, Balarama, wore the "golden howdah" 13 times during the Dussehra procession in Mysore, from 1999 to 2011. He has since retired to the Bheemanakatte camp and was out one night. At around 11 p.m., guards heard cries of distress coming from the elephant, like a trumpet in the night. Balarama was ambushed by M.A. Suresh, who stood in a treehouse with a homemade pellet gun. He used to shoot wild animals from his treetop to protect his maize and rice crops. When the guards approached the scene, they found Balarama lying on the ground and Suresh still in the tree. Suresh was arrested and Balarama was immediately treated onsite by vets before mahouts and kavadis (mahout assistants) brought him back to the camp. They removed 45 bullets from Balarama's right flank; fortunately, the wounds were superficial.



A howdah is a wooden saddle placed on top of an elephant's back. The golden howdah is a 750 kg howdah covered with gold leaf. It is used to carry the deity, Chamundeshwari's statue on the last day of the Dussehra festival. The festival spans 10 days at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the Hindu calendar (September-October). It celebrates the victory of good over evil.

The Hindu, December 17, 2022; Star of Mysore, December 17 and 19, 2022; The Times of India, December 18, 2022.<sup>120</sup>

### **Night of December 18 to 19, 2022**

#### **Rangia, Kamrup District, State of Assam, India**

Three men aged between 19 and 24 ride 2 motorcycles at night between Changsari and Rangia and are arrested by the police. They were to receive 30,000 rupees (367 US\$) for transporting 685 grams of raw ivory to Rangia.

Devdiscourse, December 18, 2022; The Times of India, December 20, 2022.<sup>121</sup>

### **December 29, 2022**

#### **Ratangarh, Churu District, State of Rajasthan, India**

Himanshu Swami and Shubham Soni are on a motorcycle. They come across a police roadblock. They are carrying 4100 grams of carved ivory, statuettes, boxes, miniature animals, hair clips, bracelets.

India Posts, December 30, 2022; WCCB, December 30, 2022.<sup>122</sup>

## **NEPAL**

### **November 16, 2022**

#### **Kachankawal, Jhapa District, Koshi Province, Nepal**



It's raining, he's dead in the banana plantation, he's looked at, he's honored, umbrellas stroll by. His tusks have been stolen. The cause of his death is unknown, and already a steel monster is preparing to bury him.

The Nepali Post, November 16, 2022; Makalu Khabar, November 17, 2022.<sup>123</sup>

### **December 23, 2022**

#### **Barahakshetra, Sunsari District, Koshi Province, Nepal**

A 30-40 year-old elephant was electrocuted. Forestry officials and villagers paid their respects at the scene. This marks the 5<sup>th</sup> elephant electrocution in the province since the beginning of the year. Some residents claim to have been harassed by elephants coming from India to graze in the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, and feel obliged to take preventive measures.

The Rising Nepal, December 26, 2022.<sup>124</sup>



## **SRI LANKA**

### **November 20, 2022**

#### **Pawattamaduwa, North Western Province, Sri Lanka**

She died of a bullet to the head in the early hours of the morning, near a rice field. The violence between humans and elephants is escalating, and will soon stop when there are no more wild elephants. The authorities are powerless.

Daily Mirror, November 21, 2022.<sup>125</sup>

## **NORTHERN EUROPE**

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

### **OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

#### **October 2022**

##### **United Kingdom**

Several carved ivories are confiscated from an online wildlife vendor.

Interpol, December 6, 2022; World Customs Organisation, December 6, 2022.<sup>126</sup>

## **WESTERN EUROPE**

## **BELGIUM**

### **OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

#### **October 2022**

##### **Brussels International Airport, Zaventem, Province of Flemish Brabant, Flemish Region, Belgium**

Inside a passenger's luggage, 2 sections of ivory are intercepted. As part of Operation Thunder, spanning October 3 - 30, 2022 and organised by Interpol and the World Customs Organisation, customs officers checked people coming from Central and West Africa over a 2-day period.

Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, December 6, 2022.<sup>127</sup>



## FRANCE

**November 2022**

### Quimper, Department of Finistère, France

It was the 44<sup>th</sup> edition of the Quimper antique fair, with 90 exhibitors and 5,000 expected visitors, and it was an opportunity for customs officials to get their hands on 152 carved pieces of ivory and secure them away from the flea markets, fairs, and garage sales. Crosses, figurines, buttons, brooches, letter openers, feather holders, feather boxes - a whole range of pagan and sacred items that revive the taste and fashion for ivory. In 2021, French Customs seized 148 kg of ivory.

French Customs, December 2, 2022.<sup>128</sup>



The seizure includes a large, homogeneous batch of rings supposedly made between 1870 and 1914, based on new, standardized labels.

## SOUTHERN EUROPE

### ITALY

**October 25, 2022**

### Genoa, Metropolitan City of Genoa, Region of Liguria, Italy

Seized from a private home in July 2021, the 2 tusks measuring 167 and 180 cm respectively and valued at 100,000 € (118,880 US\$) were handed over today, Tuesday, October 25, 2022, to the Genoa Museum of Natural History.

IVG, October 25, 2022; La Repubblica, October 25, 2022.<sup>129</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**

### Padua, Province of Padua, Region of Veneto, Italy



Seizure of 14 carved pieces of ivory, including statuettes of oriental inspiration, in the antiques showroom. An expert examined the Schreger lines to confirm the elephantine origin of the ivory. Telenovo, November 9, 2022.<sup>130</sup>

**November 15, 2022**

### Province of Pavia, Region of Lombardy, Italy

It's the piano's wrong note. A few days before being shipped abroad by a Milanese specialist in the transport of works of art, the musical instrument was examined by the Pavia carabinieri responsible for enforcing CITES regulations in the province, and the ivory-covered keys were singled out without any administrative steps having been taken to obtain an export certificate. "Checks by the CITES carabinieri revealed that the piano had been manufactured in 1983 in Germany, that it had been sold by a private individual resident in Bolzano in the Trentino-Alto Adige region to a musician resident in Italy via a Lombardy dealer, without a CITES certificate authorizing its sale." The piano was seized.

Seizure of pianos with ivory keys in or from Europe, see "On the Trail" n°22 p.102, n°34 p.37 and n°37 p.37. Arma dei Carabinieri, December 7, 2022; Vogheranews, December 7, 2022.<sup>131</sup>







## EUROPE

### RUSSIA

**November 24, 2022**

**Sheremetyevo International Airport, Moscow Oblast, Russia**

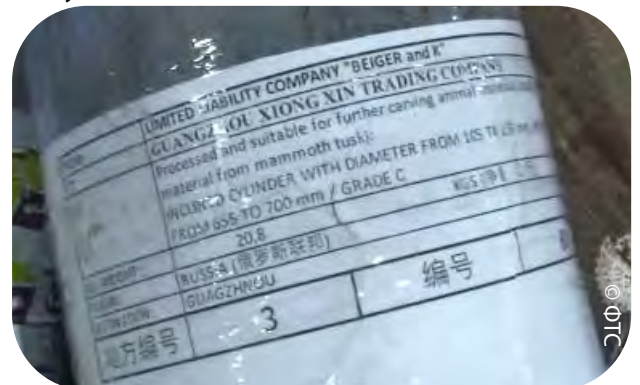
Officials confiscated 7 tooth fragments, 2 mammoth jaws, a femur and humerus of a woolly rhinoceros (*Coelodonta antiquitatis*), as well as a cave bear's femur (*Ursus spelaeus*) inside a parcel bound for the Netherlands. "Experts have confirmed that the relics have cultural value and can only be exported with the Russian Ministry of Culture's permission. The total value of the objects has been estimated at 162,000 rubles [2,635 US\$]." Sakhalin customs officials were closely monitoring the shipper, a professional palaeontologist in Yakutia. He was subsequently detained and criminal proceedings have commenced under article 226.1 of the Criminal Code on smuggling cultural goods. Interfax Russia, November 24, 2022.<sup>1</sup>



**End of December 2022**

**Rudnyansky District, Smolensk Oblast, Russia. Border with Belarus.**

Officials intercepted 97 mammoth tusks in a lorry bound for Belarus, among other goods. According to various documents, the tusks came from Russia, the shippers were identified as Beiger and K. and the consignee is a company named Guangzhou Xiong Xin. "Processed and suitable for further carving animal ..." say the labels



The total weight is reaching one tonne. The value is estimated worth of 16 million rubles, or 262,000 US\$ (262 US\$/kg). The Russian Ministry of Culture considers these tusks to have heritage value and thus can only be exported with a permit. Proceedings against the businessman have begun.

Channel Zvezda, Dec. 27, 2022; Virtual Customs, Dec. 27, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



# ELEPHANTS, RHINOS / HIPPOS / FELINES

## AFRICA

### ANGOLA

**Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport, Luanda Province, Angola**

45 kg of ivory and 4 kg of big cat teeth seized from the luggage of 2 Vietnamese passengers bound for Dubai via the United Arab Emirates.

Jornal de Angola, December 3, 2022; Na Mira do Crime, December 3, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### KENYA

**November 16, 2022**

**Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Following a missing person report filed at the Muthangari police station, Yang Changgui's house was searched and his lifeless body was discovered, along with 78 sections of elephant tusk and some carved ivory, 2 rhinoceros horns, 65 lion teeth and 160 lion claws (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), stamps in the name of Hua Xoang Development Limited, Stanbic Bank chequebooks, 2 cell phones (Huawei and Lenovo), a printer and an electric saw. The body was taken to the morgue for autopsy.

Nation (Kenya), November 17, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

### MOZAMBIQUE

**December 6, 2022**

**Maputo, Maputo Province, Mozambique**



Seizure of 10 kg of rhinoceros horns, 280 kg of raw ivory, 340 kg of bones, claws and skulls (12) of lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) in the hands and home of a Mozambican man. According to SERNIC (Serviço Nacional de Investigação Criminal), the loot, which the man says he "kept" on behalf of a Vietnamese who has not given him any news for over a year, was awaiting shipment to Asia via Maputo airport.

The trafficker is believed to be linked to a Vietnamese gang arrested in May in Nigeria (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.10).

Notícias (Mozambique), December 6, 2022; MMO, December 8, 2022; Stephen Carmody (Wildlife Justice Commission), December 16, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

### UGANDA

**November 5 and 22, 2022**

**Nansana and Kampala, Central Region, Uganda**



- Katushabe Patrick, a high-ranking army officer, was arrested in a guest house. He possessed 28.9 kg of raw ivory and 2 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) weighing 1.65 kg. His accomplices fled the scene.

- He was fined 10 million shillings (2,640 US\$) or 6 years' imprisonment for illegally possessing protected animal parts and 5 million shillings or 5 years' imprisonment for conspiring to commit a crime.

KFM, November 15, 2022; Uganda Wildlife Authority, November 30, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

### TOGO

**October 13 and 14, 2022**

**Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo**

Arrest of 3 thugs well versed in trafficking and with well-filled address books. They include Moazu Kromah, alias Kampala Man, extradited to the USA and sentenced to 63 months in prison (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.38). Moustapha Seck, the Senegalese jeweller, Oumarou Kamara and Mamoudou Kamara,



who it is unclear whether they are from Guinea or Liberia, or both, were caught in possession of 50 carved ivories, an elephant tail and 11 lion teeth (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II). The lion teeth used to make pendants came from Ghana and Nigeria, and the elephant hair used to make bracelets from Cameroon. The operation is credited to OCRTIDB (Office central de répression du trafic illicite des drogues et du blanchiment) and MERF (Ministère de l'Environnement et des Ressources Forestières), with support from EAGLE Togo.

EAGLE, October 21, 2022; EAGLE Togo, October 2022.<sup>5</sup>

## ZIMBABWE

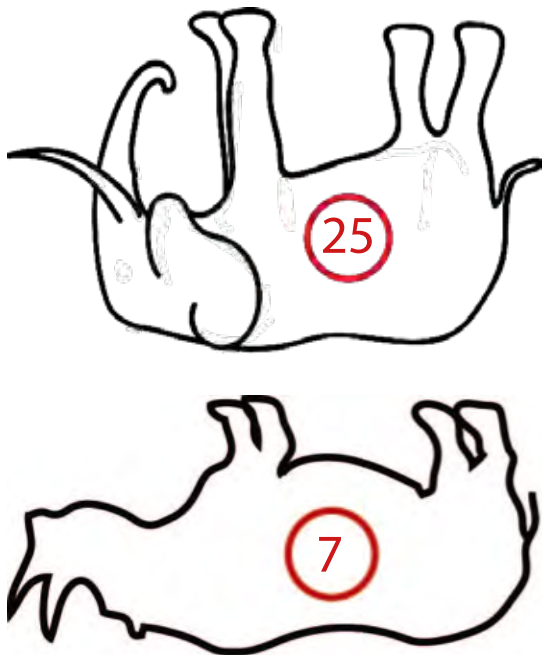
**Year 2022**

### Zimbabwe

Official toll for the year 2022.

- Poaching of 25 elephants, 7 rhinoceros and 4 lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II).
- Seizure of 123 elephants tusks or tusks sections, 3 rhino horns, 25 firearms and 174 rounds of ammunition.
- 5,530 traps dismantled.
- 167 poachers convicted.

NewZimbabwe.com, January 31, 2023.<sup>6</sup>



AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 17, 2022**

### New York, State of New York, United States of America

The Kenyan citizen named Mansur Mohamed Surur, alias Mansour, was sentenced to 54 months in prison. He committed a crime punishable by 45 years in prison. For a summary of all his run-ins with the US justice system, see "On the Trail" n°25 p.81, n°29 p.42, n°30 p.41, n°31 p.42 and n°36 p.43. Inner City Press, October 17, 2022.<sup>7</sup>



**December 14, 2022**

### New York, State of New York, United States of America



A Guinean citizen named Amara Cherif, alias Bamba Issiaka, was sentenced to 57 months in prison. He was accused alongside Moazu Kromah (alias Ayoub), alias Ayuba, alias Kampala Man, and Mansur Mohamed Surur for organising the transport, smuggling and sale of 190 kg of rhinoceros horns and over 10 tonnes of elephant ivory. The horns retail for 3.4 million US\$ and the tusks for 4 million US\$. Between March and July 2018, the African crime syndicate shipped 2 "test packages" containing one black and 2 white rhino horns to New York State in the United States.

Moazu Kromah was sentenced to 63 months in prison on August 18, 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.38).

In the context of overwhelming evidence presented in the indictment, strong links between wildlife and heroin trafficking, and the means used to obtain their extradition, the sentences handed down by New York's Southern District Court seem light.

For a summary of the case, see "On the Trail" n°25 p.81, n°29 p.42, n°30 p.41, n°31 p.42 and n°36 p.43. U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of New York, December 14, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

ASIA

INDIA

**December 29, 2022**

### Vadodara, Vadodara District, State of Gujarat, India

Officials seized 5 carved ivories and 2 rhinoceros horns from a store and its operators' home, a first in Gujarat.

The Times of India, December 31, 2022; WCCB, December 31, 2022; Wildlife SOS, January 6, 2023.<sup>9</sup>





# RHINOCEROSES



White rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*). Photo Wynand Uys

The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Eswatini and South Africa which are listed in Appendix II for trade of live animals and hunting trophies.

The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: the Indian rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, the Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, and the Javan rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

## On the Trail n°38

**Black market horn quotation from media or official sources**  
**The values were estimated at the time of the seizures**

### 1kg of raw horn

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	South Africa	3,500	15 (2022)
America	United States of America	10,000	29 (2019)
Asia	Singapore	25,300	31 (2022)

## CENTRAL AFRICA

### ANGOLA

**End of November 2022**

**Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport, Luanda, Luanda Province, Angola**

Over the weekend, a Chinese woman flies to Dubai with 13 horns in 2 suitcases. She was intercepted at the last minute in the departure lounge.

Novo Jornal, November 21, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

## EASTERN AFRICA

### MOZAMBIQUE

**October 5, 2022**

**Maputo, Maputo Province, Mozambique**



Sentencing of 2 Massingir nationals to 30 years in prison for possession of a clandestine firearm and ammunition, breaking into the Twin City private reserve, and attempting in conspiracy to poach rhinos to extract their horns for lucrative trafficking in September 2021. This is the third time in Mozambique that the 30-year sentence has been imposed for poaching or attempting to poach rhinos.

Twin City extends over 1,379 km<sup>2</sup> to the north of the Greater Lebombo Conservancy, the Kruger Park's cross-border buffer zone between South Africa and Mozambique.

Integrity Magazine, November 11, 2022; The Zimbabwe Independent, November 16, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

### ZIMBABWE

**October 12, 2022, January 11 and February 21, 2023**

**Chipinge Safari Area and Chipinge, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe**



The black rhino was riddled with bullets as he quenched his thirst at the Chidimayi watering hole. "A trail of blood was seen emanating from the watering hole along the river to the place where the carcass was discovered," says the police spokesman. On January 11, following a tip-off, ZimParks ranger Johane Guzha was arrested at his home.

On February 21, in court, he claimed to have shot the rhinoceros in self-defence. He was nevertheless sentenced to 10 years in prison for shooting the animal and 10 years for taking his horn. The sentences will run concurrently. The horn has not yet been found.

Rhinos poached at Chipinge, see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 61, n°10 p. 46 and n°25 p. 76.

The Manica Post, October 28 2022 and February 24 2023.<sup>3</sup>

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa**

Rhino dehorning in Pilanesberg continue to protect rhinos from poaching, but the dehorned horns are not always protected from trafficking.

Trafficking in preventively dehorned horns, see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 68, n°17 p. 73-74, p. 75 and n°29 p. 46.

Poaching of preventively dehorned rhinos, see "On the Trail" n°7 p. 70, n°8 p. 61, p. 62, n°10 p. 47, n°11 p. 59, p. 65, n°12 p. 68, n°15 p. 83, n°18 p. 70, n°22 p. 81, n°29 p. 48, n°31 p. 45, p. 46, p. 47, n°32 p. 60, n°33 p. 67, n°34 p. 51 and p. 55,

Perry Steve Dell, October 8, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

### REPEATED OFFENCE

**October 18, 2022**

**Sannieshof, North West Province, South Africa**

The International Rhino Poaching Squad was driving a white Polo on National Highway 14. It was made up of an ex-policeman from Botswana and 3 nationals from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. It was stopped in its tracks by the Vryburg flying squad and canine squad, and the Sannieshof police. Inside the car were 2 rhino horns and a firearm silencer. Marumo, the ex-police officer, had already been arrested for trafficking horns and was released during the Covid-19 court paralysis. The quartet is behind bars.

Save the Beasts, October 19 and 21, 2022; SAPS, October 21, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**October 20, 2022**

**Middelburg Toll Plaza, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

On National Highway 4, a Toyota minibus was inspected at a tollbooth. Under the hood were 2 suspicious packages. They contained 2 rhinoceros horns valued by the authorities at 2 million rand (111,625 US\$) on the local market. The driver and sole occupant of the minibus was taken into custody. According to him, the rhino had been poached 2 days earlier in the Kruger.

Middelburg Observer, October 20, 2022; SAPS, October 20, 2022.<sup>6</sup>



**October 23, 2022**  
**KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**



The Zululand Rhino Orphanage welcomed a 105 kg, 6-week-old rhinoceros whose mother fell prey to poaching.

Zululand Conservation Trust, October 24, 2022; African Wildlife Vets, October 27, 2022; Helping Rhinos, October 30 and November 16, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**November 15, 2022**  
**Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



Sentence of Silvester Sidney Zitha, age 40, to 25 years in prison, 2 for breaking and entering, 5 for illegal possession of a caliber 458 firearm with a silencer, 2 years for the illegal possession of ammunition, 10 years for poaching a rhinoceros, 2 for carrying a dangerous weapon (ax), and 4 for conspiracy to commit a crime. Some sentences are running concurrently and the effective prison sentence is 17 years. In October 2018, he had been caught in the act of poaching after a 3 km chase with rangers from the Tshokwane section of the Kruger. He was in possession of 2 horns. He was accompanied by an accomplice who was released on bail, failed to respond to court summons, and is now presumed dead.

SAPS, November 16, 2022; myLOWVELD.net, November 17, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**November 18, 2022**  
**Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga, South Africa**



At age 34, Sipho Titus Khosa is the rhino desperado. He was sentenced to 54 years in prison. As some sentences are running concurrently, the actual period of incarceration will be 37 years. In September 2016, in the Stolzne section of the Kruger, he had been surrounded in the bushes by a patrol. Between him and a partner, authorities seized a firearm with a silencer, 2 magazines with 33 rounds of ammunition, an axe, a survival bag, and 2 fresh horns. They were released on bail and did not respond to any further court summonses. Four months later, Khosa was at it again. He was with 2 new partners, still in the

Stolzne section of the Kruger, and after a chase by helicopter and on land, they had once again been surrounded by rangers. They had a firearm with silencer, an axe, and 3 rhino horns. This time, he was denied bail, unlike his 2 accomplices Francisco Mlambo and Sam Lejane.

Arrest of rhino poachers in the Stolzne section, see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 69, n°28 p. 94, n°33 p. 65, n°34 p. 5 and p. 54, n°36 p. 48.

SAPS, November 19, 2022; myLOWVELD.net, November 20, 2022; SA-People, November 20, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**November 22, 2022**  
**Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



Sentencing of 2 Mozambican nationals to 6 years in prison. They had entered the Tshokwane section of the Kruger with the intention and means of poaching one or more rhinos (see "On the Trail" n°36 p. 46).

SAPS, November 22, 2022; News24, November 23, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**November 24, 2022**  
**Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



Sithlangu had been spotted with an automatic weapon slung over his shoulder in the Stolzne section of the Kruger by a helicopter flyover. Arrested by a ground patrol, he was also found to be in possession of ammunition and other useful hulling tools. He was released on bail and never again responded to court summonses. In February 2022, he was caught up in a raid and sentenced by the specialized court to 14 years in prison for breaking and entering the Kruger, possession of a firearm, prohibited ammunition and a dangerous weapon (an axe), and premeditated rhino poaching. The sentences are combined for a total of 11 years.

TimesLIVE (South Africa), November 24, 2022; SAPS, November 25, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**South Africa**

The Aspinall Foundation team urgently dehorned 4 rhinos in a private reserve where poachers were spotted.

The Aspinall Foundation, December 13, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**Saturday 3 or Sunday 4, December 2022**  
**Khamab Kalahari Reserve, North West Province, South Africa. Border with Botswana.**

The reserve's oldest male black rhino was poached and stripped of his horns by raiders who, despite the mobilization of a helicopter, drones, several anti-poaching teams and canine units, managed to escape to Botswana.

Baby Rhino Rescue, December 7, 2022.<sup>13</sup>



**December 6, 2022**

**Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



Kruger rangers Hendrick Experience Silinda and Archie Musa Mlambo sentenced to 7 years in prison. In their camp, the SAPS had seized in 2019 a large-calibre firearm with the number erased, with the ammunition to go with it, and 3 hunting knives. It is not known whether they themselves intended to poach, or whether they had introduced all the necessary equipment into the park for accomplices from outside. At the bar of the special rhinoceros court, they said they were the victims of a frame-up.

The Citizen (South Africa), December 7, 2022; Independent Online, December 7, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**December 8 and 14, 2022**

**Ermelo, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



The Toyota Fortuner was on the radar. It was stopped by the SAPS. Two men tried to escape. Four horns were found under the hood in the presence of the 2 suspects. Junior Chauke was released on 10,000 rand (590 US\$) bail, subject to conditions. Prince Ntsako Letswele remains in custody. The horns weigh 14.6 kg. They are valued at 876,000 rand or 3,500 US\$/kg, which in market conditions seems artificially undervalued and likely to dissuade would-be poachers!

SAPS, December 13 and 15, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**December 9, 2022**

**Leyden, Limpopo Province, South Africa**



After the poaching of 2 rhinos, the hunt for information began. SAPS, private security guards and witnesses were mobilized, and 5 men were eventually arrested. Aged between 25 and 40, they were in possession of firearms with silencers, ammunition and 2 butcher's knives, and the SAPS have every reason to believe that the horns seized from their red Volkswagen came from the night's carnage. DNA confirmation is awaited. SAPS, December 10, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**December 9, 2022**

**Limpopo Province, South Africa**



Arrival at the orphanage, blindfolded and ear plugged, of a new little resident, 4/5 months old, an orphan, dead set against humanity, throwing everything away, refusing bottles and approaches from the caretakers, fortunately agreeing to drink from a soup tureen and eat a little grass.

The Rhino Orphanage, December 10, 11 and 18, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENCE  
December 12, 2022**

**Bronkhorstspuit, Gauteng Province, South Africa**



- A new trial for Gideon van Deventer, who is already serving a 10-year prison sentence (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.48). A whistleblower who deciphered court records informed the courts in June 2022, 8 years after the events, that Gideon, brother of Nicklaas van Deventer, who is serving a 15-year prison sentence, had escaped prosecution and conviction thanks to the complicity of the prosecutor at the time, Solly Leballo, for illegally possessing 2 firearms with silencers and 46 rounds of high-calibre ammunition able to penetrate the brains of rhinos. In 2018, Leballo was caught by elite police officers negotiating the dropping of charges against a murderer for the sum of 100,000 rand (7,000 US\$). He immediately resigned from his prestigious post before "being resigned".

.../...

His corruption trial has not yet been held. The amount of the bribe Leballo received from Gideon van Deventer for dropping the charges of possessing and transporting firearms and ammunition is not known. At the end of 2006, all managers of private reserves and national parks housing rhinos in South Africa were sent "High Alert" posters with portraits of Gideon van Deventer, his brother Nicklaas and Gert Saaiman, helicopter pilot and director of Saaiman Hunting Safaris. The 3 men were wanted for poaching 22 rhinos in the Kruger Park, the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park and in private ranches in Komatipoort and Bela-Bela. They were considered armed, dangerous and likely to shoot to evade arrest. "Be on the alert if you see a low flying helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft over the parks." Arrested in 2006 and sentenced in 2007 to 10 years in prison, 2 of which were suspended, Gideon van Deventer had been released on parole in 2011. Prosecutor Leballo therefore knew in 2015 that he was protecting a serial rhino killer.

- Gideon van Deventer is sentenced to 8 years in prison for illegal possession of 2 firearms and ammunition and 8 years for transporting 2 firearms and ammunition. The 2 sentences run concurrently. See "On the Trail" n°16 p.65, n°17 p.77 and n°36 p.48.

Mail & Guardian (South Africa), October 27 and December 17, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

#### December 20, 2022

#### Bronkhorstspuit, Gauteng Province, South Africa

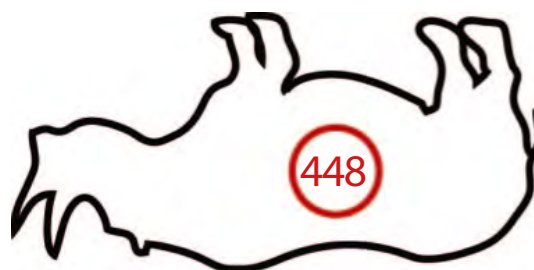
Onward Muchangowa is sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment for conspiracy to commit rhino poaching, 8 years' imprisonment for rhino poaching, acting in common purpose with the van Deventer brothers, and 5 years' imprisonment for the joint possession of 2 rhino horns. The sentences run concurrently. He had been arrested in January 2017 with the van Deventer brothers (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.65) and remained in custody awaiting trial. Muchangowa is said to have acted as a commercial agent for several poaching gangs. He was a horn seller. He sold some of them on WhatsApp. Sometimes 7 or 8 people would fight over the privilege of winning the sale.

Mail & Guardian (South Africa), December 22, 2022.<sup>19</sup>



#### South Africa Year 2022 toll. Official sources

Provinces and national parks	2020	2021	2022
SANParks	247	209	124
Gauteng	2	2	2
Limpopo	18	38	25
Mpumalanga	13	39	21
North West	19	32	24
Eastern Cape	0	0	0
Free State	1	24	4
Northern Cape	1	1	4
KwaZulu-Natal	93	102	244
Western Cape	0	4	0
Total	394	451	448



#### Comments:

Slowing down in the Kruger.

Overspeed in KwaZulu-Natal: 228 in provincial parks, 16 in private reserves.

"This year's outcome shows that collaboration between conservation authorities, the South African Police Services, revenue authorities and international agencies works. We believe that if provincial authorities in KwaZulu-Natal follow our model, they will be able to significantly curb rhino poaching in their provincial parks before it is too late," said Minister Creecy

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (South Africa), February 6, 2023.<sup>20</sup>

## NAMIBIA

**October 4, 2022**

### **Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia**

A black rhinoceros was dehorned for preventative purposes in a Kunene region reserve. The 12 kg horn was then placed in a batch with 5 other horns but soon after disappeared. A PRU (Protected Resources Unit) agent named Salatiel Simon was sent on Friday, September 30 to submit the batch to the Otjiwarongo police station, but only handed over 5 horns. After failing to explain why the 6<sup>th</sup> was missing, he was put in prison. On Friday, October 28, the head of the PRU revealed that the horn was found in Angola and that the policeman had resigned on Wednesday, October 19. Against the advice of the public prosecutor's office, Simon was released on Thursday, December 1 on a 590 US\$ bail - a puny sum compared to the value of a kilo of horn.

The Namibian, October 4, 2022; Namibia News Digest, October 6, 19, 29 and December 1, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

**October 17, 2022**

### **Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia**

Wang Hui, leader of the Windhoek gang that made the headlines in "On the Trail" between 2014 and 2019, fled this Monday at around 11 a.m. Along with other convicts, he was enrolled in a supervised work camp outside the prison north of Windhoek. He pretended to want to go to the toilet and disappeared.

Some say he took off in a Mercedes, others say in a pick-up truck. He was serving 20 years in prison for attempting to smuggle 14 horns and rhinoceros and a leopard skin in March 2014. Wang Hui and his 3 henchmen were sentenced in September 2016 to between 9 and 11 years in prison. They appealed and were sentenced to 20 years in prison (see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 66, n°5 p. 73, n°6 p. 65, n°9 p. 62, n°10 p. 47, n°11 p. 65, n°14 p. 68 and n°25 p. 78).

The Namibian, October 17, 2022; Erongo, October 18, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

**October 20, 2022**

### **Groot Gamsberg Farm, Khomas Region, Namibia**

The carcass of a male white rhinoceros, shot dead and stripped of his horns, was discovered. This rhino's economic value is estimated at 450,000 Namibian dollars (25,000 US\$).

Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), October 24, 2022; Namibian Sun, October 27, 2022.<sup>23</sup>



**Between October 21 and 24, 2022**

### **Otjisauona Farm, Khomas Region, Namibia**

Two slaughtered male white rhinoceroses, both stripped of their horns, are discovered. Their collective economic value is estimated at 660,000 Namibian dollars, or 36,720 US\$.

Informanté, October 26, 2022; Namibian Sun, October 27, 2022.<sup>24</sup>

**October 25, 2022**

### **Farm Otjisauona, Khomas Region, Namibia**

The carcasses of 2 white rhinoceroses stripped of their horns are discovered. Authorities estimate that they were poached between October 21 and 24. The economic value of the rhinos is estimated at 660,000 Namibian dollars (36,700 US\$).

Informanté, October 26, 2022; Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, October 26, 2022.<sup>25</sup>

**November 17, 2022**

### **Namibia**

Libonelo Sobosi is indicted for an attempted rhinoceros poaching on October 9.

The Namibian, November 23, 2022; Namibian Sun, November 24, 2022.<sup>26</sup>

**November 18, 2022**

### **Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia**

Jonas Gerhard, 25, Petrus Kalenga, 36, and Tangeni Jesaya, 22, are arrested for purportedly attempting to poach a rhino on September 26.

The Namibian, November 23, 2022; Namibian Sun, November 24, 2022.<sup>27</sup>

**November 19, 2022**

### **Oshivelo, Oshikoto Region, Namibia**

Festus Amunyela and Mekondjo Tsillinus, both 23, are arrested for allegedly attempting to poach a rhino on June 16.

The Namibian, November 23, 2022; Namibian Sun, November 24, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

**End of 2022**

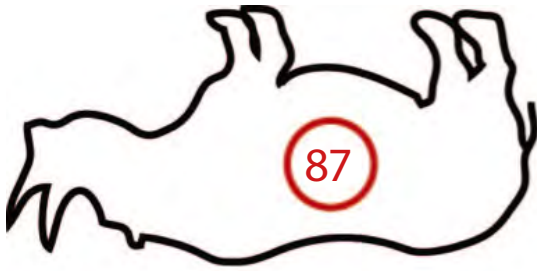
### **Düsternbrook Farm, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia**

HoRN.nam, a group connecting rhino breeders with outside stakeholders, is offering a reward of 100,000 Namibian dollars (5,770 US\$) to anyone who can provide helpful information in identifying a rhinoceros poacher.

The Namibian, February 16, 2023.<sup>29</sup>



**Namibia**  
Year 2022 toll. Official sources



The 2022 official report lists 61 black rhino poachings and 26 white rhino poachings. After the lull of 2020 and 2021, the peaks of 2019, 2018 and 2017 were again reached. Etosha National Park remains a major concern for Minister Romeo Muyunda.

Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), January 13, 2023; The Brief, January 30, 2023; The Namibian, January 31, 2023.<sup>30</sup>

**ASIA AND AMERICA**

**THAILAND AND  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**October 7, 2022 and September 19, 2023**

**Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand and New York, State of New York, United States of America**



"On the Trail" has been tracking Teo Boon Ching since 2015. Despite all his precautions, such as his looks and his alibis of travelling for pleasure between Africa and Asia, "Godfather" was hooked by 2 special agents of the US wildlife services, one of whom claimed to live in Manhattan, New York, trafficking in Madagascar radiated tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and spotted pond turtle (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I), and having a good knowledge of the smuggling manners and a desire to diversify into rhinos. During the summer of 2019, the American justice system accumulated enough photos, videos, telephone and email exchanges for the Malayan or Thai police to take an interest in this elusive character. Godfather was arrested in Bangkok on June 29, 2022. It was in the Thai capital that on August 23, 2019, one of his partners in wildlife trafficking delivered 12 African rhino horns (2 black rhino, 10 white rhino) weighing 26 kg. The day before this transaction, Godfather, who was in Malaysia, or claimed to be, had received transfers in yuan via a Bangkok-based Chinese bank unknown to the tax authorities. The 12 horns were bought by the pseudo-buyer in Manhattan for 259,000 US\$ (i.e. around 10,000 US\$/kg) and Godfather demanded to be paid in yuan to better conceal the trafficking. To complete the picture, he planned to smuggle and transport around 73 kg of horns to the United States with American pseudo-clients on the basis of 725,500 US\$, i.e. nearly 10,000 US\$/kg.

- On October 7, 57-year-old Teo Boon Ching, who also used the aliases Zhang and Dato Sri, was extradited and placed under escort by at least 2 US special agents on a scheduled flight to New York. On arrival, he was brought before the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York and charged with trafficking in endangered species and money laundering.

- On September 19, 2023, Teo Boon Ching was sentenced to 18 months in prison, which the prosecutor said was a "substantial sentence" and proof of "the resolve of this Office to use every tool at our disposal to ensure the protection of endangered species." He was liable to 20 years' imprisonment. The investigation finally proved that Teo Boon Ching had conspired to smuggle, sell and transport to the United States at least 219 kg of rhino horn worth approximately 2.1 million US\$. Teo Boon Ching, see "On the Trail" n°8 p.81 and n°36 p. 195.

US Department of Justice, October 7, 2022; US Department of the Treasury, October 7, 2022; Chiang Rai Times (avec Bangkok Post), October 9, 2022; New Straits Times, October 9, 2022; U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of New York, September 19, 2023; U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand, September 22, 2023.<sup>31</sup>

**EASTERN ASIA**

**CHINA**

**October 2022**

**Wuhan, Hubei Province, China**

A rhinoceros horn weighing around 480 grams is confiscated from a parcel from abroad. Chinese Customs, October 28, 2022.<sup>32</sup>

**SOUTHEASTERN ASIA**

**SINGAPORE**

**October 4, 2022**

**Changi International Airport, Singapore**



Seizure of 20 rhinoceros horns, parts, and sections in the travel bags of a passenger in transit from South Africa to Laos. Weight: 34 kg. Estimated value: 1.2 million S\$ (860,240 US\$ or 25,300 US\$/kg). Channel News Asia, October 5, 2022; Mothership, October 5, 2022.<sup>33</sup>

## VIET NAM

**October 23, 2022**

**Dong Tinh, Vinh Phuc Province, Viet Nam**

Five Chinese nationals working in the Bac Ninh province travelled to buy rosewood (*Dalbergia tonkinensis*, Appendix II). Arousing suspicions, the police decided to check them out. Sure enough, the men had no documentation authorizing their presence in Viet Nam. What's more, one of them, Chen Jian Fu, was wanted by Guangzhou customs in connection with smuggling 11.3 kg of rhinoceros horn. He found refuge in Tu Son, Bac Ninh province, thanks to an acquaintance born in the same town and living in Hanoi. They were all taken to the police station.

Chen Jian Fu is not the only Chinese trafficker to have gone into exile in Viet Nam: see for example "On the Trail" n°37 p.189.

Lao Dong, October 28, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

## SOUTHERN ASIA

### INDIA

**December 15, 2022**

**Kacharibhetitop, Darrang District, State of Assam, India**

Arrest of Abdul Matin, alias Kala. A reward of 200,000 rupees (2,450 US\$) was promised for his arrest. He was wanted for his alleged involvement in the poaching and dehorning of a rhino in Kaziranga in January 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.41-42). When Kala was arrested, he was in possession of a large-calibre weapon and accompanied by Shamshuddin, his alleged accomplice.

The Hindu, December 16, 2022; The Times of India, December 16, 2022.<sup>35</sup>

### NEPAL

**October 13, 2022**

**Khairahani, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province, Nepal**



Electrocuted by a DC fence next to a pigsty on the banks of a small river. He was a male between 4 and 5 years old.

myRepublica, October 13, 2022; Nepal News, October 13, 2022; Online Khabar, October 13, 2022.<sup>36</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**

**Kalika, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province, Nepal**

A hornless, hoofless rhino is discovered several weeks after being poached. Fewer patrols lead to delays in finding the carcasses.

Online Khabar, December 4, 2022.<sup>37</sup>

## EASTERN EUROPE

### CZECHIA

**December 15, 2022**

**Capital City of Prague, Czechia**



Much ado - 24 rhinoceros horns seized in Prague in July 2013, and valued at nearly 4 million US\$ - about a judicial nothing, after almost 10 years. The Vietnamese organisers and Czech shooters who carried out the point-blank slaughter of rhinos on Dawie Groenewald's farm in South Africa in 2013 have been sentenced to 1 to 3-year suspended prison terms and derisory fines following a chaotic judicial process. Instead of being considered as hunting trophies forbidden to any national or international traffic, the horns were destined to be smuggled to Viet Nam or sold to Prague's Vietnamese community.

See "On the Trail" n°2 p.44-45, n°7 p.75, n°8 p.65-66, n°11 p.63 and n°22 p.84.

Ekolist.cz, July 24, 2019, November 20, 2020, March 22 and December 15, 2022; iDNES.cz, December 19, 2022.<sup>38</sup>



The 24 horns guarded by armed men on July 23, 2013 in Prague

## OCEANIA

### NEW ZEALAND

**Beginning of December 2022**

**Auckland, Auckland Region, New Zealand**

A first in New Zealand. Seizure by the DOC (Department of Conservation) of 1.73 kg of horns in the form of cups, bracelets and one engraved horn. Authenticity confirmed. The Asian or African origin is not specified. Two people are being questioned by the police.

1News, December 6, 2022; Department of Conservation, December 6, 2022.<sup>39</sup>





Amur leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis euptilurus*). Photo sandwich31

## On the Trail n°38

**Black market feline parts quotation from media or official sources**  
**The values were estimated at the time of the seizures**

Animal	Part	US\$	Country/ region	Ref. (year)
Tiger	Skin	61,190	India	3 (2022)
	A live tiger cub	40,000	Thailand	18 (2022)
Leopard	Skin	24,500	India	51 (2022)
Snow leopard	A live or dead specimen	30,000	Tajikistan	77 (2022)
Bobcat	Skin	580	Russia	90 (2022)



**AMERICA**

**MEXICO**

**December 27, 2022**

**El Marqués, State of Querétaro, Mexico**



Manuel N. was speeding on the highway leading to the international airport. He was stopped by the police, and at the time of the check, he and his passenger showed a certain nervousness and spirit of rebellion. And for good reason: in the rear trunk were 4 firearms, 98 rounds of ammunition, and, among the suitcases and bags, a tiger cub. Mexico News Daily, December 28, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**ASIA**

**INDIA**

**October 1, 2022**

**Pench National Park, Chhindwara District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**



The body of the 3-year-old tigress was drifting in the river on the edge of the park, which had just been reopened to the public on Saturday after 3 months behind closed doors. The news sent a chill down the spine of the park and sent forestry officials into a panic. The show was not what visitors were looking for. The alarm was sounded at 8 a.m. The body floating on the Pench River had all 4 paws amputated. According to a local rumor, ceremonies and manipulations of tiger paws by initiated sorcerers bring rain and wealth. The victim died of electrocution.

The Times of India, October 1, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**October 8, 2022**

**Kanker District, State of Chhattisgarh, India**

Nishad and Markam, ages 28 and 35, were arrested on Saturday afternoon on the Dudhawa road in Kanker. They were transporting and attempting to sell a tiger skin estimated by the authorities to be worth 5 million rupees (61,190 US\$) on the international market.

The Print, October 9, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**October 19, 2022**

**Penamaluru, Krishna district, State of Andhra Pradesh, India**

The gang of 5 crooks were trying to sell a dog skin disguised as a tiger skin.

The Hindu, October 19, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**November 12, 2022**

**Hunasekuppe, Mysore District, State of Karnataka, India**



This was the fourteenth poaching victim in Karnataka since the beginning of 2022. The tigress died on Saturday, November 12 in a trap in the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, leaving 3 orphans to fend for themselves in the forest. The news was initially reassuring. Aged 10 or 11 months, the tiger cubs were seen at 4:58 a.m. on Tuesday, November 15 sharing the carcass of a deer. Mahouts on the backs of domestic elephants continued to observe the movements of the survivors, and on Sunday, November 27, one of the tiger cubs was found dead with wounds to his neck, back, and front paws. He had apparently been attacked by a dominant male tiger. His body was burned in the presence of a representative of the NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) and veterinary doctor Ramesh. Concern is now focused on the fate of the 2 surviving tiger cubs.



The Times of India, November 16 and 17, 2022; Star of Mysore, November 28, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**November 19, 2022**

**Gobarwahi, Bhandara District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Pustode, age 41, and Aslapani, age 33, fell into the trap. They were trying to sell 15 tiger claws, 3 canines, 20 teeth, and 5 kg of tiger bones to undercover forest officials. Where's the skin?

The Hitavada, November 20, 2022; The Times of India, November 20, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

## TIGERS - followed

**November 21, 2022**

**Nagercoil, Kanniyakumari District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**



Ramesh and Dhanaraj were the first to fall into the trap. Having come by motorcycle to sell a tiger skin, they were greeted by a team of district foresters. A little later, Raja and Jayakumar were arrested and 1.5 million rupees (over 18,000 US\$) were seized from their homes. A fifth man is still at large. He is believed to be the maestro of the gang.

Maalaimalar, November 22, 2022; WCCB, November 22, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**Tuesday November 29 and Wednesday November 30, 2022**

**Surewani, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India**



Four men are taken into custody for 4 days. Ashok Fago Karade, Rushi Sahare, Nitesh Shankar Wagdhare, and Parasram Goma Dhurve are suspected of poisoning a tiger by spraying the carcass of a deer with insecticide purchased from a store in Badegaon. They then cut off the feline's 4 paws and buried the body on Karade's farm. The 4 paws were found. They were hidden in a tree. The 4 men had acted out of superstition. The paws and other parts of tigers are believed to bring good fortune and success in gambling. The decomposing body was exhumed and burnt in the open air under the responsibility of the authorities. The forestry services were alerted on the evening of Monday, November 28 by an anonymous tip-off, and a search took place the following day.

This is the twenty third tiger to fall victim to human aggression since the beginning of 2022 in Maharashtra. Surewani, population 500, is haunted by poaching. In January 2017, a tigress had been electrocuted, and in April 2007, Ganda Tularam Uikey, nicknamed the "mini-Veerappan," had been electrocuted while handling one of his traps. The poaching of hundreds of wild animals was attributed to him.

The Times of India, November 30 and December 1, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**December 7, 2022**

**Panna Tiger Reserve, Panna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**



The more he pulled to free himself and regain his freedom, the more he strangled and the closer he came to death. The magnificent tiger was found in the morning hanging from a branch by a steel noose that poachers had hung there to capture a nilgai or sambar deer.

The reserve extends over 580 km<sup>2</sup>. It is home to 70 to 80 tigers. In 2020, 5 tigers were poached. Environmentalist Ajay Dubey is alarmed by the rate of tiger poaching in a reserve where forest rangers are equipped with drones and night vision cameras. The Times of India, December 8, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

## REPEATED OFFENCE

**December 14, 15 and 30, 2022**

**Bisipur, Angarpada and Sasangabeda, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India**

Thanks to a last-minute tip-off from an ex-guard, the STF seized the skin of a Royal Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) on the edge of the Similipal Tiger Reserve overnight. It will be transferred to a laboratory in Dehradun to determine the victim's age. Arrest of Dev Kumar Patra, Fagu Prasad Hansdah and Purna Chandra Majhi alias Chagulu alias Tambudu.



The latest tiger census for the reserve in 2018 records 28 specimens. The fear of a tiger reserve empty of tigers looms on the near horizon. "Had the information not been shared with STF, the poachers would never have been arrested. In case of the burning of elephant carcass also, the matter would have been buried in the forest without the media getting an inkling of it," says Acharya, a wildlife enthusiast who has sometimes helped the STF and foresters solve wildlife crimes.

The Times of India, December 15, 2022; The New Indian Express, December 16, 2022; Argus News, December 31, 2022; Odisha Bytes, December 31, 2022.<sup>10</sup>



## TIGERS - followed

**December 17, 2022**

### **Surroundings of Nanakesarodla, Uttara Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India**

According to the post-mortem, the adult tiger died of a ruptured spinal cord during a territorial fight with a fellow tiger. His body was lacerated by claws. Nevertheless, opportunistic undertakers, no doubt alerted by rumours of the fight, seized the 4 paws of the defeated tiger and his head.

The New Indian Express, December 19, 2022; The Times of India, December 19, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**December 27, 2022**

### **Sihora, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Panda Budhram Nohar Pusam, Sanjeet Chamar Singh Kushram and Dalpat Dheer Singh Uikey are stopped in a greasy spoon. They are holding a tigress skin. Relying on their confessions, the forestry services arrested 5 accomplices. The tigress died in November. She was killed in the buffer zone of the Kanha Tiger Reserve. She had fallen victim to the rumour that has been rife in Madhya Pradesh since the financial crisis of November 2016, which claims that a tiger skin makes money fall from the sky (see "On the Trail" n°15 p.62).

The Hitavada, December 27, 2022; The Times of India, December 27, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**December 30, 2022**

### **Papadahandi, Nabarangpur District, State of Odisha, India**



Seizure of suspected tiger skin. Kamal Kumar Mohanty, 30, arrested.

Odisha News Tune, December 31, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

## INDONESIA

**October 19, 2022**

### **Batang Gansal, Indragiri Hulu Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**



Underneath the traffickers' looks and words were genuine police officers. R.N. fell into the trap. He wanted to sell them the skeleton of a Sumatran tiger. R.N. initially claimed to have "found" the remains of a tiger whose skin and viscera he had already been eaten by scavengers and vermin. He then admitted to having set a "special tiger" trap in the jungle. The investigation is continuing to establish whether R.N. is a lone poacher or a member of an organised gang.

Garda Animalia, October 23, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**November 2, 2022**

### **Simpang Tiga Redelong, Bener Meriah Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**



The former prefect of Bener Meriah, whose "On the Trail" n°36 p.57 recounted the fall and arrest in flagrante delicto of transporting a Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) skin and bones, is officially charged with trafficking in protected animals. One of his accomplices has already been sentenced to 18 months in prison and fined 100 million rupiah (6,430 US\$).

Aceh Journal National Network, November 15, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

## NEPAL

**October 1 and 16, 2022**

### **Nijgadh and Bagadadob, Parsa District, Province no2, Nepal**



- A 15-year-old tiger is found dead in a ditch. The head was mutilated and the body covered with wounds. According to the autopsy report, he had not eaten for 15 or 20 days. His death is thought to be the result of a lost fight with another tiger, but pro-tiger activists cast doubt on this convenient hypothesis for the local authorities. Indian foresters sometimes use the same arguments.

- The corpse of a tiger was discovered on a Sunday morning. According to the spokesman for the Parsa forestry division, he had died 3 or 4 days earlier. Poisoning is suspected. The 2 front paws were missing at the time of the macabre, stinking discovery of the 2.85-metre-long body 7 km from Parsa National Park. Parsa will be home to around 40 tigers by 2022, compared with 7 in 2013 and 18 in 2018.

The Kathmandu Post, October 18, 2022.<sup>16</sup>



## TIGERS - followed

**End of December 2022**

**Dhangadhi, Kailali District, Sudur Paschim Province, Nepal**

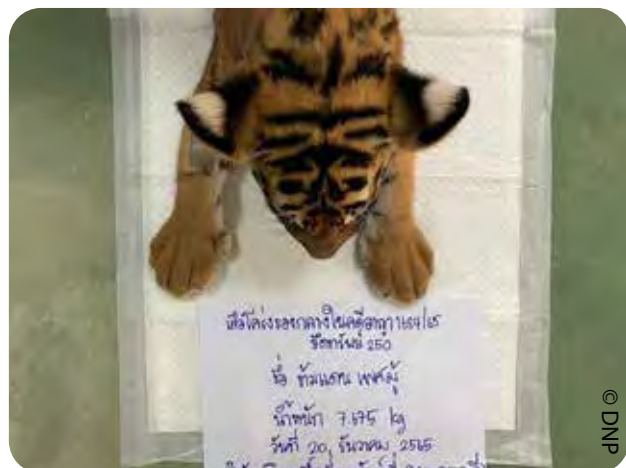
Arrest of Saud, 55, and 4 other men in connection with a transaction involving counterfeit money (142,000 rupees or 1,083 US\$) and 5.53 kg of suspected tiger bone.

The Rising Nepal, December 28, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

## THAILAND

**November 20 to December 19, 2022**

**Near Fang Daeng, Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand. Border with Laos.**



Seizure in the trailer of a pick-up truck that had just crossed the border with Laos of 4 tiger cubs, each weighing an average of 7 kg and with an estimated value of 1.5 million baht (40,000 US\$). They were destined to be eaten in luxury restaurants. The 2 males and 2 females aged around 2 months, were in such poor health that one of them died 5 days later in the hands of veterinary surgeons. Two people are under arrest. In December, Thailand obtained a commitment from Laos to combat this trade, which brings in a lot of money for the parties involved. Smuggling or suspected smuggling of tigers or tiger by-products between Thailand and Laos, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.103, n°5 p.63, n°14 p.51, n°20 p.71, n°23 p.90 and p.98 and n°36 p.58.

Dailynews, November 15, 2022; The Star, December 19, 2022; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, December 20, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

## VIET NAM

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**End of December 2022**

**Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam**

The case of the frozen tiger (see "On the Trail" n°36 p. 58), from whom the man and woman wanted to make every possible profit, resulted in suspended sentences and prison terms of 12 months, 14 months, 15 months and 50 months.

Nguyen Van Lieu, the transporter of the frozen tiger, was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, Hoang Van Hien, the seller of the frozen tiger, to 14 months' imprisonment, Do Van Lan, the buyer of the frozen tiger, to 15 months' imprisonment, and Nguyen Thi Oanh, his wife, to 14 months' suspended imprisonment. The heaviest sentence, 50 months' imprisonment, was handed down to Nguyen Van Tuan, the frozen tiger dealer.

ENV, December 29, 2022.<sup>19</sup>



## EUROPE

### GERMANY

### OPERATION THUNDER 2022

**October 2022**

**Germany**

Tiger skin amulets are seized from a parcel from Asia as part of Operation Thunder.

Interpol, December 6, 2022; World Customs Organisation, December 6, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

## FRANCE

**November 24, 2022**

**Vannes, Department of Morbihan, France**

He was the little hand of the circus world and exotic animal breeders. "A clever and resourceful man" according to the OFB, who investigated his traffick at length. In his small truck, he transported live or dead tigers from circus to circus or from circus to taxidermist for the modest sum of 2,000 € (1,990 US\$), without authorization, as if he were transporting furniture or sodas. Between 2016 and 2021, these wildlife removals netted at least 45,000 €. The 64-year-old man pleaded not guilty, admitting only to burying a donkey instead of sending him to the rendering plant, or killing a buffalo (genus *Bubalus* or *Syncerus*) with a clandestine weapon to sell the meat. He was simply given a 3-month suspended prison sentence and a 5,000 € fine, and his vehicle was confiscated. The public prosecutor's office deplored the fact that the investigation had not brought to court the most important players in the industry, and had asked for a suspended prison sentence of 18 months and a 8,500 € fine.

Ouest-France, November 24, 2022.<sup>21</sup>



## TIGERS - followed

**November 28, 2022**

### **Beauvais, Department of Oise, France**

Mario Masson, tiger trainer, breeder, seller and renter, is fined 5,000 € (4,975 US\$) and ordered to pay heavy financial penalties for animal abuse and concealment of income, a total of 126,000 € (125,400 US\$). He must also pay 120,000 € to Tonga Terre d'Accueil, which is housing his 10 tigers seized in December 2020 by the OFB in an industrial wasteland in northern France (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.56). It is thanks to the persistence of the NGO One Voice that the specialist in captive white tigers and the express sale of tiger cubs even before they are weaned has been convicted. To produce the damning videos, a private detective had filmed the daily circumstances of the prisoners for 6 days and 6 nights from the top floor of a ruined building.

Le Monde (with AFP), November 28, 2022; Le Parisien, November 28, 2022; Oise Hebdo, November 28, 2022; One Voice, November 28, 2022.<sup>22</sup>



"Aurora" was eventually transferred to the "Tiger House" near Leningrad, a kind of State-run hospice for aging and disabled tigers. "She has put on weight and is interested in the world around her," say her carers. "Her coat is shiny and thick again." Kommersant, October 10, 2022; Komsomolskaya Pravda, October 10, 2022; Interfax Russia, October 13, 2022; Readovka, October 13, 2022; Dobro. Journal, October 17, 2022; RIA Novosti, November 9, 2022; SarlInform, February 8, 2023.<sup>24</sup>

## RUSSIA

**October 3, 2022**

### **Verkhniy Pereval, Primorsky Krai, Russia**

A search of a villager's home by FSB border guards led to the seizure of the bones and skulls of 2 Amur tigers (*Panthera tigris altaica*) and a skin. Ecological damage amounted to 5 million rubles (87,000 US\$). An RGD-5 grenade and 7.62-caliber ammunition complete the FSB's kill list.

Amur Mash, October 3, 2022; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Primorsky Krai, November 23, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**Mid-October 2022**

### **Saratov, Saratov Oblast, and Kirpichnoye, Leningrad Oblast, Russia**

The head of Rosprirodnadzor, Russia's wildlife protection agency, takes an interest in the fate of the blind tigress Aurora. Administrative proceedings are to be initiated against the animal's owner. The alarm was raised by residents of Navashina Street and animal rights activist Ekaterina Rakhmanova. The emaciated tigress lives in a hovel without daylight or fresh air. Her eyes have turned blue and she is blind. She is accompanied in her misfortune by 2 owls (*Strigidae*, Appendix I or II), 2 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*). Her owner Ilya Goryachev bought her as a kitten from the Nizhny Novgorod zoo and made a few pennies from renting her out for weddings, advertising shoots, and showing her off on a leash by the Black Sea.

## LIONS - *Panthera leo* (Africa), Appendix II. *Panthera leo persica* (Asia), Appendix I.

### AFRICA

## SOUTH AFRICA

**November 9, 2022**

### **Bethlehem, Free State Province, South Africa**

Translocation to the Four Paws shelter of 10 lions, 3 males and 7 females, mistreated on a breeding farm in Gauteng Province. The farm in question is closed. After a 265 km, 3-hour truck journey, the felines were anaesthetised and the lionesses sterilized in accordance with Four Paws' doctrine. The NGO does not want to perpetuate lion breeding. Lionsrock, as the refuge is called, is not a zoo, and the lions' bones will not be sold to the Chinese at the end of their lives.

Four Paws, November 10, 2022 and February 10, 2023.<sup>25</sup>

**November 28, 2022**

### **Boksburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Four women ages 22, 25, 27, and 46 were selling 3 lion cubs between 5 and 6 weeks old. Jorain Hill, Megan du Plessis, Yannndri Bekker, and Lauren Bartholomew were arrested by the Hawks and their lawyers are seeking their release on bail.

SAPS, December 1, 2022.<sup>26</sup>

## KENYA

December 2, 2022

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya



Rescue of a sub-adult lioness from the Mulika Pride. She was limping because of an arrow in her left hind paw. Favourable prognosis. The next day, she initiated a plot against an antelope.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2022.<sup>27</sup>

## MOZAMBIQUE

November 2022

Zambezi Delta, Zambezi and Sofala Provinces, Mozambique



Since September, a lioness had been wearing the iron ring of a trap around her neck, from which she had managed to escape. After several unsuccessful attempts, she was anaesthetised, freed from her straitjacket, and nursed back to health. Despite the severity of the injury, the prognosis is favourable.

In the 4,500 km<sup>2</sup> of the Zambezi delta, wildlife, particularly ungulates, has been decimated by the effects of civil war and 20 years of rampant poaching. According to the Cabela Family Foundation, supported by American Catholic churches and the National Rifle Association (NRA), the delta has regained its pre-civil war (May 30, 1977 to October 4, 1992) wildlife density, and is home to several thousand buffalo and antelope. Only lions are missing, and 24 specimens were imported from South Africa in 2018 to boost the genetic diversity and fertility of the delta's lions. The project's ambition is to reach a population of 500 lions by 2032, representing 10% of the world population by 2038. According to the promoters, these 24 breeding stock are untouchable by sport hunters from abroad, and local populations are associated with the project and benefit from a number of amenities, according to the Cabela Family Foundation. The Cabela family made their fortune selling guns and ammunition as well as hunting, fishing and camping equipment.

The Cabela Family Foundation, December 19, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

## SENEGAL

### REPEATED OFFENCE

October 28 and November 9, 2022

Tambacounda, Tambacounda Region, Senegal



Sentencing of Oumar Ba, Sakhoba Simakha, Boubacar Ba, and Sirajo Sidebeh Jallow to a suspended sentence of 3 months and a fine equal to 150 US\$. All 4 were found guilty of illegally possessing ammunition and weapons. Oumar Ba was found guilty of illegally practicing the veterinary profession. Simakha was acquitted of the illegal practice of pharmacy.

On October 22, they had been arrested in possession of 3 firearms, including a semi-automatic weapon of war, 76 rounds of ammunition, 128 boxes of human medicines, 46 boxes of veterinary medicines and a ratel skin (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III in Botswana). The 4 men are suspected of poaching a lioness (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and abandoning 2 cubs in the buffer zone of the Niokolo-Koba Park. Simakha was given a 2-year suspended prison sentence at the end of April 2022 for illegal possession of 2 leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and 3 aardvark legs (*Orycteropus afer*) (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.61). The Tambacounda court's tolerance of crime is staggering.

EAGLE, October 2022; EAGLE Sénégal, October and November 2022; SeneNews, November 11, 2022.<sup>29</sup>

## SUDAN

December 2022

Omdurman, Khartoum State, Sudan

Three lion cubs that had escaped from their enclosure northwest of Khartoum at a Rapid Support Forces base were shot to death. Some time earlier, the Sudan Animal Rescue Center team had been called in. But they didn't have the time to intervene with their skills and anaesthetic guns. In difficult social and economic circumstances aggravated by the coup d'état of General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the Sudan Animal Rescue Center is trying to keep alive a good fifteen lions confined to a reserve south of Khartoum. Other lions, whose numbers are unknown, are confined to Dinder National Park near the border with Ethiopia.

Africanews, December 22, 2022.<sup>30</sup>



## ZAMBIA

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Busanga Plains, Kafue National Park, North Western Province, Zambia**

Kafue lost 2 lionesses who were fatally wounded in traps treacherously set in the marshes. They left 8 orphans between the ages of 6 and 8 months. The NGOs *Zambian Carnivore Program* and *Panthera*, with the agreement of the park authority, decided to capture them to prevent them from dying of malnutrition or predation by adult carnivores, and to place them for a few months in a forest enclosure, avoiding prolonged contact with the guard team. The transition to food autonomy seems to be going well for the 7 cubs. They have managed to capture a vervet monkey in the enclosure. As for the eighth cub, a female, she remains missing and her fate is unknown in the vast Kafue National Park (22,400 km<sup>2</sup>).  
African Parks, November 19, 2022.<sup>31</sup>



## AMERICA

### MEXICO

**November 26, 2022**

**Alvarado, State of Veracruz, Mexico**

A lioness wanders through Alvarado. She is often seen on the Circuito del Bosque street. She lives in a luxury house. Her owner introduces herself as an American lawyer and director of "Corporativo de Visas Americanas." Yessica López doesn't lack nerve. She says on Instagram that her lioness lives in better conditions than those protesting her detention. The Profepa (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) of Veracruz is keeping a close eye on the situation. The origin of the lioness is unknown.  
Telediario, November 25, 2022; Profepa, November 26, 2022.<sup>32</sup>



## ASIA

### SAUDI ARABIA

**November 17, 2022**

**Buraidah, Al-Qasim Region, Saudi Arabia**

Seizure of 4 sickly lions roaring in an upscale neighbourhood of Al Qasim and transfer to an approved shelter.

Twasul.info, November 17, 2022.<sup>33</sup>

## INDIA

**November 15-December 4, 2022**

**Surroundings of Alidar, Gir Somnath District, State of Gujarat, India**



- An informant tells forestry officials that a lion carcass has been burnt near Alidar (population 7,500 at the last census in 2011).

- Thanks to the flair of Tropsi, a tracking dog specially trained to detect the scent of wild beasts, the remains of the lion electrocuted by an unauthorized connection near an illegal crop were located and unearthed, although the farmers had taken the precaution of replanting grass over the pit. A little further on, in another illegal sugarcane plot, bones and ashes were exhumed thanks to the diligence of the same Tropsi. Karshan Bambhaniya, Karshan Barad, Gopal Vanja and Sunil Bambhaniya were taken into custody.  
The Times of India, December 7, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

## EUROPE

### FRANCE

**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**November 7, 2022**

**Bobigny, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, France**



Gamart Camara was sentenced to 8 months in prison, 4 of which were suspended, and a fine of 1,350 € (1,345 US\$) for keeping and mistreating a lion cub in his home. He wanted to use the cub in a rap video. He had already made headlines in 2017 with the lion cub he bought from a circus, and was fined 600 € for mistreating a horse on a street. All these exactions were staged in the Paris suburbs.

Actu Seine-Saint-Denis, November 7, 2022; 30 millions d'Amis, November 8, 2022.<sup>35</sup>

## RUSSIA

**October 3, 2022**

### **Kazan International Airport, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia**

Seizure of 177 lion claws and 6 lion canine teeth worth over a million rubles (17,420 US\$) in the 2 suitcases of a Russian passenger traveling from Addis Ababa in Ethiopia via the United Arab Emirates. The man had tried to show clean hands. On arrival, he presented CITES permits and veterinary certificates issued in Zimbabwe for lion bones worth 1,600 US\$.

Tatar-inform, October 3, 2022; Virtual Customs, October 4, 2022.<sup>36</sup>

**December 27, 2022**

### **Anapa, Krasnodar Krai, Russia**

An abused lion drew the attention of neighbours at a water park on the Black Sea with his roars. After inspection, the Rosprirodnadzor interregional directorate ordered the seizure of the African lion and his transfer to Belgorod Zoo near the Ukrainian border, 1100 km from Anapa. The operator of "Planet Ocean" was fined 500,000 rubles (8,200 US\$) by the Anapa District Court.

New Kuban, December 28, 2022; Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources, December 28, 2022.<sup>37</sup>

**December 30, 2022**

### **Krasnyi Kamen Border Post, Bryansk Oblast, Russia. Border with Belarus.**

Seizure of a lion cub in a luxury camper van about to enter Belarus.

Portal of the participant of foreign economic activity. Customs news, January 12, 2023.<sup>38</sup>



## LEOPARDS - *Panthera pardus*, Appendix I

### AFRICA

## CAMEROON

**October 7, 2022**

### **Nkongsamba, Littoral Region, Cameroon**

Gilbert Pacôme Nguekeng and Dieudonné Gabri Lapa each fined 3 million CFA francs (4,500 US\$) and 150,000 CFA francs in court costs for transporting and illegally possessing a leopard skin and an African civet skin (*Civettictis civetta*) in the middle of a bag of rasps (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.51).

LAGA, October 2022.<sup>39</sup>



## KENYA

**December 13, 2022**

### **Timau, Meru County, Kenya**

The leopard was approached on foot, anaesthetised on the left flank, freed from the steel ring that was beginning to dig into his neck and beautiful spotted coat, treated and awakened by 2 injected antidotes (10 mg atipamezole and 6.5 mg yohimbine). He was then relocated where he had come from, in the Loisaba conservancy.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2022.<sup>40</sup>



## NAMIBIA

**November 8, 2022**

### **Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia**

Tjizire Kohongo and Angula Mbwale Kafidi were caught with a leopard skin in their hands. Following their arrest and court appearance, their request for bail was denied.

Informanté, November 15, 2022; Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), November 16, 2022; Namibian Sun, November 24, 2022.<sup>41</sup>

## REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**October 31, 2022**

### **Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, Republic of Congo**

Evariste Oyanke and Arsène Nguebili were given a suspended one-year prison sentence, fined 500,000 CFA francs (740 US\$) and ordered to pay 3 times more in damages, jointly and severally, for possessing, transporting and attempting to market a leopard skin. The Ministry of Forest Economy considered the sentence insufficient and appealed.

PALF, July 8 and October 2022.<sup>42</sup>



## LEOPARDS - followed

**December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 and March 3, 2023  
Dolisie, Department of Niari, Republic  
of the Congo**



Seizure of 2 leopard skins, a skull and 11 teeth allegedly purchased in the neighbouring department of Kouilou. Arrest of Jean Victor Issouissou and Fils Juvet Safou. The 2 individuals were each fined 500,000 CFA francs (800 US\$) and ordered to pay damages of one million CFA francs (1,600 US\$). The weakness of the judicial system in the face of the trafficking involved is evidently regrettable. The Ministry of Forest Economy has lodged an appeal. EAGLE, December 3, 2022; Polele-Polele, December 7, 2022; PALF, December 2022 and March 2023.<sup>43</sup>

**December 14, 2022  
Owando, Department of Cuvette,  
Republic of the Congo**



Marie Noëlle Molango and Symphorien Obanga remain in prison. They had appealed against their first-instance sentence of 2 years' imprisonment plus a fine and damages for trafficking in leopard parts (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.61). The Owando Court of Appeal upheld the original verdict. PALF, December 2022.<sup>44</sup>

## SENEGAL

**Thursday, November 17, Wednesday,  
November 30, 2022, Thursday, January  
12, and Wednesday, January 18, 2023  
Kedougou, Kedougou Region, and  
Moussala, Tambacounda Region,  
Senegal. Border with Guinea and Mali.**



Mouminou Touré, claiming to be Senegalese and suspected of being Nigerian, is arrested at the Bedik Hotel. He was transporting and selling a leopard skin in violation of the law of January 24, 1986 on the hunting code and protection of wildlife. The skin was smuggled in from Mali.



A few hours later, Seydou Mouhamadou, a Nigerian national, was arrested in Moussala, on the border with Mali, 125 km from Kédougou. He supplied Mouminou Toure with the skin.

On November 30, the 2 men were sentenced to 15 days in prison and fined 500,000 CFA francs (760 US\$).

On January 12, arrest of Sonkolo Coulibaly, a Malian national, presented by Touré and Mouhamadou as the owner of the skin.

On January 18, Coulibaly was sentenced to one month in prison.

EAGLE, November 19, 2022; Actusen, November 23, 2022; Emedia.sn, November 23, 2022; EAGLE Senegal, November 2022 and January 2023.<sup>45</sup>

## ASIA

### BANGLADESH

**December 14, 2022**

**Rahisal, Habiganj District, Sylhet Division,  
Bangladesh**

The lynching of a stray leopard cub, perhaps the orphan of a poached mother, begins. Some locals capture him, break his paw and hang him from a rope. Other people intervene, calm things down and hand the little victim over to the forest rangers. One of them, Tofail Ahmed Chowdhury, declares that the leopard cub is "a boy", about 2 months old. "We are currently giving him treatment. He lost his way and became a victim of violence due to people's ignorance."

The Daily Star, December 17, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

## INDIA

**October 1 and 4, 2022**

**Cherambadi, Nilgiris District, State of  
Tamil Nadu, India**



The leopard's anaesthetised extrication had been complicated. The animal suffered several wounds and possibly fractures. He died 2 days later. Rajan Mathew, age 39, is in custody. He was the one who set the lethal trap. The Hindu, October 2 and 5, 2022.<sup>47</sup>

**October 8, 2022**

**Ladkatwadi, Pune District, State of Maharashtra,  
India**

The dead leopard had been rotting for at least a week in the sugarcane plantation. He was around 6 years old. The position of the body shows that he made every effort to free himself from the leghold trap. He was cremated in the Pimpalgaon forest. Forest officers Kalyani Ghodase, Sachin Puri, Nanasaheb Chavan, Sunita Shirsat, and Ramesh Kolekar took care of all the formalities after being alerted by Shashikant Ladkat, the farmer. Hindustan Times, October 9, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

**Night of October 14 to 15, 2022**

**Malidhi Chowk, Jharsuguda District, and Palsamal,  
Sambalpur District, State of Odisha, India**



The 2 adult leopards and the leopard cub were poached in Sambalpur District. Sumit Kumar Patel, Krupa Sahoo, and Aditya Patra were arrested on Friday night by the STF (Special Task Force) on the basis of confidential information.

The New Indian Express, October 17, 2022.<sup>49</sup>



## LEOPARDS - followed

**Saturday, October 15, 2022**

### **Dusutimukh, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India**

The leopard was beaten to death by 3 men with machetes, sticks, and axes. He had been accused by the community of causing panic for several days and of attacking Bitopan Doley, Lalit Doley, and Malay Medak, ages 15, 45, and 20. They were taking their herd to graze. Forestry officials arrived too late to save the victim.

Northeast Now, October 16, 2022; Mirror Now, October 17, 2022.<sup>50</sup>

**October 18, 2022**

### **Thoothukudi, Thoothukudi District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

In the bag of the employee of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department of Thoothukudi, there was a leopard skin valued at 2 million rupees or 24,500 US\$. The arrest of 42-year-old Suryanarayan next to the American hospital caused a sensation in Thoothukudi, population 300,000.

Daily Thanthi, October 19, 2022; WCCB, October 19, 2022.<sup>51</sup>

**October 21, 2022**

### **Mahadevpur, Jayashankar Bhupalpally District, State of Telangana, India**

Seizure of 2 motorcycles, 5 telephones, 3,000 rupees (35 US\$) and a leopard skin. Arrest of Babu, age 28, Venkatesh, age 30, and 4 accomplices. The leopard was poached and skinned in Chhattisgarh. The skin was smuggled into Telangana and the gang wanted to sell it in Maharashtra at an exorbitant price.

The Hindu, October 21, 2022.<sup>52</sup>



**October 22, 2022**

### **Bichhiya, Mandla District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

The WCCB, with the support of local police, dismantled a wildlife trafficking gang. Four individuals were arrested and a leopard skin, whiskers and 4 wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) tusks were confiscated.

WCCB, October 24, 2022.<sup>53</sup>

**October 27 and 31, 2022**

### **Kulangi, Angul District, State of Odisha, India**

After an adult female leopard and a cub were found dead at the bottom of a ditch, giving off a pestilential stench, forest officials went to Kulangi to investigate and were confronted by a hostile crowd. A 500-meter-long bare power line runs along the ground near the village. Divisional officer Saroj Panda suspects that the 2 leopards were electrocuted. Their deaths were unintentional. The electric traps were intended for wild boar and deer. "The Satkosia forest division is struggling with a shortage of field-level staff. Only 2 forest guards are managing 7 beats in the Pampasar range.



The patrolling responsibility has been put on the locally recruited watchers who are residents of the villages inside the Tiger Reserve so it is likely that they are more supportive towards their community members than the department. Under these circumstances, protection of the animals suffer so it becomes essential to fill the vacancies up on a priority basis," says Aditya Chandra Panda, dean of the district's wildlife wardens and member of the JTF (Joint Task Force).

Pragativadi, October 28, 2022; The New Indian Express, October 28 and November 1, 2022.<sup>54</sup>

**November 5, 2022**

### **Kuanria Dam, Nayagarh District, State of Odisha, India**

Seizure by STF and forest officials of 3 skins, 2 leopard, one deer, near the reservoir of the Kuanria dam. Arrest of Bhagabat Majhi alias Ramesh.

KalingaTV, November 5, 2022; Pragativadi, November 5, 2022.<sup>55</sup>

**November 7, 2022**

### **Phuljhari, Angul District, State of Odisha, India**



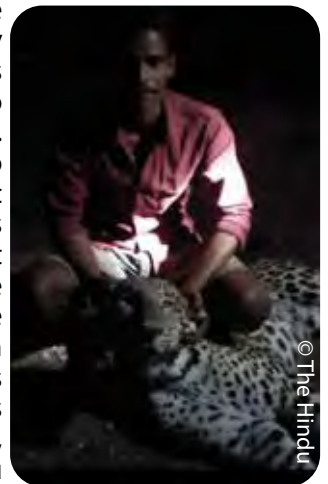
Another 11,000-volt wire lying around in the Angul District, killing a leopard instead of a wild boar. The poachers didn't lose out, far from it. The leopard was skinned and the skin sold. But the bargain was short-lived. Four men aged between 21 and 50 were arrested. At their homes, in addition to the skin and organs, foresters seized electrical cables, a butcher's knife, a crowbar, and other offensive accessories. "We have urged the Energy department to book a case under the Electricity Act and charge the accused for culpable homicide to ensure strong legal punishment," says a senior official from Angul.

KalingaTV, November 7, 2022; The New Indian Express, November 8, 2022.<sup>56</sup>

**November 8 and 9, 2022**

### **Chittoor Mandal, Yadamari and Gudipala, Chittoor District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India**

Five people were arrested on Tuesday night. Police action was triggered by a photo posted on the Internet. Despite the chiaroscuro and the almost artistic shot, Madhusudhan was identified by the district foresters' crisis unit. The leopard was shot at close range by Madhusudhan in the forest 2 years ago. Two accomplices accompanied him and, like Rudram and Basu who had supplied the



guns to the trio, they were also arrested. The claws and bones were found by foresters, but the fate of the leopard skin remains unknown.

The Hindu, November 10, 2022.<sup>57</sup>

## LEOPARDS - followed

**Mid-November and December 14, 2022**

**Ammapatti, Theni District; Chennai, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

The police receive a tip-off that a leopard skin is drying on the terrace of Duraipandian, a former municipal councilor from Ammapatti. Police and tax officials gained access to the terrace when the house was empty and locked. The skin, sprinkled with turmeric and drying in the sun, was observed. 25 days later, Duraipandian was arrested in Chennai. He claims to have "found" the dead leopard in a forest reserve at the end of October and, without further explanation, to have brought the skin back to his home. Investigators are also questioning his wife.

The Times of India, November 18 and 19, 2022; The Hindu, December 15, 2022.<sup>58</sup>



**November 21, 2022**

**Maijan Tea Estate, Dibrugarh District, State of Assam, India**

Day labourers at the Maijan tea plantation, while plucking leaves from the tea bushes, stumbled in an alleyway upon the corpse of a leopard that had died 2 or 3 days earlier. An autopsy should reveal more about the cause of death. Poisoning is suspected. "Leopards take away our domestic animals. Our children are afraid to go outside due to the fear of leopards," complains a local resident. Conflicts are multiplying in Assam between human activities and leopards. Experts repeat that the reduction in forest cover is driving leopards to seek food in areas exploited by mankind.

The Sentinel, November 22, 2022.<sup>59</sup>



**November 29, 2022**

**Hassan District, State of Karnataka, India**

Five people were arrested and 4 leopard paws with claws confiscated.

WCCB, November 30, 2022.<sup>60</sup>

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

**End of November 2022**

**Saomi Nagar, South Delhi District, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India**

For the purposes of a tax investigation, the main home of the Sikha couple and Anurag Pahuja was searched and 2 leopard skins were seized.

The Pioneer, November 28, 2022.<sup>61</sup>

**End of November 2022**

**Dundasivni, Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**



After electrocution, the corpse of the male leopard was thrown into the well of a farm. It resurfaced after a few hours. Four suspects are being questioned.

Dainik Bhaskar, December 1, 2022; MP Breaking News, December 1, 2022.<sup>62</sup>

**December 5, 2022**

**Baladhadi, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India**

A suspected leopard skin is seized. It will be transferred to Derhadun for authentication. Umesh Rath arrested.

Pragativadi, December 5, 2022.<sup>63</sup>

**December 6 and 8, 2022**

**Semadoh, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India**



The death of the 2 leopard cubs was initially attributed to 2 mysterious snakebites, but then tongues loosened, a poisoned goat carcass was found nearby and heavy suspicion falls on a village shepherd.

Lokmat Times, December 7, 2022; The Times of India, December 7, 2022; Divyamarathi Bhaskar, December 8, 2022.<sup>64</sup>

**December 12, 2022**

**Saradhapur, Sambalpur District, State of Odisha, India**

Ajit Nayak and Chaitanya Kujur had poached a leopard. They had decapitated him on the spot and skinned him, taking the head and skin home with them. They were reported and when the police intervened, they were burning the head and skin in the forest. They had just been warned that they had been denounced and were frantically trying to destroy the evidence of their crime. They were arrested and the charred remains of the feline were seized as evidence.

Pragativadi, December 12, 2022.<sup>65</sup>

**December 17, 2022**

**Moran, Dibrugarh District, State of Assam, India**

The body of the female leopard was found amputated of her tail and 4 paws. She had been accused of causing panic in Moran (population 8434 at the last census in 2011) and around for the past 2 days. Disillusioned, even discouraged, the local forestry official says that this is routine in Assam.

The Times of India, December 18, 2022.<sup>66</sup>



## LEOPARDS - followed

December 23, 2022

Koparde, North Goa District, State of Goa, India



The leopard died after a whole night of trying to get out of the trap he had fallen into by entering a field of cultivated flowers, in search of stray dogs or other small mammals. Amrit Singh, director of the local NGO Animal Rescue Squad, says that the anti-poaching squad of the department is dormant, and even honorary wildlife wardens have not been appointed and no meeting of the State Wildlife Board has been conducted for a long time. The Times of India, December 24, 2022.<sup>67</sup>



December 27, 2022

Nangal Nikku, Rupnagar District, State of Punjab, India

A leopard aged between 6 and 8 months was shot dead. His body was found by foresters. An autopsy revealed that one of his ears had been bitten off by a dog. Investigators deduce that the poachers were accompanied by a pack and fear that the mother and the other leopard cub were victims of the same organised gang. Parbhat Bhatti, wildlife conservationist, had informed foresters that a poaching campaign had been underway for two weeks near the border with Himachal Pradesh. He regrets the lack of enthusiasm on the part of anti-poaching patrols.

The Times of India, December 29, 2022.<sup>68</sup>

Wednesday, December 29 and Thursday, December 30, 2022

Jorhat, Jorhat District, and Panbari, Chirang District, State of Assam, India

- The female leopard, who had been on the campus of the Rain Forest Research Institute in Jorhat for several days, was suffering from several head and paw injuries when she was anaesthetised and rushed to the veterinary clinic in Kaziranga Park (around 100 km from Jorhat).

- Died as a result of her injuries.

The Times of India, December 30, 2022.<sup>69</sup>

## PAKISTAN

December 27, 2022

Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

Not lost for everyone! An adult leopard crossing the road from Islamabad to Taxila was hit by a truck, then by a car which took a dent to its bumper, before dying on the side of the road at the Nicholson monument. Photographs were taken by witnesses, but when an Islamabad wildlife management team arrived in the early hours of the morning to retrieve the body and take it to the veterinary morgue for identification and autopsy, it had disappeared.

Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, December 28, 2022.<sup>70</sup>

## CHEETAHS - *Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I

### AFRICA AND ASIA

### SOUTH AFRICA AND INDIA

July 15, 2022 – February 18, 2023

South Africa and Kuno National Park, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



The plan to relocate cheetahs in India after their eradication in 1947 turned into a nightmare. Cheetahs flown in from Namibia and South Africa were given a red-carpet welcome by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Premier of Madhya Pradesh, Bhupender Yadav, Federal Minister for the Environment, by Indian Oil, which is financing the project to the tune of 500 million rupees (over 6.3 million US\$), and by experts from the Namibia-based Cheetah Conservation Fund and the NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority). Of the 8 cheetahs captured in Namibia and transferred to Kuno National Park in September 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.57 and n°37 p.52), Madhya Pradesh, and the 12 cheetahs captured in South Africa and transferred to the same park in February 2023, 6 died between March and August 2023 and 3 cheetahs conceived and born on Indian soil were found dead from thirst in May of the same year.

.../...



## CHEETAHS - followed

According to post-mortem examinations and information that the authorities describe as “hearsay”, the collars of geolocation is one of the causes of the black series. In a humid environment, they would have lacerated the cheetahs’ necks, opening wounds in which flies and ticks settled, eventually triggering widespread septicaemia. Other factors may have acted fatally in synergy, such as a lack of prey or the inability of adult cheetahs native to arid environments to adapt to a diet and hunting effort different from their native biotope. The much lower-than-expected weight of one of the victims, a 5-year-old male, corroborates this hypothesis. According to observers of the project, who are not the instigators, cheetahs from southern Africa are always kept in supervised, fenced-in enclosures of 4 to 5 km<sup>2</sup>. They are also fed. Over time, the enclosures become prisons, and the starving cheetahs become targets for leopards marauding in Kuno National Park. Experts ultimately recommend that the transcontinental cheetah redeployment project in India, if not abandoned, be transferred to Rajasthan. Namibia has offered 8 cheetahs to India in what appears to be a one-off gesture, but the agreement between South Africa and India theoretically covers 8 to 10 years, with a transfer of 12 wild specimens per year. For poaching, trafficking, breeding cheetahs in South Africa, see “On the Trail” n°4 p.95, n°5 p.59, n°14 p.54, n°17 p.64, n°21 p.61, n°27 p.77, n°29 p.65, n°30 p.62, n°31 p.64, n°33 p.90 and n°34 p.76



Cheetahs in Namibia, see “On the Trail” n°5 p.113, n°6 p.103, n°7 p.102, n°11p.91, n°20 p.115, n°22 p.107, n°25 p.104, n°29 p.149, n°30 p.67, n°35 p.61 and n°37 p.180.

For more information on cheetahs, see “On the Trail” n°15 p.68 and n°31 p.64.

Information Bureau, Government of India, August 2, 2022; The Print, December 5, 2022; Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (South Africa), January 26, 2023; The Hindu, February 18, 2023; Down To Earth, July 18, 2023; The Hindu, July 24 et August 2, 2023; New Delhi Television, August 2, 2023.<sup>71</sup>

## AFRICA

### SOMALIA

**November 9 and 10, 2022**

**Somaliland Autonomous Region, Somalia**

A member of the Ministry of the Environment handed over a female cheetah to the CCF (Cheetah Conservation Fund). Caretakers performed an initial health assessment and found that she had just escaped trafficking to countries on the Arabian Peninsula.

After a night of first aid and several hours on the road, the little survivor arrived at the CCF’s specialized shelter in Hargeisa.

Cheetah Conservation Fund, November 18, 2022; La Rivista della Natura, November 23, 2022.<sup>72</sup>



## EUROPE

### SWITZERLAND

**End of October 2022**

**St. Margrethen Border Post, Canton of St. Gallen, Switzerland. Border with Austria.**



A stuffed cheetah was intercepted from a car, driven by a German, attempting to enter Switzerland without CITES papers.

Federal Office for Customs and Border Security, December 1, 2022.<sup>73</sup>

**CARACALS - *Caracal caracal*, Appendix II except for the Asian populations listed under CITES Appendix I.**

**EUROPE**

**FRANCE**

**October 25, 2022**

**Roubaix, Department of Nord, France. Border with Belgium.**



Roubaix and its twin city, Tourcoing, are plagued by the clandestine breeding and trafficking of exotic felines (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.66 and n°37 p.55). When an elite Gendarmerie group searched the home of suspected car thieves, they discovered a caracal in a cage. Specialized fire fighters and OFB agents were recruited to take control and transfer the caracal to a refuge 700 km south of Paris.

Tonga Terre d'Accueil, October 31, 2022; Gendarmerie of Nord, November 3, 2022; La Voix du Nord, November 3, 2022.<sup>74</sup>

**SERVALS - *Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II**

**AFRICA**

**KENYA**

**November 14, 2022**

**Oi Pejeta Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya**

An adult female serval was trapped in a village and had iron encircling her abdomen. With 220 mg of ketamine and 1.7 mg of medetomidine, she fell asleep after 7 minutes and was freed. Her abrasions were also treated. She was awakened by 6.5 mg of yohimbine and 10 mg of atipamezole. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2022.<sup>75</sup>



**EUROPE**

**ITALY**

**November 2, 2022**

**Gropparello, Province of Piacenza, Region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy**

A serval roamed the hills for a month. Forest rangers and local residents spotted him several times, and he was gently captured in a yard. He was taken to a safe place in Bologna. An investigation is underway to learn his story. Other abandoned exotic felines are believed to have taken refuge in the hills of Val Vezzeno and Val Riglio.

Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, November 2, 2022; Libertà, November 2, 2022.<sup>76</sup>



**SNOW LEOPARDS - *Panthera uncia*, Appendix I**

**ASIA**

**TAJIKISTAN**

**October 12, 2022**

**Tajikistan**

Although snow leopard hunting has been banned for 50 years, populations are still in decline. There are barely 200 of them in the mountains. Alive or dead, they sell on the black market for around 300,000 somoni (30,000 US\$). As a result, parliament has amended the criminal code: penalties for poaching a snow leopard have increased from 51,200 to 76,800 somoni (5,010 to 7,520 US\$), and 2 years of corrective labour or 3 years' imprisonment. If a public official or organised group executes a poaching in a nature reserve, forest plantation or area affected by an ecological disaster, the fines have increased from 96,000 to 128,000 somoni (9,400 US\$ to 12,530 US\$) and prison sentences rose from 3 to 5 years, accompanied by a ban on holding official positions or carrying out certain activities for up to 5 years.

Previously, the maximum fine for poaching a snow leopard was 64,000 somoni (6,260 US\$), and poachers were not liable to imprisonment.

For snow leopard poaching and byproduct trafficking in Asia, see "On the Trail" n°13 p.64, n°16 p.102, n°23 p.164, n°24 p.60, n°26 p.69, n°28 p.84, n°30 p.63, n°32 p.88, n°33 p.91, n°35 p.58 and p.182, n°36 p.67 and n°37 p.55.

AZDO TV, December 15, 2022.<sup>77</sup>



**LEOPARD CATS - *Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II except for the populations from Bangladesh, India and Thailand which are listed under CITES Appendix I**

**ASIA**

**CAMBODIA**

**December 2022**

**Takeo Province, Cambodia. Border with Viet Nam.**

The Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) confiscates a leopard cat from a private home.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 28, 2022.<sup>78</sup>

**INDONESIA**

**October 2022**

**Kabanjahe, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**



Piher Sitepu handed over a leopard cat. He said, "I obtained the animal through an acquaintance without knowing that it was a protected species", sounding quite vague. He added, "Now I understand," and handed over the cage and kitten to the head of the BKSDA (Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation). Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, November 1, 2022.<sup>79</sup>

**EUROPE**

**RUSSIA**

**October 13 and December 20, 2022**

**Moscow Federal City, Russia**

Alerted by neighbours, specialists and officers dispatched by the prosecutor's office discovered 3 Amur leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis euptilurus*), one male and 2 females, in a ground floor apartment on 5 Voykovskiy Proyezd Street. They lived among cat trees and stuffed animals, and had a little corner on the windowsill to "get some fresh air". Their owner has no licence. She claims to have bought them from a zoo near Vladivostok.



Two months later, she was sentenced to a symbolic fine of 2,500 rubles (40 US\$) and the permanent confiscation of the felines. The 3 cats now live in a wildlife rehabilitation centre.

Amur leopard cats live in the forests of Russia's Far East, in the Primorye Krai, more than 8,000 km from Moscow. They can measure up to 90 cm long with tails, weigh around 4 kg, and have a very thick coat. As they cannot hunt in the thick snow that covers the ground in winter, their survival depends on building large reserves over the summer.

Moscow City Prosecutor's Office, October 13 and December 20, 2022; Deita.ru, October 14, 2022.<sup>80</sup>



## A CAUCASIAN WILD CAT - *Felis silvestris caucasica*, Appendix II

### EUROPE

#### RUSSIA

**November 12, 2022**

**Mostovsky District, Krasnodar Krai, Russia**

A Caucasian wild cat (*Felis silvestris caucasica*) was shot dead by a hunter. This subspecies differs from the European species in that it's lighter grey in colour, with a fainter pattern on the sides. Live Kuban, November 15, 2022.<sup>81</sup>

## JAGUARS - *Panthera onca*, Appendix I

### AMERICA

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

##### REPEATED OFFENCE

**September 15, October 5 and November 8, 2022**

**Los Angeles and Riverside, State of California, United States of America**

O.B. had come to Austin, Texas, with other fans to attend a stock-car race when she received a call inviting her to the Hyatt Regency hotel "to see something exceptional". Hurried into a room, she saw one of her acquaintances, Abdul Rahman, a car salesman from California, and a few people she didn't know, including a woman, and a small jaguar. As a connoisseur of the sides of these exhibitions, she thought he'd been rented for an hour to take photos. She then realized that the unknown woman was preparing to sell him to Rahman.



A few weeks later, she saw the little jaguar several times at Rahman's home in Murrieta. He didn't know how to look after him and was already trying to get rid of him without losing too much money. He had bought him for 25,000 US\$ and sold him for 20,000 US\$ to a friend in Riverside whose girlfriend was pregnant. On reflection, the couple decided that the cohabitation of a newborn baby and a jaguar in the same house was risky, and decided to put the jaguar in a dog kennel and abandon him at night at the door of a feline and bear shelter in Alpine.

The meticulous investigation by Ed Newcomer, former Washington State attorney and FWS (Fish and Wildlife Service) Special Agent in California since 2002, led to the arrest of 40-year-old Trisha Denise Meyer, known in the wildlife trade as "Mimi Exotic" and "Mimi Erotic", and her indictment on 2 felony counts of illegally transporting protected species for commercial purposes. Mrs. Meyer is a woman who has been involved in wildlife trafficking for years. In 2016, Houston police discovered 3 tigers in her home, including an adult, a puma, monkeys, a skunk (family Mephitidae) and a fox (family Canidae). She was charged with endangering her 2 minor daughters. She home-schooled them, and according to the case file, the tigers were only locked up when the house was empty. She had convinced the judges that all precautions were taken and was only given a 2-year suspended prison sentence for cashing in 300 US\$ for the sale of a savannah kitten, a cross between a cat and a serval, whom she never delivered.

Houston, Texas, is a hot spot for the trafficking and possession of wild animals (see "On the Trail" n°24 p.55, n°27 p.119, n°32 p.70 et n°33 p.77).

United States District Court for the Central District of California, September 15, 2022; The Daily Beast, September 22, 2022; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, November 2022; The Independent (UK), November 8, 2022.<sup>82</sup>

#### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

**Mid-October 2022**

**Trinidad and Tobago**

Two juvenile jaguars from Guyana were up for sale on the internet. By the time the NGO coalition Nurture Nature Campaign, whose mission is to combat wildlife trade, alerted police, it was too late. "The trail has gone cold."

Nurture Nature Campaign, October 15, 2022.<sup>83</sup>

**PUMAS - *Puma concolor*, Appendix II, except for the populations of Costa Rica and Panama, which are in Appendix I**

**AMERICA**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**October 2022**

**State of Oregon, United States of America**

A man is charged with poaching a puma. He had bought the regulatory tag after shooting the animal. The skin and rifle used were confiscated. Oregon State Police, October 2022.<sup>84</sup>

**November 2, 2022**

**State of Utah, United States of America,**

Wade Lemon, a hunting guide, was indicted again. He was already implicated for baiting an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and handing his clients, including Donald Trump Jr., on a plate in May 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.188). Lemon's current indictment pertains to canned hunting pumas. They are forced to climb up a tree and have no means of escaping. The client of the guide can without any difficulty shoot them to death. These events are said to have occurred between November 2020 and March 2021. Kasey Yardley, who accompanied Lemon with his pack of dogs, has also been charged. The 2 men are also suspected of facilitating the transport of a puma skin out of Utah.

Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, Dec. 2022.<sup>85</sup>

**MEXICO**

**Mid-December 2022**

**Ixmiquilpan, State of Hidalgo, Mexico**

The autopsy report is clear: "the puma died from polytrauma due to compression of his limbs and organs and from neurological shock." Police seized 8 coyote traps in the surrounding area.

La Silla Rota, December 16, 2022.<sup>86</sup>



**BOBCATS AND LYNX - *Lynx* spp., Appendix II**

**AMERICA**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**November 2022**

**Dane County, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**

After a bobcat was killed illegally, game wardens managed to identify the perpetrators: a group of people from Black Earth, a village in the same county.

Outdoor News, January 25, 2023.<sup>87</sup>

**November 2022**

**Belmont County, State of Ohio, United States of America**

Acting on a tip, Logan Ambrister, an agent at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, stopped a vehicle with a bobcat carcass in the trunk. The driver claimed to have killed him in a collision and was transporting him for photographic purposes. The man was also in possession of narcotics, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. He was taken into custody and summoned for his unlawful possession of a bobcat.

Outdoor News, January 31, 2023.<sup>88</sup>

**EUROPE**

**POLAND**

**October 20, 2022**

**Piasecznik, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland**

As in other European Union countries, the Eurasian lynx's return to northwestern Poland is not going smoothly. Shotgun pellets were found in the body of a female lynx. Her kittens will not survive the loneliness of the coming winter. Magdalena Tracz, on behalf of the Zachodniopomorskie Towarzystwo Przyrodnicze (West Pomeranian Nature Protection Society), is outraged: "Some people just want to have a well-trimmed lawn, they are bothered by any animal that disturbs their world order."

Radio Szczecin, November 15, 2022.<sup>89</sup>

**October 19, 2022 and February 14, 2023**  
**Mashtakov and Pervomaysky, Orenburg Oblast,**  
**Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.**



- The FSB discovered 299 carefully hidden, folded and packed bobcat skins in the back of a new truck that had just left Kazakhstan. Their value is estimated at 10 million rubles (174,180 US\$ or 580 US\$ per skin).

- Four months after the seizure, the 299 bobcat skins were stolen from the district police headquarters. They were stored there until the investigation was completed.

Orenburg Media, October 19 2022 and February 14 2023.<sup>90</sup>

**December 18, 20 and 28, 2022**

**Tula, Tula Oblast, Russia**

- A clawless lynx in his twenties lived in an apartment at 174 Kirova Street. One day he escaped, but made it no further than the stairwell. Neighbours panicked and called the police. A team arrived, "tranquilized" the lynx with a sedative and took him to the Shcheglovsky Forest.

- Two days later, his "owner", alongside volunteers, found the lynx dead in the forest. A complaint was lodged.

- Eight days later, the prosecutor accused both parties of wrongdoing. The Tula resident was accused of lacking a permit to keep a protected animal that's dangerous to public safety in his home. The team dispatched by the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Service was accused of not having the skills to "tranquilize" the lynx, and of not having examined him sufficiently before abandoning him in the forest on the outskirts of Tula.

Komsomolskaya Pravda, December 20, 2022; First Tula, December 26 and 28, 2022; Vesti-Tula, December 28, 2022.<sup>91</sup>

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**December 20, 2022**

**United States of America**

The Big Cat Public Safety Act comes into force. The law is based on the prevention of risks to humankind from proximity to big cats. It is now forbidden to import, export, transport, sell, lease, give, receive or purchase lions, tigers, leopards, snow leopards, clouded leopards, jaguars, cheetahs, pumas and hybrids of these species. The federal law does not apply to establishments exhibiting wild animals, veterinarians and transporters, as long as they hold the updated permits and capacities required by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Public Law 117-243, December 20, 2022; The White House, December 20, 2022; US Fish and Wildlife Service.<sup>92</sup>

## INDIA

**October 15 and 16, 2022**

**Biharpur, Surguja District, State of Chattisgarh, India**

A tiger skin and leopard skin were confiscated near the Madhya Pradesh border. Six people were arrested but 4 fled, including the gang leader and the smuggler. The fake buyers (forest officials from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh) made a deal with the sellers for 2.6 million rupees (32,000 US\$) for the 2 skins.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), October 17, 2022; Asian News International, October 18, 2022.<sup>93</sup>

## FRANCE

**December 5, 2022**

**Saint-Martin-la-Plaine, Department of Loire, France**

A caracal and serval recently rescued from a private owner in the South of France arrived at the Tonga Terre d'Accueil shelter. They had temporarily been placed under the Montpellier Zoo's care while their transport was being prepared.

Tonga Terre d'Accueil, December 7, 2022.<sup>94</sup>



## REPEATED OFFENCE

December 7, 2022

Jumilhac-le-Grand, Department of Dordogne, France



Gendarmes and OFB agents confiscated a male serval and female caracal from a 38-year-old woman. She was already known to law enforcement for holding and possibly attempting to resell a marmoset (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II) 10 years earlier. The same question arises for the 2 felines: did she intend to keep or sell them?

The felines were transferred 400 km away from the woman's house to the La Tanière zoo-refuge, south of Paris. Just 10 days later, public authorities asked La Tanière to take in 9 young wild animals: 2 servals, a caracal, a ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I), a white-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys* or *Nomascus siki*, Appendix I), 2 marmosets, a macaw (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) and a cockatoo (*Cacatuidae*, Appendix I or II).

La Tanière, December 8, 2022; France Bleu Périgord, December 12, 2022; Gendarmerie of Dordogne, December 12, 2022.<sup>95</sup>

## ITALY

November 2022

Genoa, Metropolitan City of Genoa, Region of Liguria, Italy



Officials confiscated a complete ocelot skin, 9 ocelot fur coats and a 10<sup>th</sup> jaguar fur coat from a laundry service. Estimated value: 10,000 € (9,950 US\$).

Kodami, December 15, 2022.<sup>96</sup>

## UKRAINE

Beginning of October 2022

City of Kyiv and Odesa, Odesa Oblast, Ukraine. United States of America. European Union.

- Transfer by private jet to Minnesota, USA, via Poznań Zoo, of 4 lion cubs, 3 from Odesa and one from Kiev seized from private homes. After the flight, they underwent an 8-hour journey by truck before being admitted to TWS (The Wildcat Sanctuary).

- Transfer by road of a black panther from Poznań to the French sanctuary of Tonga Terre d'Accueil. She had been picked up in Kiev and transferred to Poznań to receive treatment for several weeks.



Zoos and other establishments in the European Union have reportedly received 200 wild animals from Ukraine since the start of the war. Most were rescued from abandonment or destruction by Natalia Popova, a woman committed to animal protection who runs a wildlife sanctuary in partnership with UAnimals, and by UAnimals and other organisations that have long fought against the trafficking, breeding, mistreatment of wild animals from the 2 hemispheres in Ukraine.

Poznań Zoo, October 26, 2022; Tonga Terre d'Accueil, December 26, 2022.<sup>97</sup>

# WOLVES, PAINTED DOGS, FOXES FENNEC FOXES AND HYAENAS



Painted dog (*Lycaon pictus*). Photo Wayne and Pam Osborn

## AFRICA

### MALAWI

**November 1, 2022**  
**Liwonde National Park, Southern Region, Malawi**



Big trouble in Liwonde National Park. Alerted by geolocation collar anomalies observed between Wednesday, November 2 and Thursday, November 3, rangers set out to find the park's one and only pack of painted dogs (*Lycaon pictus*). On Saturday, November 5, they discovered the decomposing carcasses of all 18 members of the pack next to a watering hole and the dry bed of the Mwalasi River. The bodies were hidden, more or less buried. Collective poisoning is strongly suspected. Death occurred in the early hours of Tuesday, November 1. When the GPS units were found in a hole near a termite mound, the question was no longer whether the pack had been poisoned, but by what, by whom and why.

The bodies were colonized by a multitude of worms, suggesting that contrary to poachers' usual practices, the aldicarb-based Temik, also known as "Two Step," both insecticide and nematicide, was not used. The watering hole and a small diversion channel were covered with sand to prevent cascading poisoning, and the wild dogs' bodies were burned under a pile of dry grass and wood to prevent scavengers from dying.

By July 2021, 8 painted dogs had been reintroduced to the park in a joint effort by African Parks and the Malawi National Parks Authority. They came from Gorongosa National Park and Karingani Wildlife Reserve in Mozambique on the one hand, and from 2 wildlife reserves in South Africa on the other. From a biological point of view, the reintroduction attempt was successful: from 8 individuals in July 2021, the pack had grown to 18 by November 2022. From a psychological and social point of view, it is not certain that it was perceived as positive by the park's neighbours.

Across the continent, between the sub-Saharan countries and the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa, only 5,000 to 6,000 fragmented, genetically isolated individuals remain, including fewer than 700 breeding-age pairs. In Malawi, only a pack of around 15 individuals remains in the Majete Reserve, following the reintroduction of 6 painted dogs in 2021.

Painted dog, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.99, n°15 p.73, n°17 p.109, n°18 p.83 and p.108, n°21 p.102, n°23 p.137, n°26 p.97 and p.98, n°29 p.70 and p.149, n°30 p.62 and p.68, n°33 p.97, n°34 p.85 and p.225 and n°37 p.59.

African Parks, November 11, 2022 and February 23, 2023.<sup>1</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

**November 2-24, 2022**

### **Savé Valley Conservancy, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe**

A male painted dog puppy (*Lycaon pictus*) from the Chapungu pack was seen wearing a trap that was beginning to cut into his neck, and the first rains of the season were complicating the search to locate the pack. The following day, thanks to the efforts of the trackers, the pack was found and the puppy anaesthetised. Thanks to the skill of a veterinarian nicknamed "Mzungu Vet" ("mzungu" means vagabond in Swahili) and a pair of cutting pliers, he was freed from this torture instrument. He was followed up with and 3 weeks later was back on his feet. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for another painted dog dragging a trap. The trackers and Mzungu Vet can't get their hands on him.

African Wildlife Conservation Fund, November 1, 2, 19 and 24, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



© African Wildlife Conservation Fund

## AMERICA

### BRAZIL

**Friday, November 25, 2022**

### **Ponte Serrada, Santa Catarina State, Brazil**

Military police rescue a crab-eating fox (*Cerdocyon thous*, Appendix II). He was on a chain without food or water, squatting on a pile of garbage. A 31-year-old woman is accused of mistreatment. She was handed over to the city police station. The victim was transferred to the veterinary clinic in Xanxerê. All hope is not lost that she will later be released.

ClicRDC, November 26, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## CANADA

**November 24, 2022**

### **Boot Lake, Province of Saskatchewan, Canada**

Discovery of the headless carcass of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). He had been shot in an unknown location, then decapitated and abandoned elsewhere to cover tracks.

SaskTIP, December 22, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 2, 2022**

### **Baker County, State of Oregon, United States of America**

The corpse of the black-coated grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) bore wounds "compatible" with a shot. OR88 was suffering from melanism, a genetic anomaly quite common in wolves in the USA, and her coat was black. She was a member of the Lookout Mountain pack, which in 2021 had already suffered the loss of 8 members shot by the authorities following conflicts with human activities. The pack numbers only 5 individuals, none of them breeding adults.

Oregon State Police, October 18, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**October 6, 2022**

### **Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, State of Oregon, United States of America**

A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) has been poached. The USFWS is offering a 5,000 US\$ reward to anyone who can lead to the arrest of the culprit. Informants are guaranteed anonymity.

US Fish and Wildlife Service, December 15, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**October 8, 2022**

### **Sierra County, State of New Mexico, USA**

Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*, Appendix II) n°1693 has died. US Fish and Wildlife is withholding details of the circumstances of the event so as not to prejudice the ongoing investigation. Until then, n°1693 had been living a wonderful adventure. Born in captivity, he had been introduced at the age of 15 days into the den of a wild wolf of his species in 2018 and had been adopted by his foster family. A November 2021 trap-cam photo showed him as a healthy adult. He had mated with wolf n°1728 and formed a pack with the cubs. In the summer of 2022, they had escaped the Black Fire, an immense forest fire that had spread over 130,000 hectares in 3 New Mexico counties, including Sierra County. A reward is promised to those who, through their testimony, facilitate the arrest and conviction of the Mexican wolf killers. The reward is up to 50,000 US\$. Arizona and New Mexico (over 610,000 km<sup>2</sup>) are home to fewer than 200 Mexican wolves. In 2022, at least 3 specimens were poached.

Mexican wolf, see "On the Trail" n°10 p. 73, n°21 p.70, n°23 p. 95, n°24 p. 64, n°30 p. 69, n°31 p. 71 and p. 72, n°32 p. 95, n°34 p. 86 and n°35 p.63-64.

Western Watersheds Project, October 18, 2022; Arizona Republic, October 19, 2022.<sup>7</sup>



**November 15, 2022**

**State of Michigan, United States of America**

Conservation Officers Maki and Dani follow the boot and tire tracks of an all-terrain vehicle and discover the body of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) in a garbage bag under a pine tree. They seize it. Following the vehicle's tracks, they enter a hunting camp at around 1 a.m., where they are greeted by an individual who admits to poaching the wolf and a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*).

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, November 26, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**ASIA**

**INDIA**

**December 6, 2022**

**Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India**



Seizure of 2 fennec foxes (*Vulpes zerda*, Appendix II) from North Africa in the luggage of a passenger travelling from Bangkok. "The foxes are considered to be lucky charms and I bought these two at very reasonable rates." In the meantime, he had to pay the cost of returning the 2 canines to Bangkok.

ETV Bharat, December 8, 2022; Chennai Customs, December 9, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**December 20, 2022**

**Aravali Forest, Rewari District, State of Haryana, India**



A striped hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) is caught in a trap. The tribals prefer to take jackals for meat and "siyar singhi" (bones claimed to be horns). They had to make do with the hyaena. His throat was slit on the spot and all 4 legs amputated.

The Times of India, December 21, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**UZBEKISTAN**

**Mid-November 2022**

**Sariosiyo District, Surxondaryo Region, Uzbekistan**



A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was killed and skinned. T.F. was identified thanks to a video that circulated on social media. He was fined 240 U\$.

QALAMPIR.UZ, November 16, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**EUROPE**

**GERMANY**

**Beginning September-December 5, 2022**

**Adelschlag, Bavaria State, Germany**



There's a fear of the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) in the area, with more or less reliable reports being repeated from mouth to mouth. Six dogs and 2 cats were poisoned by baits laced with a blue metaldehyde slug-killer. Most died. The others are paralyzed. European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) are seriously threatened by these unclaimed toxic seeds. For the moment, wildlife is escaping this new weapon, which is less staggering than carbofuran but more insidious, as animals are likely to die or lose their mobility far from the poisoning site.

Donaukurier, December 7, 2022; Tatort Natur, December 7, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## CROATIA

December 6, 2022

Unešić, Šibenik-Knin County, Croatia



"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth", the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) on the Unešić entrance sign bears this message on his torso. When the police arrived on the scene in the early hours of the morning, the staging had disappeared. Last week, in Sitno, 15 km from Unešić, a wolf killed sheep in or near a sheepfold.

It's becoming fashionable in the European Union. In Gračac in Croatia in 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.97) and in Era in Italy in 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.60), the body and head of a wolf had been hung on the town's entrance sign.

Dnevnik.hr, December 7, 2022; ŠibenikIN News Portal, December 7, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

## ITALY

### OPERATION SABAUDUS

October 4-6, 2022

Province of Cuneo, Region of Piedmont, Italy. Border with France.



Grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.67), but also red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), eagles (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II) and owls (Strigidae, Appendix I or II) are victims of poisoning. The practice was encouraged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to get rid of so-called pests. Over 40 years ago, it was outlawed, and continues to this day, using old stocks of banned pesticides. Every year in Piedmont, over 200 reports of poisoned bait or poisoned animals are recorded by the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale. In at least one case, the poison mania is directed at domestic animals. In truffle woods, harvesters still scatter toxic bait to

eliminate competitors' dogs. A detection campaign in the high valleys and mountains most exposed to this calamity has mobilized more than 20 Malinois and Labrador shepherds trained for 6 months to detect the most commonly used poisons. In this high-risk track, the handler and dog pair have to demonstrate their complicity and constant vigilance on rugged trails subject to the vagaries of the weather. The dog must detect the poison without touching the bait, biting it or, worse still, swallowing it, and the handler must take every precaution to collect the bait and package it safely. They are then analyzed in the laboratory for their chemical composition and other information that may facilitate the work of investigators tasked with identifying the killers playing the lottery of death. Commandant Stefano Gerbaldo is pleased that a large number of poisoned baits were detected without any damage to the carabinieri or the dogs, who cleaned up a 150-km course in 3 days.

Arma dei Carabinieri, October 10, 2022; Kodami, October 10, 2022; LIFE Wolf Alps, October 13, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

### Beginning of December 2022

Castiglione Chiavarese, Metropolitan City of Genoa, Region of Liguria, Italy



Duel. Hundreds of miles an hour, yellow lines, lampposts, and none other than a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) caught in the beam of the headlights and a car. Two theories collide. Wolves are the victims of man (Lega Anti Vivisezione, Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali and Meta Parma) and man is the victim of wolves (Francesco Lollobrigida, Minister for Agriculture and Food Sovereignty).

Il Mattino, December 8, 2022; Il Giornale dell'Ambiente, December 12, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022  
Maggiora, Province of Novara, Region  
of Piedmont, Italy**



Operation Sabaudus did not deter the poisoners. In the death lottery, at least one grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) and 2 red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) were mowed down. Death was caused by an anticoagulant substance. The place of poisoning and the place of death may be far apart. The dog and the carabinieri, specialists in the fight against poisoning, are scouring the woods and paths.

NovaraToday, December 12, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**Thursday, December 8, 2022  
Pianoro, Metropolitan City of Bologna, Region  
of Emilia-Romagna, Italy**

Two men in a meadow drag a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) shot during a wild boar hunt. At the beginning of the year, 100 km from Pianoro, several dead or dying wolves were discovered poisoned (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.67).

BolognaToday, December 11, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

**December 10 and 24-25, 2022  
Rabbi, Autonomous Province of Trento, Region  
of Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy**

The grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) is limping. The wolf is wandering. It may be a she-wolf. She's been the victim of a collision, a trap, a shot. On Christmas night, she was sighted. She was prowling near the houses of Piazzola, a hamlet in Rabbi (population 1,350). She was growling. She's either frightening or pitiful.

TrentoToday, December 21 and 23, 2022; Il Dolomiti, December 25, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**December 11, 2022  
Sant'Omero, Province of Teramo, Region of  
Abruzzo, Italy**

The corpse of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) is found by the side of the road. Simulated collision to conceal illegal shooting? The Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale veterinarian found bullet holes in the animal's back.

VeraTV, December 11, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

**December 21, 2022  
Anzola d'Ossola, Province of Verbano-Cusio-  
Ossola, Region of Piedmont, Italy**

The female grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was run over on the road, but was pierced by bullets. Another attempt to disguise an illegal shooting? Ossola 24, December 22, 2022; La Stampa, December 23, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

**LITHUANIA**

**November 24, 2022  
Silute, Klaipeda County, Lithuania**

The head of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) stuffed in the window of an antique store caught the eye of environmentalists and the police. It was seized.

Environmental Protection Department, Nov. 24, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

**NORWAY**

**December 20 and 27, 2022, January 13 and  
February 3, 2023**

**Oslo, Eastern Norway Region, Norway**

The courts' about-turns are giving vertigo, and in the end it's always the Ministry that wins and the grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) that lose.

- On December 20, 2022, the Ministry authorised the killing of wolves in the territories of Juvberget, Kockohonka and Ulvåa on the border with Sweden until February 15.

- On December 27, the Oslo court, hearing a case brought by the NGO NOAH, suspended the Ministry's authorisation.

- On February 3, the Court of Appeal reinstated the legality of the Ministry of the Environment's authorisation. Hunters "acting at the request of the government" will be able to shoot until February 15 at wolves considered the most dangerous to livestock.

Wolves in Norway, see "On the Trail" n°9 p.92, n°14 p.102, n°15 p.73, n°19 p.79, n°28 p.87, n°30 p.70, n°33 p.99, n°35 p.67 and n°36 p.198 and n°37 p.61. Government.no, December 28, 2022 and January 13 and February 3, 2023.<sup>22</sup>

**POLAND**

**November 22, 2022  
Wegliniec, Lower Silesian Voivodeship, Poland**

The grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) had been buried in the forest. He was dug up by wild animals and poaching was revealed. The NGO Z Szarym Za Płotem ("With the grey behind the fence") is outraged.

Association Z Szarym Za Płotem, Nov. 28, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**December 22, 2022  
Debno Forest District, West Pomeranian  
Voivodeship, Poland**

A forest ranger intrigued by freshly disturbed soil unearths 2 dead grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). The NGO Z Szarym Za Płotem ("With the grey behind the fence") estimates that several dozen wolves are poached every year. According to the Szczecin public prosecutor's office, an investigation is underway to find the perpetrator, and in response Z Szarym Za Płotem replies that almost all cases of wolf poaching are closed without prosecution.

Association Z Szarym Za Płotem, December 22, 2022; Gazeta Lubuska, December 29, 2022.<sup>24</sup>



**December 30, 2022**

**Huta Polanska, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland**

The carcass of a less-than-one-year-old female grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was found. She bears the marks of a bullet wound.

Association Z Szarym Za Plotem, January 2, 2023.<sup>25</sup>

## SWEDEN

**October 14, 2022**

**Stockholm, Stockholm County, Sweden**

The Court of Appeal confirms the acquittal of Karl Hedin. He was accused of attempting to poison grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) with carbofuran. At first instance, the court had ruled that it had not been proven that carbofuran could kill wolves, and that if the forestry industrialist was indeed tracking wolves, it had not been proven that he was doing so in order to kill them. The prosecutor appealed. See "On the Trail" n°32 p.100. Svensk Jakt, October 14, 2022; Courts of Sweden, October 14, 2022.<sup>26</sup>



**December 14, 2022**

**Örebro, Örebro County, Sweden**

Sentencing of a dog breeder who, in her advertisements between 2018 and 2021 on Blocket and Facebook, boasted about the genetic proximity of her "products" to wild grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), in breach of Article 27 of the Species Protection Order. The aim is to avoid using the qualities of the wolf, such as resilience and elegance, as a selling point for breeding dogs. She said she was selling puppies with the best of both wolves and German shepherds. She was fined 10,000 kronor (950 US\$) and given a suspended prison sentence for offering for sale wolfdogs or wolf hybrids similar to the Czechoslovakian wolfdog breed recognised by the International Canine Federation and banned from breeding or import into many countries.

Wolfdog breeding, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.63 and n°32 p.98.

Slaughter of a wolfdog mistaken for a wolf, see "On the Trail" n°31 p.73.

Swedish Prosecution Authority, December 14, 2022; Sveriges Television, December 14, 2022; Jakt & Jägare, December 15, 2022.<sup>27</sup>



**FONDATION  
FRANZ  
WEBER**



**ROBIN DES BOIS**



**Fondation  
Brigitte Bardot  
reconnue d'utilité publique**

## SWITZERLAND

**December 16, 2022**

### Switzerland

Amendment to the law of 20 June 1986 on hunting and the protection of wild mammals and birds. Extracts:

"Wild fauna shall be regulated in such a way as to guarantee the sustainable management of forests and natural regeneration using species adapted to the site and to be able to avoid significant damage to food crops."

"The cantons may, with the prior consent of the Federal Office for the Environment (Federal Office), plan the regulation of populations of:

a. ibex: during the period from August 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30;

b. wolves: during the period from September 1<sup>st</sup> to January 31.

"These regulations must not endanger the size of the population and must be necessary to:

a. protect biotopes or conserve the diversity of species;

b. prevent harm or danger to man when it appears that reasonable protective measures will not be sufficient, or

c. preserve regionally adapted wild populations.

"In order to prevent accidents involving wild animals and to ensure the permeability of the landscape for wild animals, in particular in supra-regional wildlife corridors in accordance with Article 11a, the cantons shall take steps to ensure that fences are built and maintained in accordance with standard practice".

"In agreement with the cantons, the Federal Council will designate wildlife corridors of supra-regional importance, intended to link wildlife habitats over a wide area.

"Wolves belonging to a pack may be regulated between June 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31, with the prior agreement of the Federal Office, if the pack in question causes damage, in particular by attacking livestock, cattle or horses. The Federal Council shall lay down the conditions for regulation."

"The Confederation shall encourage and coordinate measures by the cantons to prevent damage caused by:

a. large predators to livestock, or

b. beavers to buildings and installations of public interest, farm access roads or riverbanks that play an important role in flood protection."

"The Confederation and the cantons shall ensure that the population is sufficiently informed about the lifestyle, needs and protection of wild fauna, in particular large predators and cohabitation with them."

"A fine of up to 20,000 francs [21,000 US\$] shall be imposed on anyone who, intentionally and without good reason

i. fails to search in good time and in accordance with standard practice for an animal which he has wounded while hunting or for which he cannot clearly assess whether he has wounded it while hunting."

### Comments:

While it is clear that ibex and grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) may under certain conditions be subject to regulation shooting, the fate of beavers remains unclear if their activities, despite reasonable preventive maintenance measures, were considered likely to affect the safety of the public and farms during periods of flooding.

Lynx are not named. The abstraction of the law could make it possible, under pressure from farmers or other corporations, to include them in the category of "large predators" mentioned 3 times in the law.

Wolves may be killed as a preventive measure without having caused any damage if one or more cantons, with the approval of the Federal Office for the Environment, consider that their numbers and range are endangering livestock farms and the alpine economy. The "preventive" killing of an animal as noble and rare as the wolf clearly raises ethical questions and does not encourage farmers to take all the measures necessary to prevent attacks on their herds.

Switzerland, with its 41,285 km<sup>2</sup> and 8.7 million inhabitants, currently has around 180 wolves, and the aim of the elected representatives who voted for this law and the members of the public who approve it is undoubtedly to keep them at this low level.

Tribune de Genève (with ATS), December 13, 2022; Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation, December 16, 2022; Le Temps (avec ATS), January 14, 2023; Radio Télévision Suisse, April 11, 2023.<sup>28</sup>

## AMERICA

### CANADA

**October 14, 2022**

**Woodlands County, Province of Alberta, Canada**



Call for witnesses. A grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*, Appendix II) weighing over 200 kg was found shot dead along a forest road running through Wildlife Management Unit 349. The poacher is believed to have left the scene in a blue Dodge truck.

Alberta Fish and Wildlife Enforcement, October 19, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Beginning of October 2022**

**State of Minnesota, United States of America**

A suspect was indicted for shooting an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) without a licence and using bait while in a no-hunting zone. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, October 10, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Benton County, State of Minnesota, United States of America**

A suspect was indicted for poaching an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) following a testimony by "Turn in Poachers".

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, October 10, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Ontonagon County, State of Michigan, United States of America**



A man is under investigation for poisoning an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) who was "tiring" him. He had farming poisons hidden under peanut butter and jelly.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, October 15, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**October 2, 2022**

**Forestburgh, State of New York, United States of America**

The individual hunted American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with a bow by baiting them with doughnuts. He claims that the doughnuts were for his personal consumption. They apparently fell out of his bag. Officers Parker and Doroski were not convinced. The hunter was ticketed.

Department of Environmental Conservation, October 12, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**October 6 and November 15, 2022**

**Siletz and Newport, State of Oregon, United States of America**

Corey D Loving Jr. aged 29 was arraigned for killing 2 American black bear cubs (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). The offence took place on James Frank Avenue, along the Siletz River, on the edge of the frontier between the city and forestland. Loving's mother is charged with complicity. She had given a legal hunting tag belonging to her to conceal her son's poaching.

Oregon State Police, October 2022; News-Times, November 18, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**October 8 and November 1, 2022**

**Rochester and Accord, State of New York, United States of America**

Devin Lockwood, Douglas Douglas and Alexander B. Quick are accused of poaching a female black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) by baiting her with household waste and finish her off with a firearm when only bow hunting was permitted. They have been released on bail pending trial. The bear's skin and meat were seized.

Department of Environmental Conservation, October 26, 2022; Daily Freeman, November 2, 2022.<sup>7</sup>



## **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**October 15, 2022**

### **Kersey, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

Joseph Blessel, 46, poached an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) by baiting him with apples and corn. The carcass was seized  
WJAC, November 29, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## **OPERATION GAME THIEF**

### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**October 18, 2022**

### **Colorado Springs and Fremont County, State of Colorado, United States of America**

David Schlitt (64) and his sons Robert Schlitt (36) and Richard Schlitt (33) are charged with poaching an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and an elk (*Cervus canadensis*). A vehicle, firearms, and hunting trophies were seized from their homes. A decapitated and skinned bear carcass with his paws amputated was also seized. The anti-poaching unit was tipped off by hunters. Colorado Parks & Wildlife, October 19, 2022; KKTV October, 27 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**October 26, 2022**

### **Rogue River, State of Oregon, United States of America**

The Drug Enforcement team with the assistance of the SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) serves a search warrant at a property of 18000 block of East Evans Creek Road. Discovery of 3 firearms, 453.5 kg of marijuana, around 40 plants and 3 stolen vehicles. Additional seizure of an American black bear carcass (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). Two arrests. Matthew Connors (46) and Gerald Fath (36) were put in prison.

Central Oregon Daily, October 27, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

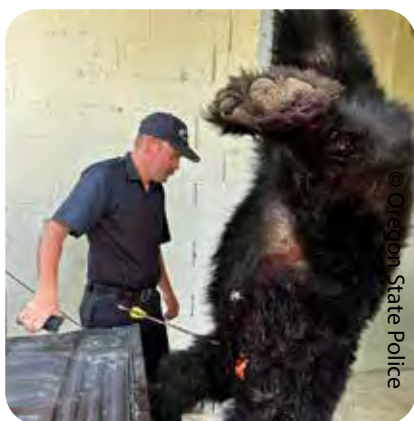
**October 29 and 31, 2022**

### **Jackson County, State of Oregon, United States of America**

- Police are notified of a dead 125 kg American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in a tree. An ensuant autopsy found that she was killed by an arrow while taking refuge in the tree, and that she had been shot twice previously. A crane removed her 12-15-meter-high carcass.

- Two days later, another bear carcass was discovered in a nearby tree. Its decomposition lead police to believe that he, too, had been killed by humans. The remains were left for scavengers.

Oregon State Police, November 2 and December 15, 2022.<sup>11</sup>



**October 2022**

### **York County, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

An American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) was illegally shot to death after being lured with bait. The carcass was recovered and the hunter plead guilty.

Outdoor News, November 24, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**October 2022**

### **Lackawanna County, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

A Greenfield Township resident was indicted for poaching an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) using bait.

Outdoor News, November 24, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**October 2022**

### **Chippewa County, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**

An individual is caught attempting to hunt American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with bait in a no-hunting zone, in the immediate vicinity of Wisconsin's Ice Age Trail.

Outdoor News, December 1, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**October 2022**

### **St. Croix County, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**

The carcass of an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) is discovered amidst remnants of bait. Officers were able to identify the perpetrator, who "forgot" to report his hunt.

Outdoor News, December 1, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

## **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**November 5 and 21, 2022**

### **West Feliciana Parish, State of Louisiana, United States of America**

Justin A. Olano, 24, Robert J. Salts II, 41, and his 15-year-old son were charged with poaching a Louisiana black bear (*Ursus americanus luteolus*, Appendix II). The minor was not very experienced. He mistook a bear for a deer. Olano and Salts II senior disposed of the body in a creek.

The Louisiana black bear is the State's emblem. They are mainly found in the Mississippi Valley. After being decimated by hunting and deforestation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the population of this subspecies is now considered stable and viable.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, November 23, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**November 10, 2022**

**Andover, State of New Jersey, United States of America**

Acting on information, 2 agents from New Jersey's Fish and Wildlife Division approached a deer hunter at his stand. Visible trails of blood lead the agents to an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) carcass. The hunter claimed that his cousin killed the bear several days earlier. This latter took responsibility. He was summoned to appear in court.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, November 20, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

**November 13 and 15, 2022**

**Ringwood State Park, State of New Jersey, United States of America**

Matthew Ligus, aged 22, was charged with hunting without a licence, using an illegal weapon and out-of-season hunting. He had wounded a female American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and killed her 4 cubs with a firearm near a middle school, causing panic among locals. According to witnesses, he used baits.

NorthJersey.com, November 15, 2022; NJ.com, November 16, 2022; WABC-TV, November 16, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**November 18, 2022**

**Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, State of New York, United States of America**

The very first American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) sighted in Montezuma Wildlife Refuge was found dead by a K9 squad. Police identified and questioned a suspect who admitted to shooting the bear with a bow. He is also accused of illegally hunting white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Department of Environmental Conservation, December 7, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

**November 26 and December 9, 2022**

**Woodfin, State of North Carolina, United States of America**

Following an investigation, John Robert Bunkley Jr, aged 26, had been charged. He is on the run. He is suspected of mutilating 3 American black bear cubs (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). In a scene of carnage, the 3 bodies were found on Moore Street off Brookdale Avenue by residents. Their paws were cut off and scattered, their bodies were skinned and their viscera were lying in a bucket.

Mountain Xpress, December 2, 2022; WLOS, December 2 and 9, 2022; Asheville Citizen Times, December 10, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

**November 28, 2020**

**Greenfield, State of Massachusetts, United States of America**



A poacher is sentenced to a 1,800-US\$ fine, forfeiture of his crossbow and hunting licence suspension for one year for baiting an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with doughnuts and muffins and killing him in 2020.

Massachusetts Environmental Police, November 4, 2020 and December 8, 2022.<sup>21</sup>



**November 2022**

**Fayette County, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

A man is charged with poaching an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) using bait.

Outdoor News, December 8, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

**December 9, 2022**

**Missoula, State of Montana, United States of America**



Kevin Moll, 31, admitted to shooting a female grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*, Appendix II) from his vehicle without a licence in September 2018. He was sentenced to a 5,000 US\$ fine and 2 years' probation.

The bear was wearing a GPS collar. Moll had therefore taken the precaution of moving the carcass away from the scene of the crime. Two days later, realising that the carcass was being sought by a helicopter, he returned to the scene to remove the collar and throw it into a creek.

U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Montana, December 9, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**December 17, 2022**

**Columbia Wildlife Management Area, State of New Jersey, United States of America**



A hunter was fined for killing an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with an illegally possessed weapon out of season. He was in possession of a 30-30 calibre lever-action rifle. It was seized.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, December 20, 2022.<sup>24</sup>

**December 21, 2022**

**Jacksonville, State of Florida, United States of America**

The 5-year-old American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) had been captured to prevent conflict with the humans he was approaching. A carer left his cage's door open in the city zoo. He was shot by a member of staff while a vet with an anaesthetic gun was awaited on site. Florida Times-Union, December 22, 2022; First Coast News, January 25, 2023.<sup>25</sup>

**MEXICO**

**October 14, 2022**

**Santiago, State of Nuevo León, Mexico**

The prognosis is unfavourable. The American black bear cub (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), 6 or 7 months old, is wounded near the spine and the X-ray shows "a foreign body" in the small rib cage. A firearm was involved and the perpetrator is being sought out. Black bears are in trouble. The prognosis is unfavourable for the entire species in the States of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. Profepa, October 14, 2022.<sup>26</sup>

**ASIA**

**GEORGIA**

**December 1, 2022**

**Utsera, Region of Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti, Georgia**

A female hiker in the forest stumbles upon the carcass of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). The bear had been strangled by a trap and his paws cut off. Netgazeti.ge, December 2, 2022; Tabula, December 2, 2022.<sup>27</sup>



**INDIA**

**November 10 and 14, 2022**

**Jarida, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India**



Arrest of Mangal Babulal Jamunkar, 46. A sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) was killed by the illegal electric fence he had installed around his crops to protect them from wild boars.

The Times of India, November 15, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

**INDONESIA**

**October 5, 2022**

**Mondang, South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**



Some people wanted to capture a porcupine and it was a 7 or 8 year-old male Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) that was trapped in the middle of the night. Alerted by his complaints, the village chief called the Sipirok BKSDA to the rescue. After anaesthesia, a minor paw wound was treated and he was released around 2 p.m. The rescuers then took the opportunity to call on villagers to respect the Article 21 of the Law on the protection of living natural resources and their ecosystems, which forbids anyone to capture, injure, store, possess, maintain, transport, or market protected animals. Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, October 6, 2022; Garda Animalia, October 13, 2022.<sup>29</sup>



**IRAN**

**November 2022**

**Bam Prefecture, Kerman Province, Iran**

All that remains of the Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) are bones. The skull is pierced by rifle bullets.

Young Journalists Club, November 15, 2022.<sup>30</sup>





## KAZAKHSTAN

**December 7, 2022**

**Eskeldi District, Jetisu Region, Kazakhstan. Border with China.**



The man posing on the steppe with snow-capped peaks behind him and a large brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) with a bloody snout in front of him was quickly identified by the Region police and questioned. His still life dates from September.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, December 6 and 7, 2022; Sandugash Duisenova, December 6, 2022.<sup>31</sup>

## PAKISTAN

**October 14, 2022**

**Gujranwala, Province of Punjab, and Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan**

Rescue of an Asian black bear cub (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). Around two years old and already a street dancer and public entertainer for a few rupees. He was freed from the ring in his muzzle. He was being exploited in Gujranwala. He was rescued from the street by a whistleblower and the provincial wildlife protection officers and transferred to the rescue centre in Islamabad.



Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, October 15, 2022.<sup>32</sup>

**December 2022**

**Rajanpur District, Province of Punjab, Pakistan**

An Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) was rescued from a private home. One individual was arrested and the bear was transferred to the Dera Ghazi Khan Zoo.

Veterinary News and Views, December 26, 2022.<sup>33</sup>

## TAIWAN

**Beginning of December 2022**

**Taiwan**

Four idiots parading the streets on 2 scooters with a gun slung over their shoulders and a dead Formosan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus formosanus*, Appendix I) in their arms have yet to be found. They face a fine of one million new Taiwan dollars (33,000 US\$).

Taiwan News, December 14, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

## VIET NAM

**October 14 and 17, 2022**

**Lang Son and Dien Bien Provinces, Viet Nam**

facebook

- Nguyen Thi Bich Hau fined 85 million VND (3,580 US\$) by the People's Committee for offering bear bile (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) for sale on his Facebook account.



- Nguyen Thi Tuan fined 70 million VND (2,950 US\$) by the People's Committee for offering bear bile for sale via the Internet.

Báo Quân đội nhân dân, November 11, 2022.<sup>35</sup>

**October 26, 2022**

**Son La Province, Viet Nam**



An Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) spent 17 years living in a tiny cage and is at last transferred to the Ninh Binh bear sanctuary. ENV, October 31, 2022.<sup>36</sup>

**November 3, 2022**

**Quy Dat, Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam**



Dinh Minh Cal was sentenced to 12 months in prison. He was arrested in June 2022. He was carrying 6 Asian black bear claws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) and had a reputation for selling tiger fetuses (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and carved ivory via the Internet. ENV, November 22, 2022; Bao Phap luat Viet Nam, November 24, 2022.<sup>37</sup>

**December 14, 2022**

**Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam**

He was facing up to 5 years in prison. He got off with a 15-month suspended sentence and 30 months' probation for possessing 350 vials of bear bile (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II). This is the largest seizure to date in Viet Nam. His 7 bears have been taken to safety. See "On the Trail" n°36 p. 81. ENV, December 15, 2022.<sup>38</sup>



**EUROPE**

**ALBANIA**

**December 7, 2022**

**Tirana, Tirana County, Albania**

Release of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) used as an attraction in a restaurant in the Albanian capital. This would be the last "bear restaurant" in the country. Obese, suffering from behavioural problems and with his teeth broken by biting the bars of his cage, he was transferred by road to a specially prepared 14,000 m<sup>2</sup> meadow in Austria via Northern Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, a journey of 1,900 km. The operation was organised by the NGO Four Paws and the Albanian Ministry of Tourism and the Environment. The bear had been locked up for more than 20 years. Four Paws, December 7, 2022.<sup>39</sup>

**GREECE**

**October 10, 2022**

**Florina Regional Unit, Region of Western Macedonia, Greece**

An emergency team from the NGO, Callisto, freed a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) caught in a trap. Callisto is particularly involved in protecting large predators (bears, wolves, lynx) and facilitating their coexistence with humans.

LIFE Bear-Smart Corridors, October 14, 2022.<sup>40</sup>

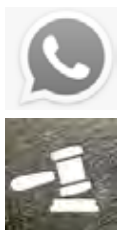


**LATVIA**

**October 2022**

**Luban Wetlands, Madona Municipality, Latvia**

The brown bear (*Ursos arctos*, Appendix II) chased and beaten by the car at dusk for at least 2 minutes at 25 to 30 km/h on the forest road was terrorized by the headlights and engine noise. He owed his survival to a miraculous turn which enabled him to escape the headlights and throw himself to the side of the road. The man was fined 600 € (580 US\$) and faces prosecution for animal cruelty under section 59 of the Animal Protection Act. There are only 60 brown bears in the country. Nature Conservation Agency, October 3, 11 and 31, 2022.<sup>41</sup>



**MONTENEGRO**

**November 2022**

**Blizna, Municipality of Podgorica, Montenegro**



This boy (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) has been a prisoner for 24 hours a day, 365 days and nights a year for 4 years, with no leave and no yard to go out in. He suffers from physical trauma and behavioural problems. He bites the bars and feeds on rotten fruit thrown at him by visitors to the "reception and rehabilitation centre" run by a certain Miljan Miličković. The NGO Animal Survival International and the local NGO Mreža za životinje ("Animal Network") are trying to get him out, but the Montenegrin authorities are turning a deaf ear. Vijesti, November 25, 2022; Animal Survival International, December 20, 2022 and February 1, 2023.<sup>42</sup>

**ROMANIA**

**October 15 and 20, 2022**

**Izvoare Hunting Ground, Maramures County, Romania**

Following the discovery of a dead brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) with a bullet hole in the neck, police combed the vast hunting reserve and spotted a second corpse near a watchtower. The county hunters' and anglers' association says to be dismayed and has launched an internal investigation into poaching offences in parallel with the official inquiry.

Europa FM, October 20, 2022; vasiledale.ro, October 21, 2022.<sup>43</sup>

**December 25, 2022**

**Bistrita Bârgaului, Bistrita-Nasaud County, Romania**



In accordance with procedure, the police called in a vet, a game warden, an officer from the Arms and Ammunition Office and the mayor of the town (population 3,500). The brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was caught in a trap near a small road. He was anaesthetised, extricated, examined, treated for superficial abrasions and released further up the hill and into the forest. It was Christmas morning. Bistrita-Nasaud County Gendarmerie Inspectorate, December 25, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

**RUSSIA**

**October 14, 2022**

**Dzivgis, Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, Russia**



Five brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) survive in metal cages in the "Wonder Trail," an obsolete zoo which the owner claims to have inherited. When Ulyana Plieva bought the land, the seller aimed to empty it of its cumbersome and unfortunate residents. Vladikavkaz Zoo is unable to house them, and they cannot be returned to the wild. They are too dependent on humans and would soon be mistaken for problem bears and killed.

For the time being, the Alagirsky District Attorney has had no choice but to fine the director of the former Wonder Trail. The transfer of the bears to Stavropol Krai (400 km away) has been considered, but poses many administrative and financial problems.

Republic of North Ossetia-Alania Prosecutor's Office, October 14, 2022; OsNova, October 14, 2022.<sup>45</sup>

**October 18 to 25, 2022**

**Inzelga and Rodina, Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia**

He killed a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) in a forest in Inzelga. Age 26, he had a wild boar hunting licence. At his home in Rodina, 14 km from the scene of the crime, 3 rifles, 10 cartridges and the bear's meat were seized. Pending trial, he is under house arrest.

Bashinform, October 26, 2022; Moskovski Komsomolets Bashkortostan, October 26, 2022, Birk, October 27, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

**October 28, 2022**

**Chudovo, Novgorod Oblast, Russia**



Vasilyev M.V. and Mikheev M.A. in September 2020 had driven up near Sloboda, a village in the Chudovsky District, with weapons, vodka, and a sandwich. They had killed an 18-month-old brown bear cub (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and thrown him in the trunk of the car before returning to their home in Chudovsky and butchering the victim. They were sentenced to 3 years and 5 months' suspended imprisonment, 3 years of probation with community service and a 2-year ban on all hunting-related activities. They must pay damages of 180,000 rubles (3,135 US\$). Chudovsky District Court, October 28, 2022.<sup>47</sup>

**November 2, 2022**

**Novgorod Oblast, Russia**

One of Shimsky's brown bear cubs (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.73 and n°36 p.84), after 7 months of care and training in the wild, has been released into the taiga, far from most human activity. He is accompanied in his reunion with freedom by an orphaned female bear who, at the Tver survival school, has also acquired the essential reflexes of human avoidance. The greatest hopes are justified.

Novgorod-TV.ru, November 2, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

**November 4 and 5, 2022**

**Kiginsky District, Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia**

The carcasses of a poached brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and 3 cubs are discovered. It is illegal to hunt bear cubs under the age of one, as well as bears accompanied by their young.

Ministry of Nature Management and Ecology of the Republic of Bashkortostan, November 7, 2022.<sup>49</sup>

**November 18, 2022**

**Kachug, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia**



Contrary to what public opinion and the press had feared, 4 of the Irkutsk Oblast forestry officers involved in the killing of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and in meat trafficking with Moscow were finally sentenced to prison terms of 3 years and 3 and a half years suspended. They were banned from all hunting-related activities for 2 years and, according to "On the Trail" n°34 p.98, had been dismissed in October 2021 at the time of the commission and revelation of the facts. The guilty parties, aged between 21 and 47, are jointly and severally liable for 800,000 rubles (13,000 US\$) in damages.

Interfax Russia, November 18, 2022.<sup>50</sup>



## REPEATED OFFENCE

November 24, 2022

Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, Russia

In the first instance, the court handed down a suspended sentence of deprivation of liberty to 3 thugs who, in December 2020, had deliberately felled a tree at the foot of which a mother brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) had dug her den to hibernate with her 2 cubs, then killed or lynched the entire family. Considering that the sentences were too lenient to deter the perpetrators from doing it again, the prosecutor appealed, and the 3 men were finally sentenced to 3 years, 3 years and 6 months, and 4 years in a penal colony. The repeat offender will serve his sentence in a high-security correctional colony.

Primorsky Krai Prosecutor's Office, November 24, 2022.<sup>51</sup>



## December 2022

Moscow Federal City, Russia

Three female Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) are in the process of recovery at the zoo. Aged 7 and 14, they were in captivity in the Krasnodar krai, 1300 km from Moscow. They were living in 9 m2 cages, in the clutches of traffickers awaiting an inevitably tragic fate. Everything is for sale in the collared bears: the meat, the claws, the paws, the fangs and the fur, which is traded on the Russian black market for between 30,000 and 100,000 rubles (430 to 1440 US\$). In their condition, releasing them would be tantamount to condemning them. They are too thin to go into hibernation. Little by little, they are regaining muscle mass. In February 2023, the 2 youngest weighed 100 and 120 kg. When they arrived, they weighed 70 kg. The press release from Moscow Zoo also gives relatively reassuring news about the polar bear on Dikson Island, who is still in intensive care and gradually regaining his mobility (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.71-72).

Moscow City Department of Culture, February 2, 2023; Komsomolskaia Pravda, February 2, 2023; MIR24, February 2, 2023.<sup>52</sup>

## December 11, 2022

Baygazino, Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia

A poacher shot a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) in his hibernation den. Unable to cut up his victim on his own, he called in 2 people in the village. The 3 men were caught in the act of cutting up. The remains of the bear, 2 firearms, ammunition and knives were seized.

Bashinform, December 12 and 23, 2022.<sup>53</sup>



On the Trail n°38. Robin des Bois

## SLOVAKIA

October 5, 2022

Brezno District, Banská Bystrica Region, Slovakia

"On the Trail" n°37 p.73 reported the poaching of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) at the very end of September 2022 in the Banská Bystrica district. At the beginning of October 2022, another brown bear poaching case was discovered at a roadblock in the Brezno district. In the trunk of a car, police found the bear's butchered body and quartered meat. The Nature Conservation Agency is concerned about this low-key poaching and is calling on witnesses to come forward on police n°158. Brown bears and wolves are in the crosshairs of poachers, some of whom come from abroad. Some of the bear population move closer to homes to take advantage of food bargains, exposing themselves to easy and deadly shooting. In turn, they become bargains.

State Nature Protection of the Slovak Republic, October 12, 2022.<sup>54</sup>

October 7, 2022

Kalamarka, Banská Bystrica Region, Slovakia

It's a black streak for the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) in the Banská Bystrica region. Within a week, a third body was discovered, this time in a hunting reserve. The post-mortem examination resulted in the extraction of a projectile, which was handed over to the forensic police.

State Nature Protection of the Slovak Republic, October 12, 2022.<sup>55</sup>

## UKRAINE

Mid-October 2022

Kreminna, Lugansk Oblast, Ukraine

"Thunder," the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), was living in a cage in the factory of Volodymyr Struk, the town mayor who was killed in the fighting. Struk said he found him wounded in the forest. Thunder was on the front line. He was transferred to the Moscow Zoo by the All-Russian People's Front and the Green Alternative party.

Sievierodonetsk online, October 18, 2022.<sup>56</sup>

# ANTELOPES, WILD GOATS, GAZELLES, IBEXES, SAIGA ANTELOPES, PRONGHORNS ...



Taiwan serow (*Capricornis swinhoei*). Photo Tingan

## AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 16, 2022**

**Sweetwater County, State of Wyoming, United States of America**

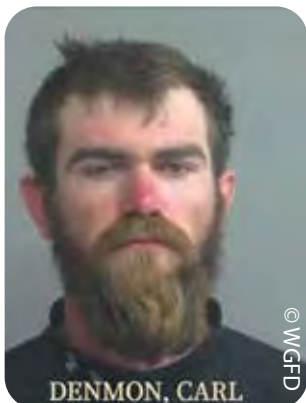
- Adams and Denmon were hunting all night long with prohibited guns, artificial light and a silencer, sharing a will for wanton destruction. On 3 separate occasions, they killed pronghorns (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico) in 3 different locations in the county. On their way back from the killings, at around 5 a.m., they had an accident. A witness noticed blood on their clothes and in the pick-up bed. The WGFD (Wyoming Game & Fish Department) was alerted. The 2 men were arrested.

- They were sentenced to 31,000 US\$ in fines and compensation, 30 days' imprisonment followed by 11 months' probation and the loss of all hunting, fishing and trapping privileges for 5 years. The citizen who informed the WGFD will receive a reward of 750 US\$.

Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Dec. 21, 2022.<sup>1</sup>



ADAMS, MATTHEW



DENMON, CARL

© WGFD

**October 31, 2022**

**Between Gateway and Grand Junction, State of Colorado, United States of America**



© Colorado Parks & Wildlife

A desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*, Appendix II in Mexico) was illegally shot and his carcass left on the highway.

Colorado Parks & Wildlife, November 1, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**November 13, 2022**

**Lane County, State of Kansas, United States of America**

An individual notified the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks that 2 pronghorns (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico) lay in a wheat field. They were shot by at least one person between the night of the 11th and morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>. One of the pronghorns is still alive but needs to be put down.

Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks, November 17, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## CAMBODIA

November 21, 2022

**Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary, Battambang Province, Cambodia. Border with Thailand**



Forest rangers pulled a female Southern serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I) out of a snare. She had a miscarriage while trying to free herself.

The Phnom Penh Post, November 24, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

## GEORGIA

End of November 2022

**Lagodekhi, Region of Kakheti, Georgia**

Two poachers who just killed a wild goat are arrested and their 2 firearms confiscated.

Georgia is inhabited by Western tur (*Capra caucasica caucasica*, Appendix II), Eastern tur (*Capra caucasica cylindricornis*, Appendix II) and wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan).

Gazeti Batumelebi, November 30, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

## INDIA

November 14, 2022

**Satara, Satara District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Arrest of the 3 poachers of a four-horned antelope (*Tetracerus quadricornis*, Appendix III in Nepal) and an Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*). Seizure of 2 firearms, cartridges, a butcher knife, the animals' heads and meat.

The Times of India, November 15, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

November 17, 2022

**Khimlasa, Sagar District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Party night for the policemen who maintain order in the district. Maqsood Ali, the chief, and a few of his elite policemen began by chasing blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and in Pakistan). This was followed by a big meal in the disused police station next to the recently inaugurated police station. The district police arrived on the scene too late to obtain any evidence. The former police station had just been power-washed. A complaint was courageously lodged by a local resident who complained, unsurprisingly, that he was now being intimidated and threatened. One India, December 5, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

Beginning of October 2022

**Hajjiabad County, Hormozgan Province, Iran**

Seizure of the car, a 270-caliber rifle, and a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Four men were arrested and a fifth fled.

Young Journalists Club, October 2, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

December 20, 2022

**Dena Protected Area, Isfahan and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Provinces, Iran**

A fight - without shots being fired - broke out when 3 guards tried to arrest 8 poachers at around 9 p.m. Two guards were slightly injured and 2 poachers handcuffed. A dead wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), ammunition and a firearm were seized at the scene. The Dena mountain range stretches for 80 km and sometimes rises above 4,000 metres, a rocky and wooded habitat where more than a hundred animal species live independently thanks to a food pyramid at the top of which are bearded vultures, golden eagles and leopards.

Baztab.ir, December 22, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

## KAZAKHSTAN

OPERATION POACHER

Beginning of November 2022

**Baydibek District, Turkistan Region, Kazakhstan**

The man on horseback had a skinned Altai argali (*Ovis ammon*, Appendix II) in his bag, and next to his mount were dogs who helped to the catch.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, November 4, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

OPERATION POACHER

Mid-November 2022

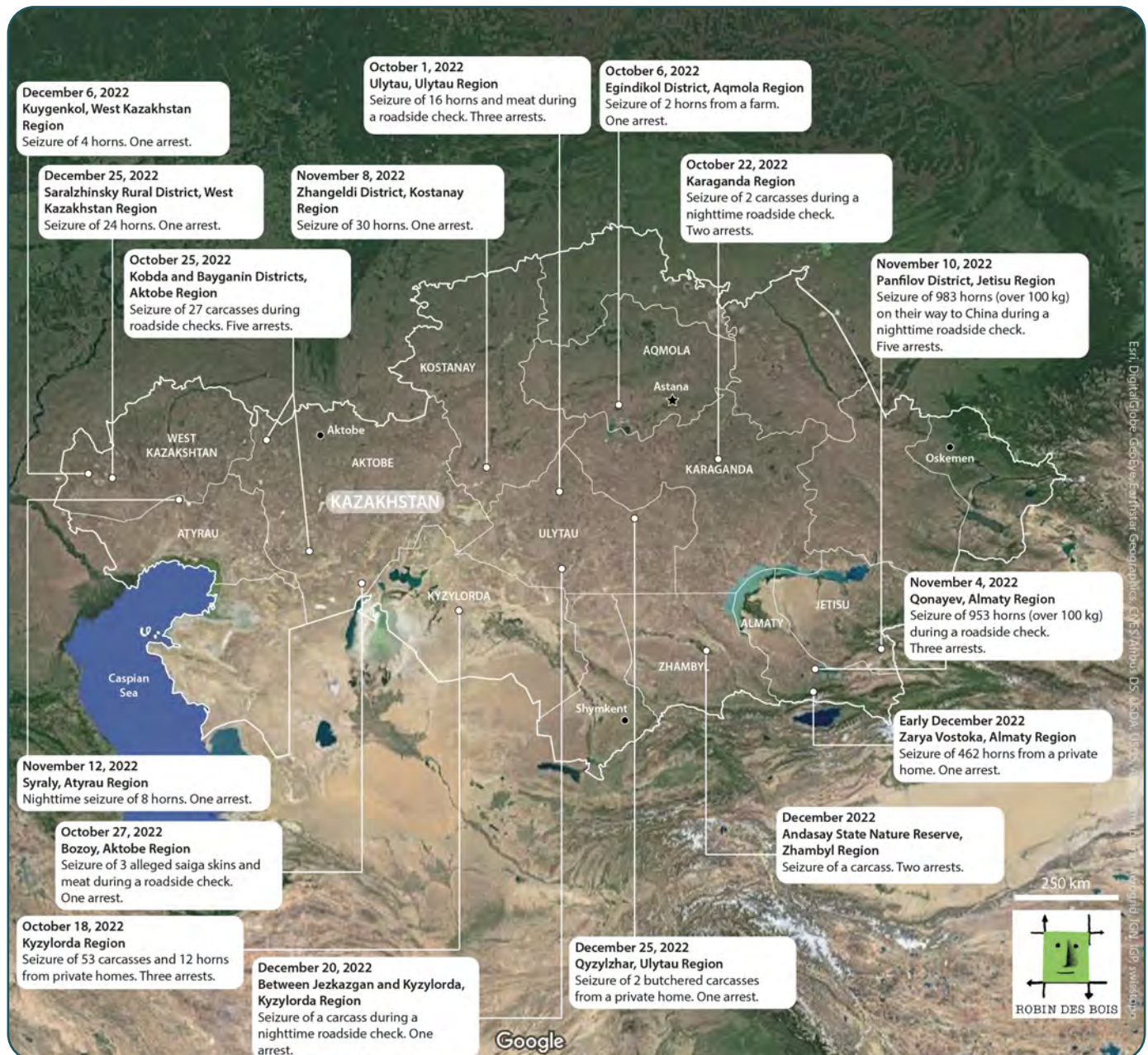
**Shu District, Jambyl Region, Kazakhstan**

Seizure of a goitered gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), a double-barrelled shotgun, and a Land Cruiser by police officers and agents of Okhotzooptom, the State wildlife protection service.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, November 17, 2022.<sup>11</sup>



## Kazakhstan. Seizures of horns (2,528), carcasses (86), skins and meat of saiga antelope between October 1 and December 31, 2022



Saiga (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II)

Sources, see page 255





November 4, 2022. Almaty Region, Kazakhstan



November 10, 2022  
Panfilov District, Jetisu Region, Kazakhstan



October 18, 2022  
Kyzylorda Region, Kazakhstan



December 25, 2022  
Qyzylzhar, Ulytau Region, Kazakhstan



October 22, 2022  
Karaganda Region, Kazakhstan



October 25, 2022. Kobda and Bayganin Districts, Aktoobe Region, Kazakhstan



## KYRGYZSTAN

**October 3, 2022**

### **Bosogo, Naryn Region, Kyrgyzstan**

Seizure at midnight of 6 Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) butchered in a poacher's lorry from the village of Bash-Kayyngdy. Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision, October 3, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## PAKISTAN

**October 2022**

### **Province of Punjab, Pakistan**

The poacher of an urial (*Ovis vignei*, Appendix I) is arrested in a private hunting reserve. Veterinary News and Views, October 30, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**October 2022**

### **Mithi, Province of Sindh, Pakistan**

Ali Ahmed, Salam Bari, Abdul Ghani, Mohammad Saleem and Mohammed Haasan had been arrested red-handed in July for poaching 7 Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III). They pleaded guilty and immediately paid the fines of 100,000 rupees (430 US\$) for each male gazelle and 300,000 rupees (1,290 US\$) for each female gazelle. Their vehicle, weapons and hunting gear were permanently seized. According to Javed Ahmed Mahar, head of the Provincial Wildlife Protection Department, "it is an unprecedented case in which the offenders have paid the fine as per the law." The Express Tribune, October 27, 2022.<sup>14</sup>



## TAIWAN

**November 22, 2022**

### **Heping District, Taichung Special Municipality, Taiwan**

This is the first time that such a corruption case has made the news in Taiwan. Kuan, the candidate in the district elections, recruited a poacher for hire to kill a Taiwan serow (*Capricornis swinhoei*), an emblematic and protected species in the archipelago, and to offer pieces of meat accompanied by persimmons to villagers in her constituency in the name of "tribal sharing". She is suspected of vote buying and trafficking in endangered species as part of an organised gang, and is subject to the Election and Recall Act and the Wildlife Conservation Act. She was released on bail of 100,000 NT\$ (3,100 US\$). Investigators arrived on the scene too late to seize the meat and fruit. They had already been eaten. A photo of the dead serow was found on her mobile phone.

Liberty Times Net, November 23, 2022; Taiwan News, November 23, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

## TURKIYE

**November 2022**

### **Çamlıyayla, Mersin Province, and Karacaören, Sivas Province, Türkiye**

Wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) are protected, but poaching continues unabated and the authorities are relentless in their pressure.

- Three poachers were fined 250,000 lira (13,430 US\$). The damages will follow. Their arrest is a credit to the Çamlıyayla and Tarsus police.

- Four poachers are fined a total of 6,484 lira and must pay 250,000 lira in damages, equivalent to over 13,430 US\$. DKMP (Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks) officers were responsible for their arrest.

Wild goats in Türkiye, see "On the Trail" n°31 p.84, n°32 p.249, n°33 p.115, n°34 p.104 and p.105, n°35 p.78 and p.79, n°36 p.88 and n°37 p.80 and p.81. Mersin Haberci Gazetesi, November 5, 2022; Habertürk, November 23, 2022.<sup>16</sup>



**Mid-December 2022**

### **Yaylapınar, Hakkâri Province, Türkiye. Border with Syria and Iraq.**

Abdulgafur Çelik fined 250,000 lira (13,415 US\$). In his car, the meat of a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) was wrapped in a plastic bag. Ensonhaber, December 20, 2022.<sup>17</sup>



**End of December 2022**

### **Yeşilyurt, Malatya Province, Türkiye**

Total fine of 505,000 lira (27,100 US\$) for 2 poachers who killed 2 wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). One of the goats had already been butchered and cut into pieces at the time of seizure. Elazığ Hakimiyet Haber, December 26, 2022.<sup>18</sup>



## EUROPE

## RUSSIA

**November 1, 2022**

### **Khnov, Republic of Dagestan, Russia. Border with Azerbaijan.**

The 64-year-old man claims to have mistakenly shot the 2 Eastern tur (*Capra caucasica cylindricornis*, Appendix II), and in fact intended to shoot his 2 goats, who had escaped and whom he was unable to retrieve alive in the snow and rain. The 2 goats, who were apparently never found, are likely to cost him 360,000 rubles (5,860 US\$) in damages. Komsomolskaya Pravda, November 18, 2022; RIA Dagestan, November 18, 2022.<sup>19</sup>



**November 22, 2022**

**Ussuriisk, Primorsky Krai, Russia**

A foreign national was sentenced to 7 years in a high-security correctional colony and fined one million rubles (16,275 US\$). He had purchased 750 saiga horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) between October and December 2020, with an estimated value of 4.5 million rubles, (59,000 US\$ or 78.5 US\$/horn), in circumstances that remain unclear. In August 2021, he had already been convicted of attempting to bribe an FSB agent, to whom he had offered 160,000 rubles to help him take a batch of horns out of Russia.

Primorsky Krai Prosecutor's Office, November 22, 2022.<sup>20</sup>



**December 1, 2022**

**Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia**

Officials confiscate 46 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) collectively weighing over 10 kg and arrest 2 individuals.

Interfax Russia, December 1, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**

**Kosh-Agachsky District, Republic of Altai, Russia. Border with Mongolia.**

Border guards arrested 3 men on the Belyachi-Argout road who were holding 2 dead Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in their Toyota Land Cruiser. In 2022, no hunting quota has been issued with the dual aim of restoring the numbers of Siberian ibex, which have collapsed in 10 years in the Altai Republic (92,900 km<sup>2</sup>), and saving from extinction the snow leopard, whose favourite prey is the Himalayan ibex.

4s-Info, December 6, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

## GIRAFFES

### AFRICA

#### KENYA

**October 6, 8, 14, 19 and 23, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

- A giraffe is found with a trap around her neck, but rangers cannot anaesthetise her for treatment.
  - The carcass of a giraffe who died from a spear wound to his front leg is discovered.
  - A suspect attempting to sell 3 kg of giraffe meat is arrested.
  - A giraffe killed by unknown assailants is reported to rangers.
  - A giraffe killed by a spear is discovered.
  - Another giraffe wounded by a spear is discovered, though no veterinary intervention is required.
- Big Life Foundation, October 2022.<sup>1</sup>



**October 16, 2022**

**Raya, Garissa County, Kenya**

- The steel wire around the neck had not yet penetrated the flesh. The giraffe got up 3 minutes after the revival antidote was administered and ran off again. Favourable prognosis.

- The wound on the right hind leg of the juvenile male giraffe was fresh. The bone was not affected by the throwing weapon. Favourable prognosis.



SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**October 16, 2022**

**Mara Triangle, Narok County, Kenya**

After the anaesthetic injection, the male giraffe was roped up to slow down his fall. He lay down 12 minutes later. The steel rope was removed. The wound at the bottom of the leg was washed and treated with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. He woke up well and was able to get back without stumbling. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Sky Vet program, January 2023.<sup>3</sup>



**October 22, 2022**

**Kuku Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya**

The male giraffe wounded on his back by a spear has finally been located. The 2 anaesthetics, 12 mg of etorphine and 6 mg of medetomidine, took a long time to take effect. The vet believes that in similar cases, the dose of medetomidine should be increased. He finally collapsed. He was kept on the ground during treatment. Favourable prognosis. Big Life Foundation, October 2022; SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**October 23, 2022**

**Lentolia Wildlife Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya**

The winch wire lacerated the left front leg. The alert was given in time by the scouts. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2022.<sup>5</sup>



**November 1, 4, 10, 15 and 30, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

Big Life Foundation rangers reported on their actions to protect giraffes in November:

- A giraffe carcass with a spear mark on the right hind leg is discovered.
- A giraffe with a trap around his neck is reported to a veterinary team.
- A suspect is arrested with giraffe meat, a poisoned arrow, a non-poisoned arrow and kitchen utensils.
- A giraffe carcass with an arrow in his neck is found.
- Two dead giraffes are discovered in traps: one fresh and skinned, the other on the way to be rotten. The suspects fled on motorcycles.
- Giraffe meat is found during a search following a tip-off.
- The decomposing carcass of a butchered giraffe is discovered.

Big Life Foundation, November 2022.<sup>6</sup>



**November 7, 12, 13, 14 and 15, 2022**  
**Naivasha, Nakuru County, and Garissa County, Kenya**



- Two arrows, one in the right hind leg, one in the thorax. She was limping close to Lake Naivasha. Before anaesthesia, she was roped up to avoid drowning. She was sprayed during the treatment. It was very hot. After waking up, she was able to walk again. Favourable prognosis.

- Immediately after injecting the anaesthetics, the care team moved the giraffe away from the shores of Lake Naivasha, once again to avoid drowning. The trap lines around the neck were sheared off with wire cutters. Favourable prognosis.

- Her gait was unsteady. She had already undergone an extrication operation, but the trap wound at the hock joint of her left hind leg had not completely healed. Garissa County takes its toll on giraffes.

- The left front leg was swollen above the hoof as a result of being surrounded by a trap or thrown by a throwing weapon. Immediately after anaesthetics were fired from a Dan-Inject shotgun, she was roped up by 2 members of the care team to cushion the fall and avoid fractures. Swelling was treated with an anti-inflammatory. Prognosis relatively favourable.

- Looking at the wound on the left hind leg, laymen tend to be pessimistic. However, after immobilization, examination and treatment, the vet's prognosis is optimistic. The giraffe stood upright and posed for a moment for the photographer.

- Three strong men hold her down. As always, she has a blanket over her eyes, and after extracting the trap from her lower neck with the help of the cutting pliers and the wake-up antidote, she righted herself.



- This is the fifth rescue in Garissa County in November alone. Another cable trap around a swollen, suppurating leg. Another millimeter precision operation with wire cutters. Favourable prognosis. The alert was given in time, and she headed off into the savannah at her own risk and under the watchful eye of the rangers. The terrain is mined by traps, even more so since the Covid-19 pandemic.

SWT/KWS Sky Vet program, January 2023.<sup>7</sup>

**November 8, 2022**

**Wajir County, Kenya. Border with Somalia.**

After exchanging fire with KWS rangers, 6 men fled, leaving behind 3 motorcycles, 3 cell phones, knives, an axe, and the carcass of a giraffe they had been butchering.

Kenya Wildlife Service, November 8, 2022.<sup>8</sup>



**November 23, 2022**  
**Saparingo, Narok County, Kenya**



She had a spear embedded in her right flank. She hardly moved at all because of the pain. Within 3 minutes of the anaesthetic injection, she was roped up to cushion the fall and prevent the neck fracture. The lance was carefully removed. The wound was disinfected and sealed with green clay. An antibiotic was sprayed on the swollen area and an anti-inflammatory injected into the peripheral muscles. The giraffe perked up. Her gait was really more confident. She rejoined her band. No vital organs appear to have been affected. The prognosis is favourable. She will be monitored for a while. SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**November 27, 2022**  
**Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya**



The trap encircled a hind leg. As always, bolt cutters were an indispensable surgical tool. Poorly healed wounds on the right front leg were treated. During the operation, she was constantly watered to prevent heat stroke and death. The neck and head were held down by assistants. Favourable prognosis. SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**October and November 2022**  
**Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania.**

For the past 2 months, in the Narok County yet plagued by all kinds of trafficking, poaching and violence, a new scourge has arrived. Three giraffes have been killed and their genitals cut off. Kenya News Agency, December 13, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**December 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13 and 15, 2022**  
**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**



Rangers at the Big Life Foundation have been hard at work fighting giraffe poachers. In December, at least 25 giraffes died:

- one sub-adult with a trap around his neck.
- 8 adult in traps and another butchered.
- 12 giraffes near 7 traps.
- one adult decomposing in a trap.
- another decomposing adult in a trap near 2 other traps.
- one skinned adult. The suspects escaped with some of the meat.
- a suspect was arrested with 177 kg of giraffe meat.

Officials seized a lamp, machete, knife, file and torch. Big Life Foundation, December 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**December 20, 2022**  
**El-Maow, Wajir County, Kenya**

Kenya Wildlife Service officers swooped down on the 3 poachers. Two of them opened fire. One poacher was hurt in the shooting. A rifle, a mobile phone, daggers, ammunition and cartridges of various calibres were seized. The carcass of the partially skinned male giraffe has been disposed of. Kenya Wildlife Service, December 21, 2022; NTV (Kenya), December 21, 2022.<sup>13</sup>





# ZEBRAS AND DONKEYS

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Sabi Sands Private Game Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Officials rescue a zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra*, Appendix II, found in South Africa) whose neck got caught in a wire.

African Wildlife Vets, October 4, 2022.<sup>1</sup>



### KENYA

**From October 5 to December 27, 2022  
Kedong Ranch and Kijabe Farm,  
Nakuru County, Kenya**

- Nakuru County

Authorities freed 10 zebras from traps around their necks or legs. Nine favourable prognoses. One zebra whose left hind leg had been amputated by the steel trap was put down.



One female zebra direct euthanized.  
December 22, 2022. Longonot, Nakuru County

- Taita-Taveta County

Officials rescued 2 female zebras caught in traps around their necks or legs. Favourable prognosis.



December 12, 2022. Ndii, Taita-Taveta County

- Narok County

Officials removed 3 zebras trapped around the neck or legs. Favourable prognosis.

- Nyeri County

Officials extricate a zebra caught in a neck trap. Favourable prognosis.



December 14, 2022.  
Aberdare Country Club, Nyeri County

SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, October and December 2022; SWT/KWS Sky Vet program, October 2022 to January 2023; SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2022; SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, November and December 2022; SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**October 9 and 20, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

- A zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, present in Kenya) wounded on one leg by a spear is reported.

- The skinned carcass of a zebra is discovered. The suspects fled on motorcycle.

Big Life Foundation, October 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**November 8 and 14, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

- A suspect flees from Big Life Foundation rangers as they arrive on scene, following a report that a zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) was killed by a spear.

- The carcass of another speared zebra is discovered. Big Life Foundation, November 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**December 24, 2022**

**Nyakweri Forest, Narok County, Kenya**

A man is arrested in possession of 12 kg of zebra meat (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya).

Mara Elephant Project, December 2022 and January 16 and 27, 2023.<sup>5</sup>

## NAMIBIA

**November 23, 2022**

**Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia. Border with Zambia.**

Two men, ages 20 and 26, are arrested in possession of a zebra carcass (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae*, Appendix II, found in Namibia) and a firearm.

Informanté, November 29, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**December 2, 2022**

**Maltahöhe, Hardap Region, Namibia**

Two men, ages 38 and 48, are arrested. They are accused of killing 2 mountain zebras (*Equus zebra*, *Equus zebra hartmannae*, Appendix II, found in Namibia) without a permit at the Nana Nia Safari Ranch, where hunting safaris are offered. The animals hold an estimated economic value of 9,200 Namibian dollars (540 US\$). The carcasses were recovered.

Informanté, December 5, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

## NIGERIA

**May to November, 2022**

**Oyo and Osun States, Nigeria**

A customs report notes that 69 bags of dried donkey skins were intercepted and later handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture. Two individuals were arrested. Other customs confiscations included bundles of worn-out clothes, bags and shoes, tires and vehicles known as "Tokunbo", the local name for second-hand vehicles imported from Europe. "Tokunbo" literally means "born on the other side of the sea."

Independent (Nigeria), December 14, 2022; Nigerian Tribune, December 14, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**August through October 2022**

**Bauchi, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, Borno, Plateau, Benue, Gombe and Nasarawa States, Nigeria**

Ten bags of dried donkey skins were seized by Zone D customs.

Nigerian Tribune, October 10, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

## UGANDA

**October 19, 2022**

**Mbarara, Western Region, Uganda**



Five traffickers were selling bushmeat in the village. Twesigye, Samson Nuwamanya and John Kiyemba were arrested and 2 accomplices managed to escape. Six heads and around 150 kg of impala (*Aepyceros melampus*) meat and 2 zebra (genus *Equus*) carcasses were seized.

New Vision, October 19, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

## ZAMBIA

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, Southern Province, Zambia. Border with Zimbabwe.**



A juvenile zebra (genus *Equus*) had the wire from a snare deeply embedded in his leg. He was freed by the vets.

Global March for Elephants and Rhinos, October 11, 2022.<sup>11</sup>



## ASIA

### INDIA

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Nhava Sheva Port, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Two zebra skins (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra*, Appendix II, found in South Africa) are seized from a shipment of "art and decorative objects" from South Africa.

Nhava Sheva Customs, November 8, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## ASIA AND EUROPE

### ISRAEL, BELGIUM AND FRANCE

**June 26 and October 28, 2022**

**Netanya, Central District, Israel, Nogent-Le-Phaye, Department of Eure-et-Loir, France, and Wavre, Province of Walloon Brabant, Walloon Region, Belgium**

Donkey trafficking between Israel and Egypt via Palestine has been partly halted thanks to a furtive agreement between an animal lover in Gaza and an animal lover in Netanya. A donkey imported from Israel can be bought for around 300 US\$ in Palestine if he is still fit for work. In Palestine, unlike in the green meadows of Western Europe, donkeys are not pets. When they are too worn out to be beasts of burden, donkeys from Israel are transferred to Egypt for 400 US\$.

The skin, hooves and penises are shipped to China for the ejiao market and for food and sex supplements. Several thousand donkeys are sold in this way, and Sharon Cohen, the French-Israeli founder of the Starting Over shelter, buys them directly from the dealers and keeps up them thanks to her volunteers and donations from private individuals. For lack of space, she has to export them. The La Tanière refuge in Eure-et-Loir, 90 km south-west of Paris, near Chartres, and the Belgian association Les Poilus du Blé have agreed to act as transitional reception points until the adaptation of Middle Eastern donkeys to the climatic conditions of Wallonia and Pays de la Loire is confirmed, injured or sick donkeys are cared for, and calls for adoptions are followed up.

Air and road transport costs are covered by the Israeli and French Ministries of Ecology. The donkeys take off on a cargo plane from Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport and land in Liège, Belgium, where they undergo a veterinary inspection. The first arrival in the pastures made available to La Tanière zoo-refuge dates back to June 2022. The operation continued in 2023.

Franceinfo, April 1, 2022; France 3 Centre-Val de Loire, June 27, 2022; La Tanière, July 11, 2022 and May 29, 2023; RTBF, October 31, 2022; TV Com, October 31, 2022; Maariv, February 12, 2023; L'Echo Républicain, July 5, 2023; Ynet, July 16, 2023; Starting Over Sanctuary.<sup>13</sup>





# GAURS, NILGAIS AND BISONS

## ASIA

### INDIA

**December 27, 2022**

**State Highway 90, Devamachi Section, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India**



A gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) mortally wounded by at least 2 shots inside the Nagarhole Reserve fled and collapsed in the middle of expressway 90. The body was removed by domesticated elephants. The New Indian Express, December 28, 2022; The Times of India, December 28, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**December 30, 2022**

**Aron Forest Area, Guna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Early morning arrest of 2 men from the village of Jhajhon. They had just poached a male nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) with, they said, the help of around twenty other villagers. The idea was to prepare a banquet. Only 15 kg of meat were seized (an adult male nilgai weighs between 110 and 290 kg), including the head, tail and horns.

The Free Press Journal, December 30, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## EUROPE

### POLAND

**October 12, 2022**

**Drawsko Pomorskie, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland**



Two European bison (*Bison bonasus*) in quick succession. In the middle of a field of Jerusalem artichokes, the experienced hunter mistook a herd of bison for a herd of wild boars. In the shooting range with watchtowers, 2 female bison were shot. One of them was nursing. Her calf disappeared. Zachodniopomorskie Towarzystwo Przyrodnicze - Dzika Zagroda, October 12, 2022; Kronika24.pl, October 13, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**October 23, 2022**

**Swierczyna, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland**

An Irish hunter has shot a European bison (*Bison bonasus*) on a private hunting concession. According to the vet's report, the animal was shot from behind at a distance of 70 metres, which refutes the hunter's claim that he shot in self-defence. The victim was a nursing mother. Her cub has disappeared.

European bison in Bulgaria, see "On the Trail" n°32 p.119.

European bison in Poland, see "On the Trail" n°32 p.119 and n°37 p.90.

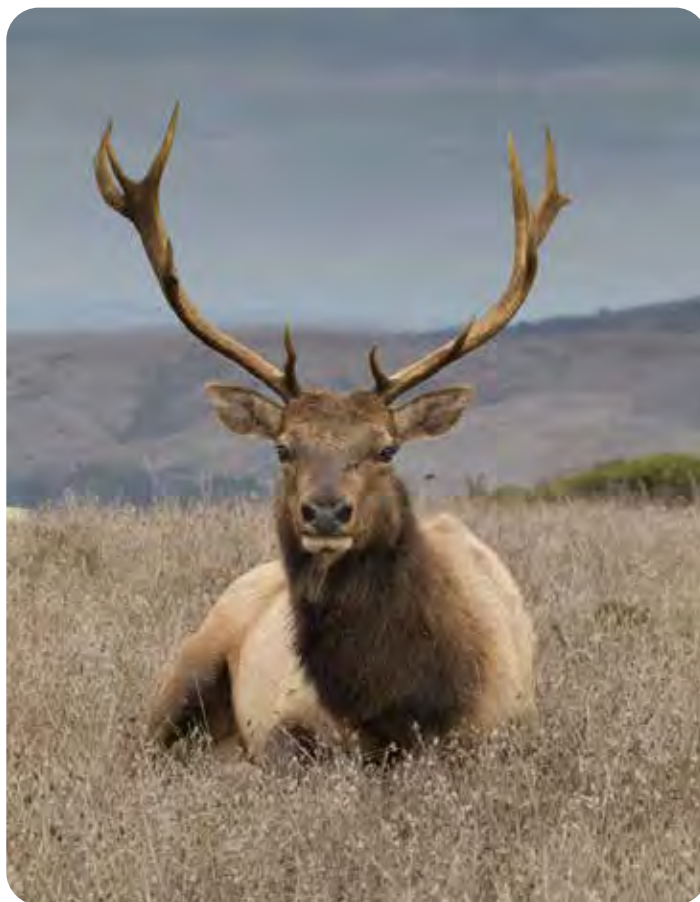
European bison in Belarus, see "On the Trail" n°35 p.86.

European bison in Russia, see "On the Trail" n°35 p.86.

European bison in Germany, see "On the Trail" n°36 p.95.

Zachodniopomorskie Towarzystwo Przyrodnicze - Dzika Zagroda, October 23, 2022; Kronika24.pl, October 26, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

# DEER, MUSK DEER, ELKS AND ROE DEER



Elk (*Cervus canadensis*). Photo Marc Brawer

## AMERICA

### CANADA

**October 31, 2022**  
**Carberry, Province of Manitoba, Canada**



The antlers and meat of an elk (*Cervus canadensis*) shot out of season are confiscated. The hunter attempted to declare him as a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and was fined 4,486 Canadian dollars (3,275 US\$) in damages. Manitoba Government, December 16, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**November 22, 2022**  
**Province of Manitoba, Canada**

Officials arrest 2 men suspected of chasing, striking and shooting a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). The carcass and antlers were seized from their homes, as were a vehicle and rifle. Manitoba Government, December 16, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**November 26 and 27, 2022**

**Manitou District and Winkler, Province of Manitoba, Canada**

A white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was found decapitated and partially butchered. The next day, police identified a male suspect, who later admitted to the crime. He was issued a ticket for wasting game.

Manitoba Government, December 16, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 1, 2022**

**Lapeer County, State of Michigan, United States of America**

The skull of a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) shot without a licence is recovered. The suspect bought a hunting licence after the fact, but the officer was adamant: "it doesn't matter whether you didn't move the deer until you had a licence. The deer was illegally taken because you didn't have a licence prior to taking the deer."

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, October 29, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**Beginning of October 2022**  
**Oklahoma City, State of Oklahoma, United States of America**



Dean Summers was fined 340 US\$ for selling “works of art” made from the skulls of deer (family Cervidae) “collected” in the wild. His stock has been seized. He also faces 60 days in prison. Summers explained that he was simply passing through and that he had already sold his products in several States without any problems. KFOR-TV, October 5, 2022; SoonerPolitics.org, October 5, 2022; Mosaic Skulls.<sup>5</sup>

**Beginning of October 2022**  
**Washtenaw County, State of Michigan, United States of America**

Suspected of poaching a large white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), a man admitted to buying a hunting licence after the killing. The trophy, which had been in the hands of a taxidermist, was confiscated.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, October 15, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**  
**Beginning of October 2022**  
**Montcalm County, State of Michigan, United States of America**

The RAP (Report All Poaching) hotline received an alert about the poaching of a 9- point antlered white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). His head was found behind a suspect’s garage and seized.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, October 15, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**Mid-October 2022**  
**Escambia County, State of Florida, United States of America**

A man who killed 2 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in a field is indicted. He decapitated one of the deer under the guise of a depredation permit. This permit allows one to protect crops or animals on his property. The trophy was confiscated.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, October 20, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**October 11, 2022**  
**Olathe, State of Kansas, United States of America**

Theft of an elk (*Alces alces*) skull and a cow skull in front of a taxidermist’s workshop. They were drying on the pavement.

Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks, October 14, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**October 19, 2022**  
**St. Maries, State of Idaho, United States of America**

Abandonment in a dumpster on St. Maries River Road of the carcass of an elk (*Cervus canadensis*), with only the head and 2 quarters removed.

Idaho Fish and Game, October 20, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENCE**  
**October 24 and November 21, 2022**  
**State of Wyoming, United States of America**



Sentencing of Joshua Anders Rae, age 38, to 5 years of probation with a ban on access to all federal forests, national parks, and the National Elk Refuge for being in possession of 22 kg of elk antlers (*Cervus canadensis*) on April 30, 2021 in Bridger-Teton National Park adjacent to the National Elk Refuge. He had cut them up and hidden them in the trunk of a dead tree. Rae operates the Great American Antler Company and sells sections of antler via the Internet as a substitute for dog chews, a considerable and growing market in the USA (see “On the Trail” n°36 p.96-97). Rae’s haul amounted to 2,300 US\$, or 105 US\$/kg based on the selling prices charged by his business. He was accused of having anticipated the opening of the antler collection during the winter molt. He had committed an illegal raid.

And it wasn’t a first for him. On June 2, 2016, he attempted to remove 47 kg of illegally harvested elk antlers from Bridger-Teton National Park. Three years later, he was sentenced to 15,000 US\$ in compensatory damages and banned from entering the National Elk Refuge and Wyoming’s National Parks for 5 years.

On Monday, October 24, 2022, Rae was sentenced to an additional 60 days in prison for violating the ban, with the option of serving the sentence in several weeks.

On Tuesday, November 8, the prison administration informed the court that such an arrangement of the sentence was not conceivable.

On Monday November 21, the Assistant U.S. Attorney, Rae and his attorney agreed to file a motion with the court to instead place Rae on 90 days of supervised release with the sole condition being 90 days in home confinement.

US Fish and Wildlife Service, June 19, 2019; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, November 2022; K2 Radio, November 21, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENCE**  
**October 26, 2022**  
**West Baton Rouge Parish, State of Louisiana, United States of America**

Arrest and imprisonment of Hunter W. Varnado, aged 20, for poaching a deer (genus *Odocoileus*). He was hunting out of season, without a licence and with a large-calibre rifle. It was not his first attempt and, as aggravating circumstances, he refused to obey the law enforcement officers.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, October 27, 2022.<sup>12</sup>



**October 28, 2022**

**Arimo, State of Idaho, United States of America**

The decapitated carcass of a deer (genus *Odocoileus*) is confiscated. "We are unsure if the individual(s) who shot the buck had a valid tag for this controlled hunt unit, but at the very least, this is a case of wasteful destruction."

Idaho Fish and Game, November 2 and 14, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**October 28-29, 2022**

**Dupree, State of South Dakota, United States of America**

Call for witnesses. Officials at South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks are looking for the perpetrator(s) of 2 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) shot dead overnight along Highway #22. One of the deer was decapitated.

South Dakota Turn In Poachers, November 2, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**October 29, 2022**

**St. Marys, State of West Virginia, United States of America**



A 10-point white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) has been poached near County Line Road. Two people admitted dazzling him with their headlights before killing him with a crossbow from their vehicle.

West Virginia Natural Resources Police, Nov. 1, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**End of October 2022**

**Kent County, State of Michigan, United States of America**

Officials confiscate a trophy white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) who was shot without a permit. The male suspect attempted to rectify this by purchasing a permit after the fact.

Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources, Oct. 29, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**End of October 2022**

**State of Michigan, United States of America**

Examination of the case in progress. The man poached a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and attempted to fraudulently pass him as legal using his stepson's hunting licence. He was caught out by his posts on social networks. He boasted that he had shot his first deer with a bow. The animal was found at a taxidermist's.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, October 29, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

**October 2022**

**Somerset County, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

A man is indicted for poaching and decapitating a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) overnight.

Outdoor News, November 10, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**October 2022**

**Milwaukie, State of Oregon, United States of America**

Poaching of a 4-point mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) on private land. A father and his son who fired the shots were charged. The deer meat, antlers and rifle were seized.

Oregon State Police, October 2022.<sup>19</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**October 2022**

**Pendleton, State of Oregon, United States of America**

Seizure of 6 sets of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) antlers, 3 sets of elk (*Cervus canadensis*) antlers, a rifle, a bow and meat from Walker Erickson (28) and Hunter Wagner (23). Erickson is charged with 22 counts of poaching 13 elk and deer between



August and September 2021 and again between December 2021 and January 2022. Wagner is charged with 7 counts of killing 7 elk and deer. He was also convicted in early 2022 of illegal fishing. Oregon State Police, November 29, 2022; Tri-City Herald, November 30, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

## REPEATED OFFENCE

**Beginning of November 2022**

**State of Kentucky, United States of America**

- The head of a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is confiscated from a man. The deer was shot without a permit before the start of gun-hunting season.

- Officials confiscate 4 antlered skulls and 2 antlered heads of a white-tailed deer. The 2 suspects left the carcasses behind, constituting an aggravating circumstance. One of them had already had his hunting licence suspended for similar offences.

Kentucky Conservation Officers, November 9 and 15, 2022.<sup>21</sup>



**Beginning of November 2022**

**Decatur, State of Illinois, United States of America**

Antlers from a recently poached white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are recovered from a man's home.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, November 15, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

## OPERATION GAME THIEF

**November 1, 2022**

**Concord Township, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

The white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was killed a few hours before. His beheaded carcass was found this morning. Both on and adjacent to the carcass, Pennsylvania Game Commission officers collected an electric saw blade, a knife and a crossbow bolt.

Pennsylvania Game Commission, November 18, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**November 2, 2022**

**American Falls, State of Idaho, United States of America**

A citizen finds the carcass of a male elk (*Cervus canadensis*) south of town. Authorities learn that the killer had attempted to cut off the head but gave up. The death occurred some 10 days earlier. Idaho Fish and Game, November 14, 2022.<sup>24</sup>

**November 2, 2022**

**Mira, State of Louisiana, United States of America**

The young Cole Knighton, 19, has already poached 7 deer (genus *Odocoileus*) over the last 2 years, sometimes from his car. Two antlered skulls were seized from his home.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, November 10, 2022.<sup>25</sup>

**November 3, 2022**

**Gallipolis, State of Ohio, United States of America**



Justice has been served for the employees and owners of A&E Deer Processing, Gallia County, Ohio. The 14 suspects charged in 4 counties and 2 States with 122 felonies and misdemeanors were sentenced to a total of 70,000 US\$ in fines and restitution and 6,700 US\$ in court costs. Their hunting licences were revoked for a total of 63 years. They are convicted of trading in over 900 kg of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) meat, either by stealing it from A&E Deer Processing customers or by poaching deer out of season and using prohibited means such as spotlights. During the search, deer trophies and a moonshine still were discovered and seized. This is one of the biggest scandals in Ohio to hit the hushed world of deer hunting. 280 hunters were customers of A&E Deer Processing. They brought deer carcasses there to be butchered and processed into ready-to-eat meat. The survey began in 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.114).

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, November 3, 2022; Field & Stream, November 8, 2022.<sup>26</sup>

**November 4, 2022**

**Lincoln, State of Nebraska, United States of America**



Chad M. McCullough, 34, was sentenced to 2 years' probation and fined a total of 9,000 US\$ for illegally transporting 2 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) to Georgia. He was also ordered to surrender his mounts and other taxidermy parts to the authorities.

In October 2020, McCullough shot the 2 mule deer during the archery season with a Ruger 6.5 calibre rifle supplied by the owner of the Noble Outdoors hunting and taxidermy business.

Noble Outdoors, see "On the Trail" n°37 p.92.

U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Nebraska, November 4, 2022.<sup>27</sup>

## OPERATION GAME THIEF

**November 11 or 12, 2022**

**Henderson County, State of Texas, United States of America**

Call for witnesses. Overnight, an unknown individual left the carcass of a decapitated male white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) along Route 1311. A 1,000 US\$ reward is being offered to anyone who can identify the culprit(s).

Operation Game Thief (Texas), November 27, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

**November 12, 2022**

**Tyler County, State of West Virginia, United States of America**

Those responsible for poaching a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) with atypical antlers (5 branches on the right, 4 on the left) have been found. The deer carcass and antlers and the suspects' firearm were seized. One of them is already under a ban preventing him from owning firearms.

West Virginia Natural Resources Police, November 18, 2022.<sup>29</sup>

**OPERATION GAME THIEF**

**November 13, 2022**

**Milford Township, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

The carcasses of 2 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are discovered along Chippewa Road. The deer were killed on the night of Friday the 11th, and the poachers cut out the antlers and best parts of meat.

Pennsylvania Game Commission, November 14, 2022.<sup>30</sup>

**Mid-November 2022**

**State of Kentucky, United States of America**



A man and woman were indicted for killing a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) without a permit. Their trophy and rifle were seized.

Kentucky Conservation Officers, November 18, 2022.<sup>31</sup>

**Mid-November 2022**

**Putnam County, State of West Virginia, United States of America**

- A man admitted to shooting an 8-point white-tailed buck (*Odocoileus virginianus*) with a spread of 55.9 cm near Bills Creek. He was fined 10,000 US\$.

- A man shot a 12-point deer near Heizer Creek, his second of the season. He didn't tag him properly.

West Virginia Natural Resources Police, November 21, 2022.<sup>32</sup>



**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**November 15, 2022**

**Kunkletown, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

David J. Frantz Sr, 59, was taken in custody. His criminal record began to be filled in 1989. At that time, he was banned from hunting in Pennsylvania and from owning a firearm. He got busted again for stealing corn. A firearm was seen in his vehicle at the edge of the field. A search of his home led to the seizure of numerous other guns, 37 skulls and antlers of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), 14 kg of meat, a crossbow and butchery equipment. He claimed to have collected deer killed in road collisions. He was charged with 88 counts and imprisoned because he was unable to pay the 50,000-US\$ bail.

lehighvalleylive.com, November 22, 2022.<sup>33</sup>

**OPERATION GAME THIEF**

**November 17, 2022**

**On the border between Pecos and Crockett Counties, State of Texas, United States of America**

Following a call, game wardens went to Olsen Road, near a bridge over the Pecos River. At the side of the road were 2 large garbage bags containing the carcasses of 2 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). The antlers had been sawn off and some of the meat removed.

Operation Game Thief (Texas), November 18, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

**Between November 17-21, 2022**

**Fort Peck, State of Montana, United States of America**

A decapitated white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was discovered at the Fort Peck dam on military land.

Military zones and poaching, see "On the Trail" n°7 p.101, n°13 p.48, n°15 p.37, n°16 p.28 and p.35, n°21 p.39, n°30 p.199, n°32 p.27 and p.121 and n°33 p.54, n°34 p. 159 and n°35 p.66.

The Glasgow Courier, January 4, 2023.<sup>35</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**November, 20 2022**

**Loowit Game Management Unit, State of Washington, United States of America**

The antlers of a male elk (*Cervus canadensis*) were sticking out of the boot of the vehicle as it left a forest where hunting is prohibited. On board were a man, his son and 2 elk heads. At the scene of the crime, officers found the carcasses.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Police, November 23, 2022.<sup>36</sup>



**Between November 25-28, 2022**  
**Moffat County, State of Colorado, United States of America**

Officials are looking for witnesses after a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) was poached and decapitated. The carcass was abandoned on County Road 14.

Craig Press, December 3, 2022.<sup>37</sup>

**November 28, 2022**  
**State of Georgia, United States of America**

Two hunters were indicted for poaching 2 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and 3 hinds. Two European mounts were confiscated.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division, December 6, 2022.<sup>38</sup>

**End of November 2022**  
**McLean County, State of Illinois, United States of America**

Seizure of the skull of a 10-point male white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), the skull of a 12-point male, a 6-point set of antlers, as well as several fraudulently obtained licences. The poacher had been caught with salt blocks as bait. Secondly, a trophy deer poached in 2001 was seized from a taxidermist.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, November 30, 2022.<sup>39</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**End of November 2022**  
**Foraker, State of Oklahoma, United States of America**



Dustin Higgins and Darrell Gregory, 2 repeat offenders, were arrested for poaching a deer (genus *Odocoileus*), illegal possession of a firearm and driving without a licence an unregistered vehicle. The deer head with antlers and the 4x4 were seized. Bail has been set at 150,000 US\$ for one of the men. Oklahoma Game Wardens, December 3, 2022; KTUL, December 4, 2022.<sup>40</sup>

**November 2022**  
**Wauzara County, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**

A landowner reported that a man came to kill a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) on his property without permission. Turns out he didn't have a hunting licence either.

Outdoor News, December 30, 2022.<sup>41</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Okaloosa County, State of Florida, United States of America**

Officials intercept an antlered head, 3 bags of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) meat, a lamp and a rifle. The suspect admitted to killing the deer with his rifle overnight during the bow-hunting season.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, December 8, 2022.<sup>42</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Adams County, State of Illinois, United States of America**

A man had a habit of falsifying his hunting licence applications by posing as the owner of the land where he intended to hunt (landowners are eligible for free hunting licences). At his home, 2 pairs of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) antlers were seized.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, December 15, 2022.<sup>43</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Macon County, State of Illinois, United States of America**

A man used a deceased landowner's hunting licence to hunt white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) on his property. However, he didn't fool anyone. He declared 2 deer to authorities, and a search into his home resulted in officials confiscating 3 antlered heads.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, December 15, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**  
**Beginning of December 2022**  
**McLeansboro, State of Illinois, United States of America**



Conviction of 3 poachers from the same family and another hunter, all from Mississippi, for shooting 23 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and 7 wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*). Lyle Chemin, 48, and his son Kalyn Chemin, 23, shot in particular an 18-point deer with a spread of 520 cm without a licence. Kalyn's brother Lawson Chemin, 19, and Kenneth R. Fancher, 59, were convicted of numerous wildlife offences. All 4 pleaded guilty and paid fines totalling 110,600 US\$. They are also banned from hunting in Illinois for 10 years. The 18-point deer mount is now on display in the Hamilton County State's Attorney's Office. Crimebeat, December 12, 2022; WRUL-FM, December 12, 2022.<sup>45</sup>

### **Beginning of December 2022**

#### **Major County, State of Oklahoma, United States of America**

Charges laid against 2 men suspected of poaching 11 deer (genus *Odocoileus*). Several heads with antlers and firearms had been seized.

Oklahoma Game Wardens, December 14, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

### **Beginning of December 2022**

#### **Macomb, State of Illinois, United States of America**

A citation was issued to a hunter who shot a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) at night with a .223 calibre rifle equipped with a thermal scope from the side of the road. He cut off the head and left the carcass.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, December 15, 2022.<sup>47</sup>

### **December 5, 2022**

#### **Readington Township, State of New Jersey, United States of America**

Seizure of the head of an 8-point white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). The poacher claimed that he could not register the deer dead on his mobile phone. The rest of the animal's body was found the next day in a butcher's shop. The meat was donated to Hunters Helping the Hungry.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife December 20, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

### **REPEATED OFFENCE**

#### **November 7 and 10, 2022 and August 29, 2023**

#### **Black Creek Township and Wilkes-Barre, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

- Acting on information, gamekeepers found white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) heads and carcasses full of flies in the property, and a decapitated carcass in the surrounding woods. White-tailed deer have paid a heavy price to 28-year-old Joshua Lex. His home contained 3 bows, a knife with hairs stuck in blood and a loaded rifle, even though Lex is banned from possessing and carrying a firearm following a previous conviction. He was released on 5,000 US\$ bail.

- On August 29, 2023, he was sentenced to 2 years' probation and fined 3,000 US\$.

Times Leader, December 22, 2022, May 2 and August 31, 2023; The Citizens'Voice, May 3, 2023.<sup>49</sup>



### **December 8, 2022**

#### **Kwethluk, State of Alaska, United States of America**

It took police 2 days to identify the owner of the snowmobile and sled spotted at the scene of the poaching of a male caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*). William Egoak, aged 47, confessed. He was feeding caribou meat to his dogs, which is a waste in the eyes of the authorities.

State of Alaska Department of Public Safety, December 9, 2022.<sup>50</sup>

### **December 13-14, 2022**

#### **Lucile, State of Idaho, United States of America**

A 4-tailed mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) was shot from Highway 95. His head was gone when officers arrived, but the rest of the body was intact. Idaho Fish and Game, December 16, 2022.<sup>51</sup>

### **December 2022**

#### **Bend, State of Oregon, United States of America**

A pair of antlers and deer (genus *Odocoileus*) meat were confiscated from a hunter's home. The hunter claimed he did not know that he needed to purchase a tag in addition to a licence.

Oregon State Police, December 2022.<sup>52</sup>

### **December 2022**

#### **Newport, State of New York, United States of America**

Citations were issued to 2 men who shot 3 elk (*Cervus canadensis*), one female and 2 male. Elk meat and a set of antlers were seized.

Oregon State Police, December 2022.<sup>53</sup>

## **EUROPE**

### **AUSTRIA**

### **Night of November 15 to 16, 2022**

#### **Pfafflar, Tyrol State, Austria**

An unknown person killed and cut up a large red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. in the Tyrol valley. The damage is estimated at 10,000 € (9,950 US\$).

Kronen Zeitung, November 16, 2022.<sup>54</sup>

### **ITALY**

### **Beginning of October 2022**

#### **Cuasso al Monte, Province of Varese, Region of Lombardy, Italy. Border with Switzerland.**



A mushroom picker stumbles upon a decapitated red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), the latest episode in a phenomenon that became widespread during the Covid-19 lockdown. The head had been cut off to be stuffed and sold as a wall hanging in a private home or in an establishment open to the public. Beheadings are on the increase in the forests of Cuasso al Monte and in the Campo dei Fiori National Park. Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) are not spared. As well as their heads, their legs are also cut off.

Poachers are in league with taxidermists. Trophies can eventually be shipped to other European Union countries. The market is international. It is all the more open as the red deer is not listed in Appendix II of CITES.

La Prealpina, October 4, 2022; La Provincia di Varese, October 4, 2022.<sup>55</sup>

## ROMANIA

**October 1, 2 and 10, 2022**

**Novaci, Gorj County, Deva and Simeria, Hunedoara County, and Voineasa, Valcea County, Romania**

Following 7 simultaneous searches under the supervision of the Novaci prosecutor's office, 8 hunting weapons, a silencer, a night vision scope, 585 cartridges, 280 kg of game meat, 3 axes, 8 deer trophies (family Cervidae), and 4,300 contraband cigarettes were seized and 8 people, including the husband of Lena Miclăuș, a famous singer in Romania, were arrested, questioned and placed under judicial supervision. They are suspected of poaching in the Obârșia Lotrului mountains.

Romanian Police, October 3, 2022; Antena 3, October 4, 2022; Gazeta de Sud, October 11, 2022.<sup>56</sup>



### REPEATED OFFENCE

**November 27, 2022**

**Crâmpoia, Olt County, Romania**

Two pairs of European roe deer antlers (*Capreolus capreolus*), an air rifle and ammunition and 3 greyhounds were seized from the home of a 22-year-old man following a search conducted by the SAS (Special Action Service) under a prosecutor's warrant.

OLT TV, November 28, 2022.<sup>57</sup>

**December 15, 2022**

**Petris, Arad County, Romania**

Acting on search warrants, officers from the Weapons, Explosives and Dangerous Substances Section seized the heads of European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), a firearm, 9 traps and a hunting knife from 2 young men aged 19 and 21. Ghidul Aradean, December 16, 2022.<sup>58</sup>



## RUSSIA

**October 25, 2022**

**Kyren, Republic of Buryatia, Russia**

February 2021: seizure of a Siberian musk deer carcass (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II), 3 sable furs (*Martes zibellina*), a rifled firearm and metal traps. The 50-year-old man, with no fixed job, had been in Tunkinsky National Park for a long time. He is a woodsman.

October 2022: suspended sentence of 3 years and 6 months' deprivation of liberty and 3 years' probation.

Baikal-Daily, October 25, 2022.<sup>59</sup>



**December 3, 2022**

**Cheremkhovsky District, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia**

A homemade steel trap made by an unidentified poacher and placed in the right place and at the right height caught a Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II). Forest wardens found him hanging from a tree with his musk gland amputated. The damage is estimated by the Service for the Protection and Use of Wildlife at 180,000 rubles (2,950 US\$).

Oblastnaya - Official Internet Portal of Legal Information of the Irkutsk Oblast, December 6, 2022.<sup>60</sup>



**December 7, 2022**

**Bagdarin, Republic of Buryatia, Russia**

A suspended sentence of one year's corrective labour and 15,000 rubles (245 US\$) in compensation for poaching a Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) with a noose trap in February 2022. Damages to the State were estimated at 60,000 rubles (770 US\$), which the poacher partially reimbursed before the trial.

Republic of Buryatia Prosecutor's Office, December 7, 2022.<sup>61</sup>



**Mid-December 2022**

**Khabarovsk International Airport, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia. Border with China.**

On the Khabarovsk-Shanghai flight, a Chinese passenger tried to board with several deer antlers (family Cervidae) in his luggage, the species of which was not immediately identified.

Komsomolskaia Pravda, December 15, 2022.<sup>62</sup>



## AMERICA

### ARGENTINA

#### Beginning of October 2022

##### La Quiaca, Province of Jujuy, Argentina

Members of police force n° 17, alerted by members of the community whose main source of income is shearing and selling wool, intercepted a gang of 3 men during the night who were poaching vicunas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) and cutting up their fleeces.

Jujuy Government, October 11, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

#### October 21, 2022

##### Near Telsen, Province of Chubut, Argentina



During the night, the police intercepted a Ford Ranger containing 1,600 kg of meat and 19 guanaco hearts (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) and a Chevrolet C10 loaded with 1,900 kg of guanaco meat, including 85 loins and 130 quarters. Diario Jornada, October 22, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## PERU

#### October 2022

##### Province of Jujuy, Peru

Poaching of vicunas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) is on the increase and threatens to undermine the profitability of the agreement signed in 2012 by Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru under the aegis of CITES, whose mission is to conserve the camelids of the Andean high plateaux while ensuring the sustainable exploitation of their wool, a kilo of which sells on the legal international market for between 300 US\$ and 450 US\$. During the month of October, 60 cases of poaching were reported in the Puna alone, and experts fear that these 60 cases are not representative of the new wave of looting in the province of Jujuy and other vicuna territories.

Jujuy al Momento, November 6, 2022.<sup>3</sup>





Long-nosed monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*). Photo Bernard Dupont

## WESTERN AFRICA

### GUINEA

**October 10-December 27, 2022**

**Kouroussa, Kankan Region, Guinea**

Seizure of an orphan chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). Despite all the care he received, he died on December 27.

Chimpanzee Conservation Center, October 11, November 22, December 2 and 27, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**October 11, 2022**

**National Park of Upper Niger, Faranah Region, Guinea**

A 1-year old orphan chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) tied in a village for 3 days was taken in by the Chimpanzee Conservation Center. He didn't survive multiple dog bites.

Chimpanzee Conservation Center, October 11 and 12, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**November 16, 2022**

**National Park of Upper Niger, Faranah and Kankan Regions, Guinea**

Release of 2 female chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). One of them had been taken from a poacher who intended to sell her as a pet in 2006. She was one year old at the time. The Chimpanzee Conservation Center remains cautious about the success of this second reintroduction attempt, but is hopeful, as females of this age are looking for a new group to avoid inbreeding problems.

Chimpanzee Conservation Center, November 13 and 16, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## LIBERIA

**November 2022**

**Marshall, Margibi County, Liberia**



A very young chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) was rescued from a trafficker and placed at the Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection. Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue, November 24, 2022.<sup>4</sup>



## SIERRA LEONE

**November 20, 2022**

**Kabala, Northern Province, Sierra Leone**

The baby female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) who was being held as a pet in the Loma Mountains 300 km from the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary. The chimp was suffering from skin infections and diarrhoea. After a few weeks of treatment, she is improving. On January 29, she finished her quarantine.

Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, November 19, 20, 21, 22, 30, 2022 and January 29, 2023.<sup>5</sup>



© Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary

## CENTRAL AFRICA

### CAMEROON

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Mefou Primate Sanctuary, Centre Region, Cameroon**



© Ape Action Africa

A baby female gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*, Appendix I) is rescued. Not her family who was slaughtered by the poachers.

Ape Action Africa, October 11, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**October 27, 2022**

**Niete, South Region, Cameroon**

A one-year-old female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) was rescued from a bag belonging to a poacher who had escaped. The orphan is now under the care of the Limbe Wildlife Centre team. Limbe Wildlife Centre, November 15, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**Map next page**



© Lwiro Primates

Beginning of October 2022  
Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu,  
South Kivu Province



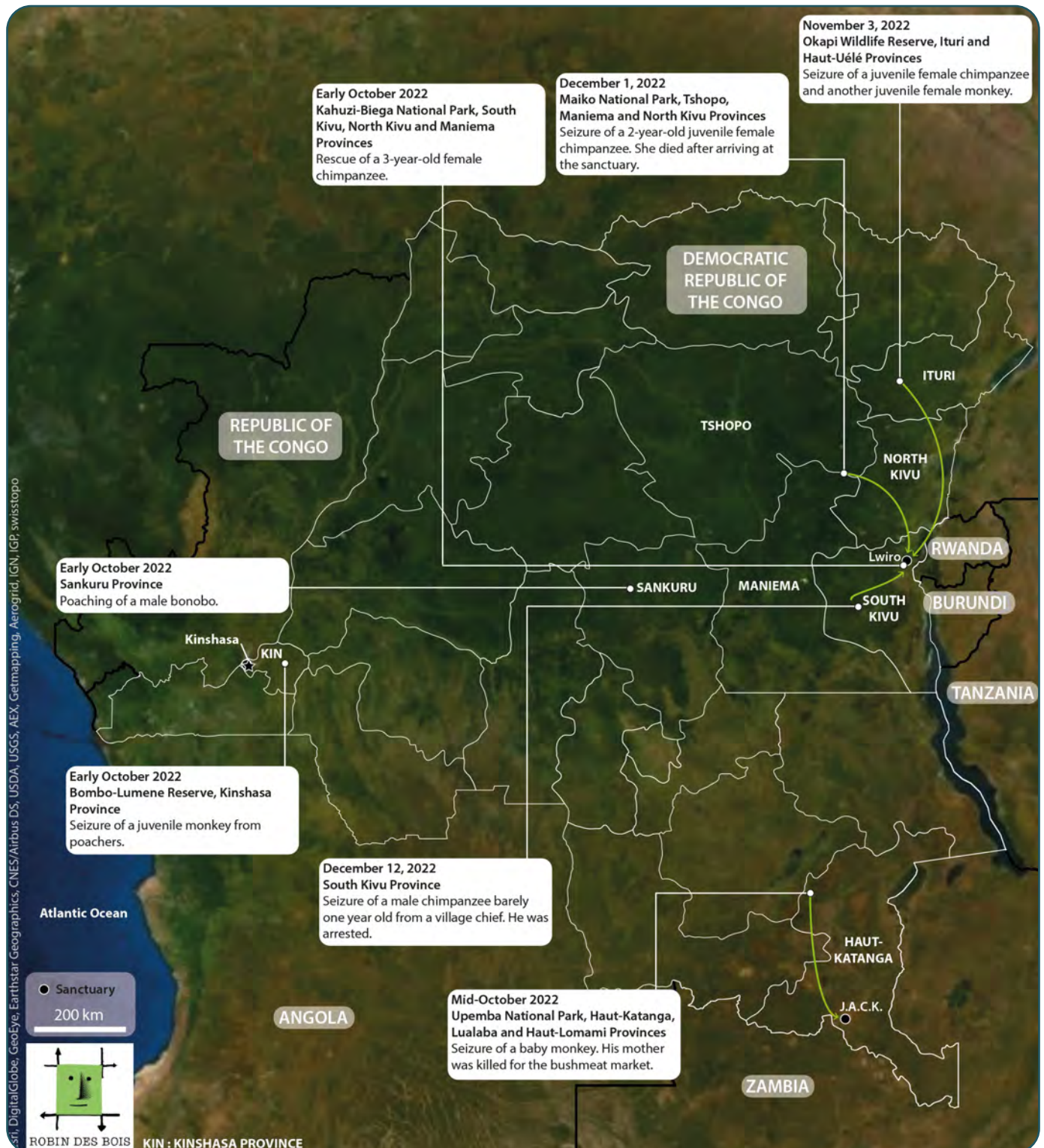
December 1, 2022  
Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu,  
South Kivu Province



December 12, 2022  
Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu,  
South Kivu Province



## Democratic Republic of the Congo. Seizures, poaching and rescue of monkeys between October 1 and December 31, 2022



Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I)  
 Monkey (Cercopithecidae, Appendix I or II)  
 Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I)

Sources: see page 255

**October 2022**

**Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve, Equateur Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

A bonobo (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I) was injured when 14 other bonobos were returned to the wild in March (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.94). Members of Friends of Bonobos preferred to keep him under their watch for longer. Now, he was finally released into the wild and welcomed by his group with open arms.

Friends of Bonobos, October 25, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

**November 26, 2022**

**Lésio-Louna Reserve, Department of Pool, Republic of the Congo**

Baltasard Nkikoua is arrested in possession of 2 dead De Brazza monkeys (*Cercopithecus neglectus*, Appendix II), a firearm, and ammunition. PALF, November 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**EASTERN AFRICA**

**KENYA**

**Diani, Kwale County, Kenya**

Colobus Conservation volunteers are searching for a female baboon (*Papio* spp., Appendix II) accompanied by her young. She was injured by a trap, according to witnesses.

Colobus Conservation, November 28, 2022.<sup>10</sup>



**UGANDA**

**End of October 2022**

**Bukora, Western Region, Uganda**

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) officers were searching for village residents who poached a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) for the bushmeat market. One suspect has been arrested. He confessed to orchestrating the hunt with accomplices.

ChimpReports, October 29, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**ZAMBIA**

**October 17, 2022**

**Kafue National Park, North Western, Central, and Southern Provinces, Zambia**

22 vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) rescued from trafficking have been released into the wild by Zambia Primate Project. They are still well 3 months later, in January 2023. Zambia Primate Project, October 10, November 6, 2022 and January 28, 2023.<sup>12</sup>

**October 26, 2022**

**Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia**

A vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) escaped from a home where he was being held illegally and found refuge in a liquor store. He almost caused a riot. Passers-by were beginning to accuse the shopkeeper of witchcraft when the police intervened. After his transfer to a sanctuary, the vervet monkey was given medical treatment for a fever, several open wounds, and bruises from the rope that held him captive. Zambia Primate Project, October 31, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**November 8, 2022**

**Kafue National Park, North Western, Central, and Southern Provinces, Zambia**

A defence soldier contacted the Zambia Primate Project after rescuing a 2-week-old vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) from 2 young boys who were trying to sell him. The monkey was immediately transferred to the NGO.

Zambia Primate Project, November 20, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**November 8, 2022**

**Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia**

A second vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), 8-months-old, also joined the Zambia Primate Project shelter after being held in captivity for 6 months.

Zambia Primate Project, November 20, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**November 19, 2022**

**Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia**



A third, 7-month-old vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was rescued by officers from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife and transferred to the Zambia Primate Project shelter.

Zambia Primate Project, November 28, 2022.<sup>16</sup>



**December 5, 2022**

**Masombo, Southern Region, Zambia**

A fourth vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), this time a young male, was confiscated from 2 children who held him captive for at least 3 weeks. He was returned to the refuge.  
Zambia Primate Project, December 5, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

**December 10, 2022**

**Kasempa District, North Western Province, Zambia**

A fifth, one-year-old male vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was rescued from a man named Mr. Bornface. He had kept the monkey in a cage for 6 months. Another vervet died at his home from a dog attack.  
Zambia Primate Project, December 14, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**December 23, 2022**

**Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia**

A sixth, 3-week-old vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was temporarily taken in by the Lusaka Animal Welfare Society after his mother was poached. The monkey is now under the care of the Zambia Primate Project.  
Zambia Primate Project, December 23, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

**ZIMBABWE**

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Wild is Life Sanctuary, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**



A juvenile chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*, Appendix II) was transferred to the Wild is Life Sanctuary after his mother was killed for the bushmeat market. One of the sanctuary's caretakers had seen children using the monkey as a toy while visiting her village.  
Wild is Life, November 10, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

**NORTHERN AMERICA**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Lavonia, State of Georgia, United States of America**

Three juvenile ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I) were taken to the Haven Farm and Zoo. Two of them, an 8-week-old male and female, had been seized by the U.S. Fish and Game Service. They were being kept in poor conditions in private homes. In 2022, the APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) identified a number of non-compliances at this shelter.  
The Haven Zoo, October 7, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

**November 1, 2022**

**Brownsville, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.**



Savannah Nicole Valdez, aged 20, pleaded guilty to attempting to smuggle a baby spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II). During a border check on March 21, 2022, agents noticed a wooden box with holes in her vehicle, which Valdez said was filled with beer and in fact contained a spider monkey. Valdez managed to escape. Later that day, agents detected Internet ads for a spider monkey with a contact number. On March 28, 2022, Valdez turned herself in to the police. The monkey was recovered and sent to an animal shelter. Valdez was released on bail pending trial.

U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of Texas, November 1, 2022; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, November 1, 2022.<sup>22</sup>



## THE TRIBULATIONS OF A MONKEY DEALER

### November to December 2022

#### Phnom Penh, New York, Washington DC, Virginia

On November 16, 2022, Masphal Kry was arrested at JFK Airport in New York. Director of wildlife and biodiversity, he was going to Panama. He should have been the head of Cambodia's delegation during the 19<sup>th</sup> CITES Plenary Conference (November 14 to 25). He is accused by the Department of Justice of having facilitated the fraudulent introduction of thousands of wild long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) captured in Cambodia and intended for animal experimentation in the United States of America. The Cambodian government disputes this accusation.

Kry is being held in Brooklyn jail where, according to his lawyer, he faces painful psychological, cultural, and linguistic isolation. He is undergoing medical treatment, the nature of which has not been disclosed and which does not justify his transfer to a hospital. Chhea Keo, the Cambodian Ambassador to the United States of America, officially offered to accommodate Kry in Washington in the premises of the embassy, committing to suspend the diplomatic immunity of the embassy and to remain on guard 24 hours a day on the presence of Kry unless summoned by the courts and to allow at all times the United States authorities to verify the application of this commitment made on behalf of the government of Cambodia. Attorney General Thomas Watts-Fitzgerald questions the reliability of this proposition. It involves, he writes, several risks of flight. "This proposal is illusory and unacceptable." "The embassy would be powerless to prevent Kry from fleeing while traveling the 500 miles between the Cambodian Embassy in Washington and Miami's where his trial is set to take place." "While the United States does not question the good faith of the current undertakings, they are subject to the future decisions of the GOC – including the possibility that the decision to waive the protections attached to Embassy premises may be revoked by that government. If Ambassador Keo or any of his successors decide to help Kry escape, the strongest response open to the U.S. government would be to expel the ambassador."

On December 22, Judge Kathleen M. Williams, in Miami, Florida, ordered Kry's release on an electronic bracelet. He is required to report to the Cambodian Embassy in Washington and stay there until December 27. He must then report to the office of the attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, his new place of residence during his legal troubles. To this end, Kry must be equipped with a new electronic bracelet, which he must keep until further notice.

Eight people are charged with several crimes for having, in conspiracy, facilitated the smuggling of several thousand wild crab-eating macaques among "batches" of farmed macaques. They are

Omaliss Keo, age 58, director general of the Forestry Administration in Cambodia, Masphal Kry, age 46, vice-director of the wildlife service within the Forestry Administration, James Man Sang Lau, age 64, founder and owner of the macaque breeding holding company Vanny Resources Holdings, Hong Kong, Dickson Lau, age 29, general manager of the same group, Sunny Chan, deputy director of the same group, Hong Kong, Raphael Cheung Man, age 71, responsible for communications and exports of Vanny Bio Research in Cambodia, Hing Ip Chung, age 61, general manager in Cambodia of Vanny Bio Research and Sarah Yeung, financial manager of Vanny Group in Hong Kong.

American justice says it has recordings proving the commission of crimes. Several medical research laboratories on animals located in the United States of America are suspected of complicity.

U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of Florida, November 16, 2022; U.S. News (with AP), November 16, 2022; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Cambodia), November 17, 2022; Robin des Bois, November 18, 2022, [www.robindesbois.org/en/bonne-nouvelle-pour-les-macaques/](http://www.robindesbois.org/en/bonne-nouvelle-pour-les-macaques/); Royal Embassy of Cambodia, November 28, 2022; Radio Free Asia, December 1 and 7, 2022; Khmer Times, December 15 and 27, 2022; The Phnom Penh Post, December 28, 2022.<sup>23</sup>



One of Vanny Bio Research's facilities in Cambodia

### December 14, 2022

#### San Francisco, State of California, United States of America



Cory McGilloway, 32, was sentenced to 3 months' renewable mental health treatments and one year's probation for stealing a ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I) from the San Francisco Zoo in October 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.98). He has already served 18 months on remand.

The Mercury News, December 21, 2022; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, January 2023.<sup>24</sup>

**End of December 2022**  
**Chicago O'Hare International Airport, State of Illinois, United States of America**



A passenger arriving from Cameroon has 2.25 kg of dried meat from non-human primates, 1.35 kg of dried porcupine (family Hystricidae) meat and 11.35 kg of unidentified dried meat seized from their baggage. The holidays are a prime time for such instances (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.214-215). US Customs and Border Protection Chicago Field Office, December 22, 2022.<sup>25</sup>

**LATIN AMERICA**

**BOLIVIA**

**October 20, 2022**  
**Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Province of Andrés Bón, Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia**

The digital media La Voz de la Naturaleza is delighted. Thanks to its publications, Chris Syler was inspired to deliberately hand over the 2 tufted capuchins (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) to the refuge and rehabilitation centre in the department of Santa Cruz. Chris Syler is a singer, songwriter, and member of the jury on the Bolivian version of the X Factor talent show. La Voz de la Naturaleza, October 20, 2022.<sup>26</sup>

**December 14, 2022**  
**Irupana, Province of Sud Yungas, Department of La Paz, Bolivia**

The black spider monkey (*Ateles chamek*, Appendix II) was being exhibited in the streets of the town (population 13,000) by a certain Ovidio Calcina. The NGO Senda Verde ("Green Way") mobilized the Authority and veterinarians came to capture him. He was transferred to a shelter for mistreated animals, and it will be difficult to integrate him into an already established troop of spider monkeys, as he is a dominant adult male. La Voz de la Naturaleza, December 14, 2022.<sup>27</sup>



**BRAZIL**

**October 27, 2022**  
**State of Ceará, Brazil**

Release of 10 capuchin monkeys (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) in a selected habitat theoretically protected from human greed, after a training course to relearn how to live in the wild. They will be monitored for 3 months by expert naturalists and academics. The species is known for its sociability and resourcefulness. They feed on invertebrates and fruit and break coconuts with stones. Ibama, October 27, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

**December 7, 2022**  
**Cuiabá, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil**

One day there should be an exhibition in "On the Trail" of the toughest cages, and this one, which closes in on a marmoset (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), won't be far from winning first prize. Arrest of a man. He was selling his pet on the OLX website. Dema (Delegacia Especializada do Meio Ambiente) and the police intervened. Civil Judiciary Police of Mato Grosso, December 7, 2022.<sup>29</sup>

**CHILE**

**November 12, 2022**  
**Colina, Chacabuco Province, Santiago Metropolitan Region, Chile**

Drug trafficking, "reckless" use of firearms, theft of luxury cars, possession and mistreatment of wild animals, threats against the neighbourhood of Las Águilas, it's certain that the squirrel monkey (*Saimiri* spp., Appendix I or II) was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The thirty-something members of the "Colima gang" were taken out, at least temporarily, by the Carabineros. The squirrel monkey was taken to safety. 13.cl, November 12, 2022.<sup>30</sup>





## COLOMBIA

### ON THE BACK OF THE GREY-HANDED NIGHT MONKEYS

#### FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 21, 2022

**Cali, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia**

Grey-handed night monkey (*Aotus lemurinus*, synonymous with *Aotus griseimembra*, Appendix II) are small, tree-dwelling monkeys, active at night. They feed on foliage, nectar and insects. They measure 75 cm in height. They are victims of the pet trend and exploited by street photographers. They are easily captured in forests and become slaves to animal experimentation.

Pseudo-scientists Myriam Arévalo Ramírez and Sócrates Herrera Valencia are aotus torturers. They began experimenting on specimens at the Cali zoo in 1987. In 1991, they founded the Fundación Centro de Primates. From 2000 to 2013, they went on to set up 4 other companies with snappy, enticing titles, enabling the consortium to obtain grants and subsidies from a number of international institutions, and to publish articles in cooperation with scientists from all over the world in prestigious journals with all the hallmarks of respectability, e.g. for the year 2022:

- Arévalo-Herrera M, Gaitán X, Larmat-Delgado M, et al. Randomized clinical trial to assess the protective efficacy of a *Plasmodium vivax* CS synthetic vaccine. *Nat Commun.* 2022;13(1):1603. doi:10.1038/s41467-022-29226-3

- Arévalo-Herrera M, Miura K, Solano E, et al. Immunogenicity of full-length *P. vivax* rPvs48/45 protein formulations in BALB/c mice. *Vaccine.* 2022;40(1):133–140. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2021.11.036

After receiving warning messages relayed by the NGO PETA, the veterinary services of the Valle del Cauca department have finally resolved to visit the monkeys' premises from 2019 and to consider the damning testimonies of employees and ex-employees.

The aotus survive in 80x80 cm cages soiled with excrement. The water troughs are made of recycled soda bottles. In the overcrowded cages, aotus fight each other and finger fractures are not reduced. Bite wounds go untreated. The perches are PVC pipes. They are fed in daylight with dog food soaked in sugar water, whereas in real life they feed at night. Herrera demanded repeated blood sampling, which endangered the health of the aotus, which on average weigh only 600-800 grams.

The only "caretaker" for all the monkeys was also the caretaker for the mice. He was also responsible for guarding the buildings and was the gardener. He was a relatively old man who had long worked for Herrera and Arévalo as a handyman. He had no real skills in drawing blood. The aotus mortality rate in the couple's pseudo-laboratory was such that the "stock" had to be constantly replenished.



In 2018 and 2019 alone, around a hundred aotus were reportedly captured in the forests of northern Colombia by local poachers and imported without permits to Cali after a twenty-hour road journey.

The multiple articles signed or co-authored by Ramírez and Herrera Valencia, on malaria research, claim that the experimentation protocols on monkeys (and mice) were approved by the consortium's internal ethics committees, board deliberations or institutional committees on animal exploitation and welfare. But the Colombian Ministry of Health has no record of these writings or these ghostly institutions.

Thanks to these deceptions, the consortium's boards of directors, which are all headed by members of the Herrera Arévalo family clan, have obtained subsidies from the USA and Germany, and signed cooperation agreements with a Florida university, the University of Washington, the universities of Basel and Lausanne in Switzerland, and the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) in Montpellier, France. Blanca Liliana Perlaza was a long-standing member of the Board of Directors of the Centro Internacional de Vacunas. She lives and works in France and was represented by Mr. Herrera when the board met. She is now a researcher at Vac4All, a vaccine development company subsidiary of Sanofi, having previously worked at the Institut Pasteur.

On February 17, 2023, the 102 aotus and 6 squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri* spp., Appendix I or II) were seized in the animal house. The research centre was sealed off on the night of March 14-15, and the couple's in vivo research was suspended. Unfortunately, the fate of the primates is uncertain. Initial analyses seem to prove that they are not malaria carriers, but they suffer from amputations, old fractures and skin lesions of the phalanges and lips. Research is underway to locate a place where they can be kept for until the end of their lives.

*Aotus* spp. see "On the Trail" n°1 p.39, n°5 p.116, n°6 p.106, n°8 p.36, n°10 p.73, n°21 p.111, n°22 p.57, n°27 p.116, n°28 p.68 and n°31 p.99.

*Saimiri* spp. in Colombia, see "On the Trail" n°3 p.74, n°4 p.98, n°35 p.99 and n°36 p.108.

PETA, December 21, 2022 et January 3, 2023; Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca, January 5, 2023; El País (Colombia), February 17, March 13, 14, 16, 17 and 24, June 25, 2023; Infobae, March 15, 2023.<sup>31</sup>



## MEXICO

**November 23, 2022**

**Near Córdoba, State of Veracruz, Mexico**



Six Geoffroy's spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II), around 6 months old, were in a cardboard box on board an ADO (Autobuses de Oriente) Mercedes coach traveling from Villahermosa to Mexico City, a 765 km, almost 10-hour journey. They were released at the Córdoba stop after attracting the attention of some passengers with their shouts and agitation. Profepa, December 7, 2022; La Jornada Veracruz, December 17, 2022.<sup>32</sup>

## PERU

**October 3, 2022**

**Huaripampa, Province of Huaraz, Department of Ancash, Peru**

Thanks to a citizen alert, the white-fronted capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*, Appendix II) tied by a rope to a roof and more or less fed through a skylight was freed by agents of Serfor (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) and the environmental police. Serfor, October 3, 2022.<sup>33</sup>

**October 6, 2022**

**Province of Chachapoyas, Department of Amazonas, Peru**

Rescue of a yellow-tailed woolly monkey (*Oreonax flavicauda*, Appendix I). He was extricated from an iron mesh cage. The species is confined to the mountain forests of Amazonas and San Martin departments. It is threatened by deforestation and pet mania. Serfor, October 6, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

## THE CARIBBEAN

### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

**October 22 and 23, 2022**

**City of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago**

The El Socorro Center for Wildlife Conservation receives a call for help. A capuchin (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) is accused by his owners of turning the house upside down. In the archipelago, the species is exotic. He has been baited with fruit to facilitate his capture. His mouth is bruised. His canines have been filed down.

Nurture Nature Campaign, August 17, 2022; El Socorro Center for Wildlife Conservation, October 25, 2022.<sup>35</sup>

## SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

### ORANGUTANS

**October 17, 2022**

**Labuhan Deli, Medan City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**



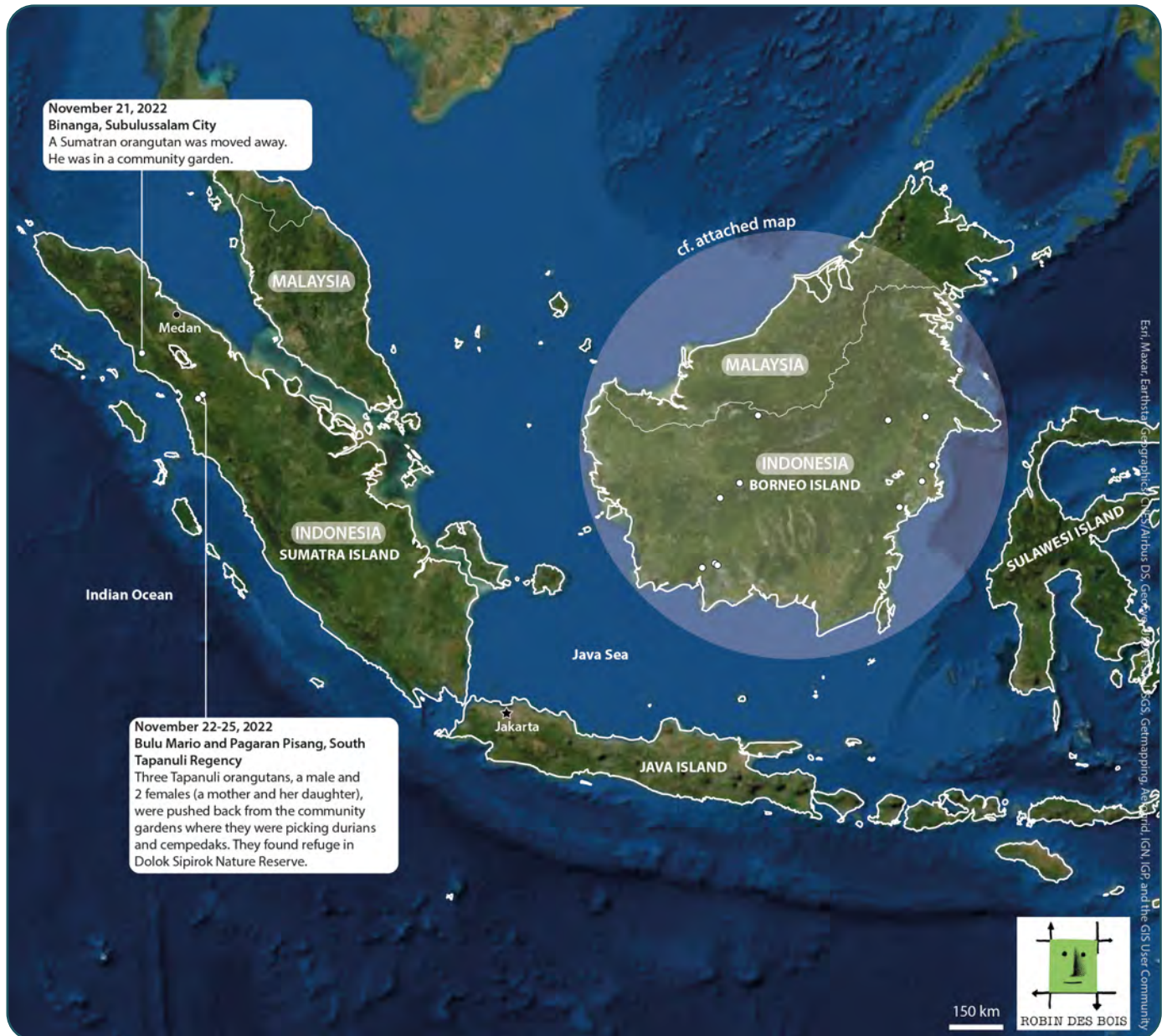
In April 2022, a gang of young people tried to sell a 4-month-old Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo abelii*) (see "On the Trail" n°36, p.109). Raider Chaniago, the 18-year-old ringleader, has just been sentenced to one year in prison and fined 10 million rupiah (660 US\$). The judgement is final. Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, October 24, 2022.<sup>36</sup>



**October 23, 2022**

**Busang District, East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island**

## Orangutans in Indonesia October 1 - December 31, 2022

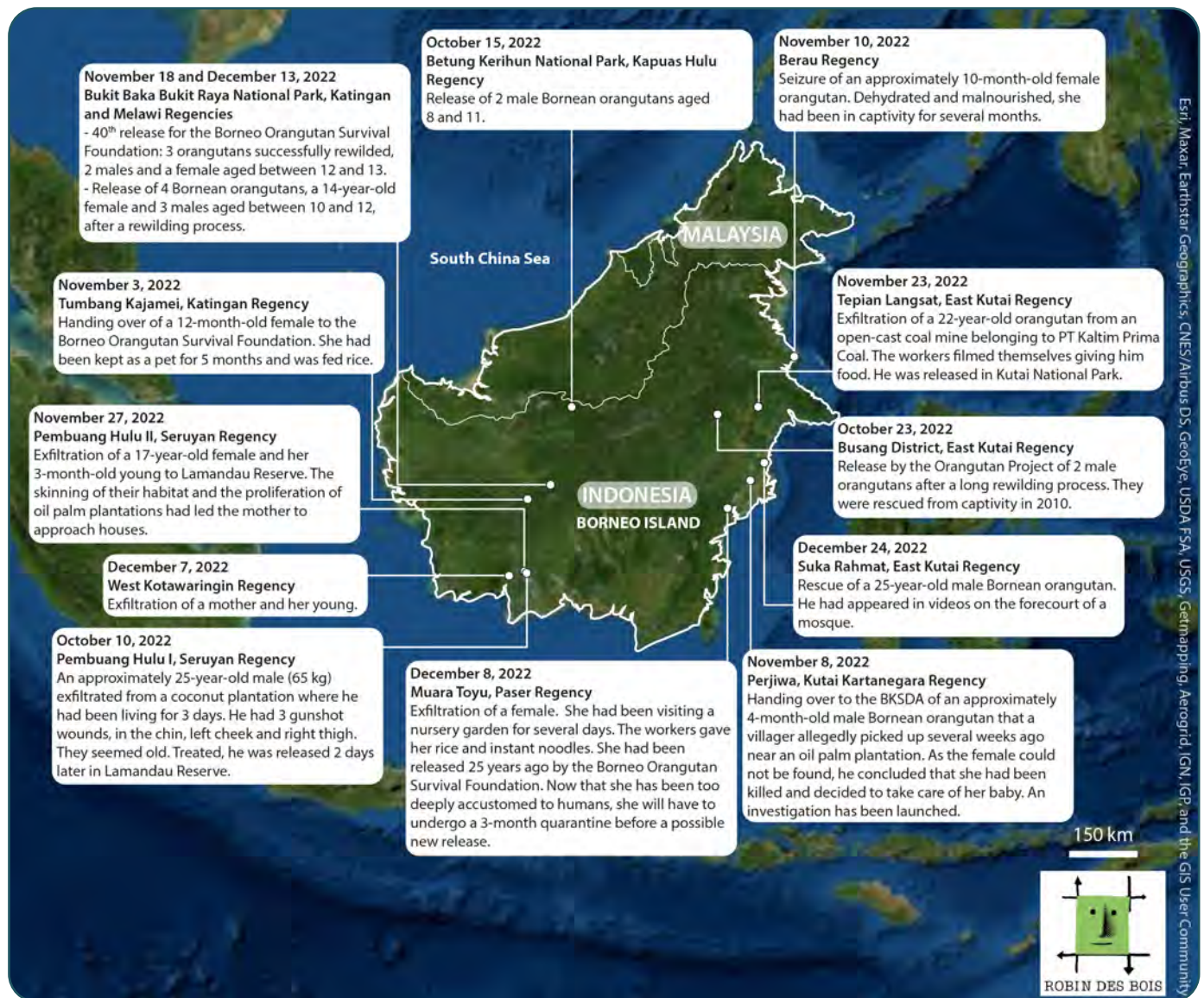


Orangoutan (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I)

Sources, see page 255



## Orangutans in Indonesia - Borneo October 1 - December 31, 2022



November 18, 2022  
Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park, Katingan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island



November 3, 2022  
Tumbang Kajamei, Katingan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island



## INDONESIA - EXCLUDING ORANGUTANS

### Beginning of October 2022

#### Tangerang Regency, Banten Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Handing over of a Javan langur (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II) to the regency's disaster management agency by a resident of Curug Wetan who had bought him online for 600,000 rupiah (40 US\$) without knowing that the species is protected and that its possession is subject to penalties.

Garda Animalia, October 4, 2022.<sup>37</sup>

### November 21, 2022

#### Port of Samarinda, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

A long-nosed monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*, Appendix I) was discovered in a cage just before the *Adithya*, an old car ferry built in Japan in 1986, departed for Parepare, in the South Sulawesi province. None of the passengers or crew claimed ownership. Had the stowaway not been discovered in time, he would have made a 25-hour-long, 500 km journey aboard the *Adithya*. The ferry, previously named *Camellia Maru*, linked Tokyo to the Izu Islands, which were known for their camellia oil production. It was sold in 2015 to Afta Trans Mandiri PT, based in Makassar, South Sulawesi. The monkey's journey would no doubt have been extended on board another old car ferry bound for Sumatra, Java island.

Long-nosed monkeys are tree-dwelling, vegetarian monkeys that live on the island of Borneo. They live in small groups comprised of one male, a few females and their young. Their main distinguishing feature is their long noses, which can exceed 10 cm in males and extend down to their chins. Males measure between 65–75 cm and weigh between 15–25 kg, while the females are smaller. Their tails are as long as their bodies.

Niaga.Asia, December 7, 2022.<sup>38</sup>



## MALAYSIA

### December 2022

#### Seremban, State of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

"This is a huge victory for the dusky leaf monkeys [*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II] and Perhilitan will now have to justify their actions" says wildlife advocate Rajesh Nagarajan. Indeed, the High Court just rejected a petition filed by Perhilitan and their lawyers, requesting that the court dismiss a complaint lodged by both Hidup, an NGO, and Nurul Azreen Sultan. The complaint alleges several monkeys were slaughtered for allegedly acting aggressively towards Port Dickson residents (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.141).

Free Malaysia Today, December 23, 2022.<sup>39</sup>

## THAILAND

### October 2022

#### Bangkok, Thailand



"Bua Noi" (little lotus), the female gorilla (*Gorilla* spp., Appendix I), is still in the Pata Pinklao shopping centre (see "On the Trail" n°29 p. 99). The Minister for Natural Resources and for Environment would like to transfer "Bua Noi" to Germany, to the zoo where she was born 33 years ago. He is ready to organise a fund-raising campaign to collect the 30 million baht (791,350 US\$) that her owner would claim. But the department store is denying it. "Bua Noi" is not for sale, and there's no guarantee she'll survive the trip.

Bangkok Post, October 21 and 22, 2022.<sup>40</sup>

### Beginning of November 2022

#### Sattahip District, Chonburi Province, Thailand

The pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II or *Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) was chained to a tree since the death of his owner 3 years ago and neglected by the family and neighbours. He was saved from death by starvation by the Sri Racha Wildlife Conservation Office.

Bangkok Post, November 8, 2022.<sup>41</sup>

**November 13, 2022**

**Yala, Yala Province, Thailand**

Arrest in flagrante delicto of 2 individuals named Doramae and Affandi in the parking lot of a gas station. They were transporting 21 baby southern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) in 3 cages, purchased from collectors in Si Sakhon district for 2,000 baht per head (52 US\$). They intended to resell them for 2 times that price via Facebook or other networks. The 21 babies were transferred to the Khok Mai Ruea station in Narathiwat Province, 92 km away, for examination, treatment, and to meet their nutritional needs. Thai PBS, November 14, 2022.<sup>42</sup>

**November 2022**

**Thailand**

PETA's third offensive against the forced labour of macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) has forced American meal-kit giant Hello Fresh and its false noses like Green Chef to stop buying wholesale coconut milk in Thailand starting in mid-2023. In short, Hello Fresh was threatened with a boycott and an image downgrade. The testimonies and documents gathered by PETA's investigators from suppliers and trainers of pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina* or *Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) used to collect coconuts from the tops of coconut palms prove that animal labour is in force. The macaques are exposed to a great deal of suffering, bullying, and mistreatment during their capture from the forest, apprenticeship, a dozen years of work, and disposal for under-performance. The latest news is that Whole Foods Market, Inc. an Amazon subsidiary based in Austin, Texas, USA, which operates 500 organic specialty stores under its own name, has not yet aligned itself with Hello Fresh.

Macaques and coconuts, see "On the Trail" n°11 p. 44, n°19 p. 59, n°30 p. 96, n°31 p. 103, n°32 p. 139 and n°33 p. 142.

PETA, November 11 and 14, 2022 and March 6, 2023.<sup>43</sup>

**VIET NAM**

**October 1, 2022**

**Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

Nguyen Quang Huu, age 61, voluntarily handed over to the forest rangers the Northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) he had been holding captive for 10 years. He claims she was passed on to him by "a friend" who had himself held her captive for 10 years. In other words, the female is 20 years old and the hope of her being released back into the forest is very slim, if not non-existent, contrary to what the local press would have us believe. For the moment, she is being transported to the Cu Chi refuge. She weighs 6 kg.

Ho Chi Minh City Law Journal, October 1, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Ba Ria Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

A long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) was held in captivity in a nursery school playground.

ENV, October 9, 2022.<sup>45</sup>

**Wednesday October 26 and Saturday October 29, 2022**

**Ba Bau and Ta CU Nature Reserve, Binh Thuan Province, Viet Nam**



Hung, on a motorcycle, carries 8 Northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) and a small Indian civet (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III in India). One of the macaques has already died. Hung says he bought the lot from a certain Phuoc without further details and intended to resell them at a profit. He was fined 15 million dong (630 US\$). The 7 macaques and the civet are released, and we only learn that they weighed a total of 14.8 kg as if they were only meat.

Báo Điện tử VOV, October 29, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Van Don District, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam**



Two long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) were held captive and freed from a private home. The homeowner is known for selling monkeys, birds, squirrels and other wild animals over Facebook.

ENV, November 23, 2022.<sup>47</sup>

**November 25, 2022**

**Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam**

Nguyen Quyet Thang was sentenced to 13 months in prison for capturing and caging 2 lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I). Shortly afterwards he offered to sell them for 3.5 million dong (152 US\$) per head in May 2022.

Lao Dong, November 25, 2022.<sup>48</sup>



**End of November 2022**

**Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam**

Thanks to a vigilant ENV supporter, a Northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) kept inside a cage at a restaurant was rescued. He was quickly released and did not have time to get used to humans.

ENV, November 27, 2022.<sup>49</sup>

**December 19, 2022**

**Hoa Binh Province, Viet Nam**

A pygmy sloth loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) was rescued in extremis. The loris had been captured by a poacher who intended to kill him and eat him with his family. He was rescued by an ENV supporter and handed over to the province's foresters.

ENV, December 19, 2022; Free Malaysia Today, December 23, 2022.<sup>50</sup>

**December 23, 2022**  
**Dong Giang District, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam**

A southern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) was rescued from individuals who kept him for around 2 years. They claimed they had tried to release him, but he had returned. ENV, December 23, 2022.<sup>51</sup>

**SOUTHERN ASIA**

**BANGLADESH**

**October 8, 2022**  
**Chunati, Chittagong District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh**

A hoolock gibbon (*Bunopithecus hoolock*, Appendix I) was removed from the hands of Mazahar and Momin. They were planning to sell him at the pet store "Nice Bird Garden" in Riazuddin Bazar. They were arrested.

The Daily Star, October 8, 2022.<sup>52</sup>

**October 22, 2022**  
**Bangchhari Forest, Rangamati District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh**

The Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I) was rescued by the rangers but the traffickers flee the scene.

The Business Standard, October 22, 2022.<sup>53</sup>

**INDIA**

**October 18, 2022**  
**Derby Tea Estate, Cachar District, State of Assam, India**



Seven moor macaques (*Macaca maura*, Appendix II), 5 lesser spot-nosed guenons, (*Cercopithecus petaurista*, Appendix II), and one De Brazza's monkey (*Cercopithecus neglectus*, Appendix II) from Africa were seized by authorities. They were shut in 3 cages. The trend for exotic animals shows no signs of slowing India.

Barak Bulletin, October 18, 2022; Hindustan Times, October 18, 2022; The Sentinel, October 19, 2022.<sup>54</sup>

**Night of November 14 to 15, 2022**  
**Jamira, Hailakandi District, State of Assam, India**



Two suspects were arrested for attempting to smuggle 7 unidentified exotic monkeys by truck from Myanmar. The driver and his companion said they had to transport them to Shillong, 460 km away, where another person was to recover them. After a health check, the monkeys were handed over to the Forest department. They won't be released.

Hailakandi Police, November; 14 2022; The Assam Tribune, November 15, 2022; The Hindu, November 15, 2022.<sup>55</sup>



**November 27, 2022**  
**Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Arrest of Mohamed Nasrudeen upon arrival of a flight from Bangkok. He was trying to smuggle 2 live pygmy marmosets (*Callithrix pygmaea*, Appendix II) and 2 dead dusky leaf monkeys (*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II). The marmosets, who are native to the Amazon basin, will be deported back to Thailand.

Chennai Customs, November 28, 2022; The Times of India, November 29, 2022.<sup>56</sup>





**November 28, 2022**

**Ghoshpukur, Siliguri District, State of West Bengal, India**

Tapan Chandra Majumdar, Rabin Boro, and Utu Deka, all from Assam, were arrested for carrying 2 golden-headed lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus chrysomelas*, Appendix I), 3 white-lipped tamarins (*Saguinus labiatus*, Appendix II), and 2 white-faced capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II), all from South America in a car. They had come from Myanmar and were on their way to Gorakhpur, in Uttar Pradesh, 640 km away.

Millennium Post, November 30, 2022; The Telegraph India, November 30, 2022.<sup>57</sup>

**NORTHERN EUROPE**

**SWEDEN**

**December 14, 2022**

**Gävle, Gävleborg County, Sweden**

Several chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) were massacred in the snow: 4 died and 1 was seriously injured. They had escaped from their enclosure in the Furuvik amusement park. Two of them were 3 years old. The management of Parks & Resorts Scandinavia AB preferred using a shotgun to a hypodermic anaesthetic syringe.

Sveriges Television, December 14, 15, 16, 17 and 19, 2022 and May 10, 2023.<sup>58</sup>

**WESTERN EUROPE**

**BELGIUM**

**OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

**October 2022**

**Brussels International Airport, Zaventem, Province of Flemish Brabant, Flemish Region, Belgium**

Seizure of 3.6 kg of monkey meat from a passenger's luggage. Monkey serum was also discovered in a parcel bound for a laboratory. Monkey serum is used to supplement cell cultures or for immunological testing.

Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, December 6, 2022.<sup>59</sup>

**FRANCE**

**October 9, 2022**

**Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France**

Abderrahmane, 19, was arrested for having weapons, drugs, and a malnourished and hurt white-eared marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II). He was exceeding the speed limit when police arrested him. The monkey was moving about in the passenger's seat. A search of his residence allowed them to find a sack that contained one kg of cannabis resin and ammunition. He was supposedly "holding on to it for a friend". Abderrahmane said that he and his friend had just purchased the monkey on Snapchat for 4,000 € or 3,880 US\$.

La Provence, October 18, 2022.<sup>60</sup>

**SOUTHERN EUROPE**

**ITALY**

**November 18, 2022**

**Catania, Metropolitan City of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy**



"Calogero," a Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) imported from Morocco by a family with an only child from Belpasso in Sicily, will remain permanently under the responsibility of LAV (Lega anti vivisezione onlus) in the sanctuary of Semproniano in Tuscany. After a long legal battle, the Catania court has just definitively withdrawn the macaque's custody rights from his foster family, who fed him lasagne and Coca-Cola in their villa. The macaque had been seized by the Carabinieri CITES in July 2019. "Calogero," now famous throughout Italy, was originally an anonymous male macaque captured in the Moroccan High Atlas and sold for around 2,000 € to 3,000 € to Italian tourists. In Sicily, Berber macaques are considered both signs of prosperity and guardians.

LAV and other Italian NGOs are calling on the new Minister for the Environment, Mr. Pichetto Fratin, to publish as soon as possible a "negative list" of animals that may not be bought and kept by private individuals. "Without this list, not only macaques but also camels, anacondas, zebras, tigers, crocodiles, and boas will continue under certain conditions to be considered pets in Italy."

MeridioNews, July 4, 2019; Kodami, November 25, 2022.<sup>61</sup>

# ARMADILLOS AND PACAS



Southern naked-tailed armadillo (*Cabassous unicinctus*). Photo Kennedy Borges

## AMERICA

### BOLIVIA

**October 2022**

**Cochabamba, Province of Cercado, Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia**

Seizure of 8 armadillos (family Dasypodidae) in a fishmonger's shop on Petrolera Avenue by SENASAG (Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria e Inocuidad Alimentaria).

La Razón (Bolivia), October 12, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**End of November 2022**

**Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia**

For sale, an armadillo (family Dasypodidae) for 300 bolivianos (43 US\$). He might as well have delivered 2 armadillos for every one bought. The Red Book of Bolivia's vertebrate fauna estimates that 2,000 "quirquinchos" are poached every year. Red Uno de Bolivia, November 30, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

facebook

### BRAZIL

**November 23, 2022**

**Delmiro Gouveia, State of Alagoas, Brazil**

Seizure at the home of a man suspected of keeping wild animals in captivity of a shotgun, 57 rounds of ammunition of various calibres, black powder and a live Southern naked-tailed armadillo (*Cabassous unicinctus*), for which he was fined 500 reais (93 US\$). Noticing that the suspect was also responsible for polluting the ground by dumping used oil, the police fined him a further 38,272 reais (7,150 US\$).



The Southern naked-tailed armadillo is a solitary, nocturnal armadillo that lives east of the Andes in the central plains of South America, stretching from Venezuela to Paraguay and from Ecuador to Brazil. The species is myrmecophagous (feeds on ants). When faced with danger, the Southern naked-tailed armadillo quickly digs a hole in the ground. He can bury himself completely in a matter of seconds. Gazeta de Alagoas Online, November 23, 2022.<sup>3</sup>



**November 23, 2022**

**Iporã, State of Paraná, Brazil**

A paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) in the freezer and firearms in the cupboard, with ammunition.

Banda B, November 23, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**December 11, 2022**

**Tabaporã, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil**

Five pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) were "raised" in a house abandoned to garbage. It would be more accurate to say "lowered". The man says it was for his own consumption. Fined 70,000 reais (13,700 US\$). Primeira Página, December 11, 2022.<sup>5</sup>



## COSTA RICA

**October 12, 2022**

### **Near Mortero, Heredia Province, Costa Rica**

After receiving information from citizens, Sinac (Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación) and OET (Organización para Estudios Tropicales) arrested 2 poachers and seized 2 paca carcasses (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), a firearm and 4 hunting dogs.

Sinac, October 13, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

## PERU

**December 30, 2022**

### **Arequipa, Province of Arequipa, Department of Arequipa, Peru**

Two Andean hairy armadillos (*Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II) seized at a New Year's Eve market. Superstitious rituals to bring luck, love and money for the coming year are in full swing. In 4 years, 31 armadillos have been seized in the department, 20 stuffed and 11 live.

Agencia Peruana de Noticias (Andina), December 31, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

## BATS

### AMERICA

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 2022**

### **United States of America**

Dead bats are becoming increasingly common on online auction sites. In October, at least 500 such ads were detected on Etsy and 71 on eBay. Their bodies are framed, mounted, turned into hair clips, hats and garter belts, or advertised as Christmas gifts or Halloween decorations. The sellers are mainly based in the United States. More than 130 ads depicted painted woolly bats (*Kerivoula picta*).

On bats for sale on the Internet and the study by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2020, see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 101.

National Geographic, February 9, 2023.<sup>1</sup>

ebay

**November 9, 2022**

### **Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand**



Inspector "Beagle" has struck again. He detected smoked bat meat in a suitcase arriving from China. Thai Public Broadcasting Service, November 10, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

### ASIA

#### THAILAND

**Beginning of November 2022**

### **Thailand**

Youtuber Phonchanok Srisunaklua may well win the grand prize for silliness in this n°38 issue of "On the Trail".

Live, she feasted and licked her fingers on bat soup. She's facing 5 years in prison. She is accused by some of triggering a new pandemic, as flying mammals are suspected of carrying transmissible viruses, and by others of contributing to the extinction of a threatened and useful species. After mocking the critics, the youtuber, who works as a schoolteacher, apologized "to society, scientists, journalists, colleagues, family and friends". There are around a hundred species of bats in Thailand. Daily Mail, November 10, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



Bats, see also page 211.



## OTHER MAMMALS

HIPPOS, HEDGEHOGS, MARMOTS, OTTERS ...



Common spotted cuscus (*Spilocuscus maculatus*). Photo G. Vigo

### AFRICA

#### SOUTH AFRICA

**December 1, 2022**

**Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

A juvenile hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) was killed in the early morning to supply the bushmeat market. A video of the mother hippo and the calf leaving the water and then of his carcass had circulated across social media.

Independent Online, December 3, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### ASIA

#### INDIA

**OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

**October 23, 2022**

**Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

The exotic wave keeps landing at Indian airports. Five common spotted cuscus (*Spilocuscus maculatus*, Appendix II) from Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and common dwarf mongooses (*Helogale parvula*) from Central and Southern Africa were discovered and seized from the luggage of a passenger travelling from Thailand.



The common spotted cuscus is the size of a domestic cat, with a round head, hidden ears and a prehensile tail for climbing. He feeds on leaves.

The common dwarf mongoose is Africa's smallest carnivore. He has a pointed head and hidden ears. Coats range from reddish to dark brown.

The 2 species, the latest pet lover's whims, could become invasive species after being tested and rejected by families. The undesirables were reportedly immediately sent back to Thailand.

Hindustan Times, October 25, 2022; Daijiworld, October 26, 2022; Interpol, December 6, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## OPERATION WILEP

**Night of December 18-19, 2022.**

**Bardhaman, Purba Bardhaman District, State of West Bengal, India**

Officials intercept 2 Himalayan porcupines (*Hystrix brachyura*) at a train station. Three individuals were arrested: Ganesh Shaw, who lives in Jharkhand, Pintu Kumar, in Delhi, and Tarun Kumar Ghosh, an employee of the Eastern Railway, in Kolkata (Calcutta). They reportedly took delivery of the 2 porcupines at Dharmanagar in Tripura and were on their way to Kolkata (1380 km).

Latesly, December 19, 2022; Railway Protection Force Eastern Railway, December 19, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## INDONESIA

**November 15, 2022**

**Tanjungsari, Tulungagung Regency, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia**

S. K. bought the 3 binturongs (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India) at the Beji Boyolangu animal market for a million Indonesian rupiahs each, or 67 US\$, and has kept them in captivity ever since.

The binturong belongs to the same family as the civets (Viverridae). He averages 65 to 95 cm in length and 9 to 20 kg in weight, with females being larger than males. His coat is black with contrasting shades of grey. White stripes can be seen on the ears. Omnivorous, the binturong is particularly fond of figs. The species is threatened by the disappearance of his habitat, but also by the petmania. His meat and fur are also highly prized.

Garda Animalia, November 17, 2022.<sup>4</sup>



## MALAYSIA

**December 2, 2022**

**Kampung Gong Kulim, State of Kelantan, Malaisie**



Officials intercepted 59 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) and white-breasted waterhens (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) in a port shed and fishing boat. Authorities arrested a Malayan and 2 Vietnamese individuals and sequestered the trawler. The suspects intended to deliver the civets to an, as of yet, unnamed foreign country. The operation is credited to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan), the Department of Internal Security and the Royal Malaysia Police.

Harian Metro, December 3, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

## MONGOLIA

**October 25, 2022**

**Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

Officials confiscate 31 dead marmots (*Marmota baibacina* or *Marmota sibirica*) illegally imported into the capital.

Eagle News, October 26, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**December 3, 2022**

**Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

Officials seize 162 frozen marmots (*Marmota baibacina* or *Marmota sibirica*) from a truck trailer.

Ecological Police Service, December 8, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**December 19, 2022**

**Khovd Aimag, Mongolia**

Authorities intercepted 6 dead marmots (*Marmota baibacina* or *Marmota sibirica*) after being informed by a local ecological club of a poaching and attempted sale. They monitored online ads.

Montsame News Agency, December 22, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## VIET NAM

**Mid-October 2022**

**Bac Lieu Province, Viet Nam**

ENV continues its campaign against “petters”, in this case a young girl who last year shared photos on Facebook of “her” Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and “her” leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II). Now she was at it again with photos of “her” otters (Lutrinae, Appendix I or II). Environmental police searched her apartment and seized 2 otters. ENV, October 20, 2022.<sup>9</sup>



**December 21, 2022**

**Pleiku, Gia Lai Province, Viet Nam**

In Madame Pha's freezer, environmental police discovered 31 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) weighing a total of 60 kg, or less than 2 kg per specimen. Asian palm civets weigh an average of 3 kg. Ho Chi Minh City Law Journal, December 21, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**December 25, 2022**

**Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

At the Long Phuoc toll booth at 3:40 p.m., traffic police discovered 21 small Indian civets (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III in India) inside a bus heading for Quang Ngai. They were packed in 7 plastic crates for the 900 km, 16-hour journey. The driver, Le Thanh Tuan, resident of Binh Phu in the Quang Ngai province, loaded the civets onto the bus at the Can Tho bus station. Freight and passenger transport companies are in the crosshairs of NGOs and the authorities.

Báo điện tử Công Luận, December 25, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

## EUROPE

### FRANCE

**October 18, 2022**

**Tarbes, Department of Hautes-Pyrénées, France**

The police checked a vehicle with 3 individuals and a hound dog on board. A live hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) is inside. The Travellers say they consume hedgehogs for “cultural” reasons. They claim to capture “only one or 2 males every 10 days” in order to preserve the species, but the hedgehog in the vehicle is a female. The men were released with a reminder of the law and the hedgehog was released.

La Dépêche du Midi, October 21, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**Beginning of December, 2022**

**Tarbes, Department of Hautes-Pyrénées, France**

Bis repetita. Three men, aged between 22 and 23, were arrested during a police check. They are in possession of a live hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). They claimed not to know that hedgehog hunting is banned in France. One of them had published videos of recipes using hedgehogs on Facebook. He was reported on Pharos, a government website for reporting illegal content online to the authorities, including acts of cruelty to animals. <https://www.internet-signalement.gouv.fr/PharosS1/> The men received a warning.

La Provence (with AFP), December 8, 2022; National Police of Hautes-Pyrénées, December 9, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

### ITALY

**Mid-December 2022**

**Molochio, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy**

Officials confiscate 78 fat dormice (*Glis glis*) inside the freezer of a 65-year-old man's home.

Fat dormice, see “On the Trail” n°30 p.102 and p.176, n°32 p.253, n°34 p.136, p.137 and p.229 and n°36 p.121 and p.200.

StrettoWeb, December 22, 2022.<sup>14</sup>



### RUSSIA

**December 7, 2022**

**Mugur-Aksy, Tuva Oblast, Russia. Border with Mongolia.**

A poacher is fined 8,000 rubles (130 US\$) for catching a Tarbagan marmot (*Marmota sibirica*) in a trap.

Moskovski Komsomolets Tuva, December 7, 2022.<sup>15</sup>







Dalmatian pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*). Photo Avinash Bhagat

## WESTERN AFRICA

### GUINEA-BISSAU

**December 1, 2022**

**Bissorã, Oio Region, Guinea-Bissau**

Sumaila Djaló, a Guinea Conakry citizen, was sentenced to 4 years and 2 months in prison and fined 1,420 US\$ for poisoning 54 vultures (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II) in 2021 near Canchungo. Their heads and feet were found in his backpack. He intended to sell them in Senegal, where they are sought after for their alleged magical abilities. "I did it because I don't have a job," Djaló told the court.

Radio Sol Mansi, December 2, 2022; SAPO, December 2, 2022.<sup>1</sup>



## CENTRAL AFRICA

### CAMEROON

**December 7, 2022**

**Akonolinga, Centre Region, Cameroon**

Four traffickers were arrested in possession of 28 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) in poor condition and detained in wooden boxes. They are part of a poaching and smuggling ring plaguing the region and supplying Yaoundé.

EAGLE, December 8, 2022; LAGA, December 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**November 14, 2022**

**Bulale Forest, Maniema Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Thirty-nine grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) were seized by police. Two out of the 4 traffickers were arrested and imprisoned. The other 2 remain at large. The parrots will be released back into the Congo Basin forest.

Election-net, November 15, 2022; Agence Congolaise de Presse, November 16, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**October 2022**

**Tchimpounga Sanctuary, Department of Kouilou, Republic of the Congo**

Authorities released 73 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) after intercepting over 140 in just a few months (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.140, n°35 p.114, n°36 p.124 and page 214).

PALF, October 24, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**December 12, 2022**

**Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo**

Five grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) were handed over by their owners after an awareness-raising campaign by the NGO Kobatéla Mabélé for the preservation of biodiversity. They were transferred to Tchimpounga Nature Reserve for release.

Panoramik-actu, December 14, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

## EASTERN AFRICA

### KENYA

**October 17, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

A suspect is arrested in possession of 2 owl eggs (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II).

Big Life Foundation, October 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**November 17, 2022**

**Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya**

Another suspect is arrested in possession of 2 owl eggs (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II).

Big Life Foundation, November 2022.<sup>7</sup>

### UGANDA

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Lyantonde, Central Region, Uganda**

An African ostrich chick (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 countries) was seized from a vehicle on the Kampala-Mbarara expressway. It was taken in by the Uganda Wildlife Education Center.

New Vision, October 11, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa**



A female eclectus parrot (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II) is confiscated from its owner who kept it locked up in a room without any light or care. It lost its feathers, and the owner was charged with mistreatment.

Bloemfontein SPCA, November 9, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**December 18, 2022**

**KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

35 decapitated white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) and 5 dead tawny eagles (*Aquila rapax*, Appendix II) are discovered by the rangers. Five vultures have so far survived this mass poisoning.

TimesLIVE (South Africa), December 22, 2022.<sup>10</sup>



## NORTHERN AMERICA

### CANADA

**End of December 2022**

**Port McNeill, Province of British Columbia, Canada**

This northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis laingi*, Appendix II) has been given a double whammy: injured by a bullet, it suffers both a fractured humerus and lead poisoning. Given the seriousness of its condition, it was euthanised.

The goshawk subspecies *laingi* is found only on the Pacific coast of North America. It is slightly smaller and darker than the other goshawks in North America.

MARS Wildlife Rescue Centre, January 7, 2023.<sup>11</sup>



### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 1, 2022**

**Islip, State of New York, United States of America**

A Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*, Appendix II) was stuck in a metal trap outside a home on Walbridge Avenue. It was suffering. It was in a pine tree. The distraught homeowner called a neighbour for help. The raptor's left talon was amputated and unfortunately there was no other option but to finish it off.

Newsday, October 2, 2022.<sup>12</sup>



**October 12 and 15, 2022**

**Madison, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**

Jorge Luis Iglesias, a 60 year-old Cuban citizen, was charged with selling yellow-faced grassquits (*Tiaris olivaceus*) on April 21, May 5, and December 29, 2020. Yellow-faced grassquits are small migratory birds which live in grassy habitats in tropical or subtropical regions like the Caribbean, Central America, or the top of South America.

U.S. Attorney's Office - Western District of Wisconsin, November 16, 2022.<sup>13</sup>



**Mid-October 2022**

**Polk City, State of Florida, United States of America**

A man is charged with shooting 2 sandhill cranes (*Antigone canadensis*, synonym of *Grus canadensis*, Appendix II). He made no attempt to deny it and showed officers where he disposed of the 2 carcasses. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, October 20, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**October 18, 2022**

**Suffolk County, State of New York, United States of America**

Hundreds of exotic birds are recovered from someone's home, including lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix I or II except *Agapornis roseicollis*), parakeets (*Psittaciformes*, Appendix I or II except 4 species), cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*) and finches (family *Fringillidae*), as well as 3 endemic birds whose keeping is prohibited: a common grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), an American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and a mourning dove (*Zenaidura macroura*).

Department of Environmental Conservation, November 9, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**October 24, 2022**

**Youngstown, State of Ohio, United States of America**



David B. Huff, 79, was sentenced to one year of probation and to pay a fine of 4,000 US\$ and 1,500 US\$ in restitution for killing a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II). He also earned himself a 5-year hunting ban and the rifle and ammunition were seized. During an inspection of his farmland in order to eliminate pests, Huff shot and killed a bald eagle with a scoped rifle from 30 meters. He dumped the carcass in the treeline of a bordering field.

U.S. Attorney's Office - Northern District of Ohio, October 24, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**October 26, 2022**

**Lethbridge, Province of Alberta, Canada**



Frankie Tesson Klassen, 23, and Wilhem Harder Reimer, 19, pleaded guilty in and were fined 500 Canadian \$ or 365 US\$ each for poaching a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II).. As the shooting occurred only 85 meters from houses, Reimer was fined an additional 100 \$ or 75 US\$ for discharging the gun near a residence. Lethbridge Herald, October 27, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

**OPERATION GAME THIEF**

**October 28, 2022**

**Nacogdoches County, State of Texas, United States of America**

A 1,000 US\$ reward is being offered for anyone with conclusive information on the killer of 2 bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), discovered just a few yards apart on the edge of County Road 283.

Nacogdoches County Sheriff's Office, November 14, 2022; Operation Game Thief (Texas), November 16, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**OPERATION GAME THIEF**

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Mattawamkeag, State of Maine, United States of America**

Forest rangers caught a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), which was struggling to fly. X-rays showed several bullets in the body, and the bird was subsequently sent to a rehabilitation center. A 4,500 US\$ reward is being offered for anyone with information leading to an arrest.

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, November 5, 2022.<sup>19</sup>



**Beginning of November 2022**  
**Marion County, State of Florida, United States of America**

Several individuals are indicted over shooting a sandhill crane (*Antigone canadensis*, synonym of *Grus canadensis*, Appendix II) in a residential neighbourhood.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, November 10, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

**November 6, 2022**  
**Bern, State of Idaho, United States of America**

A bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) was killed with a small calibre gun. The bullet passed through its leg and into its abdomen.

Idaho Fish and Game, November 16, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

**November 9, 2022**  
**Payson, State of Arizona, United States of America**

A western screech-owl (*Megascops kennicottii*, Appendix II) was seized during a traffic stop. Mason Stapley, 44, was driving under the influence of methamphetamine and with a suspended licence. He said he purchased the nocturnal raptor for 100 US\$ from a couple at a gas station. The owl was taken to the Payson wildlife rescue and was found to have multiple injuries, including a head trauma from being hit by a car. The couple most likely picked it up at the side of the road. It is uncertain whether the owl will be returned to the wild.

The western screech-owl lives in a variety of habitats in North and Central America, from British Columbia to Baja California. It eats insects and small vertebrates. Payson Police Department, November 9, 2022; Arizona's Family, November 14, 2022.<sup>22</sup>



**November 15, 2022**  
**Mellette County, State of South Dakota, United States of America**

An individual shot a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) from a truck. Locals approached and the individual explained that he was shooting at crows. They returned to the site and found the eagle wounded. The bird was taken in by a veterinarian, but died of its wounds.

South Dakota Turn In Poachers, November 19, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**Mid-November 2022**  
**Tampa, State of Florida, United States of America**

Arrest of bird trappers. Several specimens were found in cages. In Florida, the capture of songbirds for sale as pets is a common practice. The 2 species most targeted are the painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*) and the indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*).

jacksonville.com, March 3, 2019; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, November 17, 2022.<sup>24</sup>



**November 2022**  
**Greendale, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**

A man hunting in a park was empty-handed when police arrived, but their dog squad soon uncovered his rifle, hunting clothes, a dead American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and a dead mourning dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) scattered about. Outdoor News, January 25, 2023.<sup>25</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Detroit, State of Michigan, United States of America**

Arthur Anderson, 65, pleaded no contest to the allegations that he killed 3 juvenile Cooper's hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*, Appendix II) in their nest located in a tree on his property. He was sentenced to a fine of 4,975 US\$ and to 6 months' probation. In June, Anderson had shot the chicks because a private company refused to cut down the tree where the nest was (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.126). His shotgun was also seized. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, December 9, 2022.<sup>26</sup>



**December 7, 2022**  
**Franklin, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**

An adult male bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) was wounded with a firearm. Unable to fly, it was picked up near West Oakwood Road and South 112<sup>th</sup> Street. It was brought to the Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. It underwent emergency surgery. It died during a second operation on December 12. It was also suffering from lead poisoning. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, December 12 and 13 2022.<sup>27</sup>



**December 20, 2022**

**Dana Point, State of California, United States of America**

At 12:45 a.m., suspects smashed the window of a pet store and stole a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), and a white cockatoo (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II). According to the owner, they were her pets and not for sale. She estimates their worth to be around 10,000 US\$.

CBS News, December 21, 2022; Orange County Register, December 22, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

**Between December 25 and 31, 2022**

**Harman, State of West Virginia, United States of America**

A bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) was found wounded by gunshot. One of its wings was partially amputated.

Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia, January 2, 2023.<sup>29</sup>



**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**December 26 and 29, 2022**

**San Diego, State of California, United States of America. Border with Mexico.**

It is 4 p.m. when a Toyota Camry with 2 people on board arrived at the Otay Mesa port of entry. The customs officers decided to check the luggage of the 35-year-old man and the 37-year-old woman. They found 2 keel-billed toucans (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II) wrapped in clothing inside in a bag. The 2 suspects were handed over to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Three days later, Pedro Vargas Rendon is indicted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Homeland Security for attempting to smuggle the 2 toucans. He intended to sell them for 1,600 US\$ each. In September 2022, he had already tried 2 times to bring the birds into the United States without a permit. He was turned back in Mexico.

US Customs and Border Protection, January 11, 2023; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, January 2023.<sup>30</sup>

**End of December 2022**

**Mattituck, State of New York, United States of America**

An injured female red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II) was transferred to the Evelyn Alexander Wildlife Rescue Center's veterinary clinic. X-rays revealed 5 pellets in its body, one of which had irreparably damaged a wing. It was put down.

Evelyn Alexander Wildlife Rescue Center, December 24, 2022.<sup>31</sup>

**December 2022**

**Susquehanna County, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America**

A man who captured and brought a Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*, Appendix II) into his hotel room is under investigation.

Outdoor News, January 31, 2023.<sup>32</sup>

**LATIN AMERICA**

**ARGENTINA**

**November 9, 2022**

**Federal, Province of Entre Rios, Argentina**

27 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II) were seized in the province in the spring of 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°36 p. 126). The 27 specimens represent around 1% of the residual population of the species, whose original range extended from southern Brazil through Uruguay to Argentina. They were first handed over to the El Potrero Reserve in Gualaguaychú, where they received emergency treatment. They were then taken under federal police escort to CRET (Centro de Recuperación de Especies de Temaikén), 182 km away. A specimen of green cardinal can fetch up to 860 US\$ on the domestic market for prestige birds. The journey was not without risk. Nine months after the rescue, the 19 survivors were discreetly released back into the forests that constitute their ultimate natural reservoirs, under the authority of the federal government, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, experts from Conicet (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas) and the NGO Aves Argentinas.

*Gubernatrix cristata*, see n°2 p. 38, n°4 p. 35, n°4 p. 99, n°8 p. 24, n°9 p. 25, n°13 p. 25, n°17 p. 29, p. 30, n°18 p. 29, n°19 p. 34, n°20 p. 116, n°23 p. 146, n°24 p. 41, n°26 p. 36, n°29 p. 112, n°30 p. 105, n°31 p. 119, n°32 p. 155, p. 235, n°33 p. 154, n°34 p. 143, n°36 p. 126 and this issue p.129.

Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, November 9, 2022; Entre Rios Government, November 11, 2022.<sup>33</sup>



Yellow cardinal (*Gubernatrix cristata*)

## End of November 2022

### Colonia Roca, Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina

52 birds were kept in a pen in conditions totally unsuited to the heat wave: red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II), diademed tanagers (*Stephanophorus diadematus*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), black-backed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus aureoventris*), creamy-bellied thrushes (*Turdus amaurochalinus*), golden-billed saltators (*Saltator aurantirostris*), chestnut-backed tanagers (*Tangara preciosa*), sayaca tanagers (*Thraupis sayaca*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), and jays (genus *Cyanocorax*). After veterinary assistance, they were all seized. Their commercial value on the black market is estimated at 160,000 Argentine pesos (1,030 US\$).

El Herald (Argentina), November 28, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

## December 1, 2022

### Villa Belgrano, Province of Tucumán, Argentina



- Authorities intercept a red-headed cardinal (*Paroaria coronata* or *Paroaria capitata*, Appendix II), 4 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), 2 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), a double-collared seedeater (*Sporophila caerulea*) and 3 saltators (genus *Saltator*) in a private home.

- Authorities confiscate a red-headed cardinal, 2 ultramarine grosbeaks and a saltator from a man setting bird traps.

The 2 seizures are credited to the Directorate of Rural and Environmental Crime and were supervised by Commissioner Luis Castaño and Inspector Ariel Galván.

Secretary of State for Public Communication of the Government of Tucumán, December 4, 2022.<sup>35</sup>

## Mid-December 2022

### Ingeniero Luis A. Huergo and General Conesa, Province of Río Negro, Argentina



Across 2 farms, authorities intercept 11 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II), 7 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), 7 golden-billed saltators (*Saltator aurantirostris*), 4 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 2 passerines (family Icteridae), an Austral thrush (*Turdus falcklandii*), a band-tailed seedeater (*Catamenia analis*) and a mourning sierra finch (*Rhopospina fruticeti*). They also destroyed 29 cages and 9 traps.

NoticiasNet, December 16, 2022.<sup>36</sup>



*Catamenia analis*

## December 2022

### Alvear, Province of Corrientes, Argentina

Authorities seize 10 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II) and hand them over to the Aguará wildlife refuge and rehabilitation centre in Paso de la Patria. Aguará officials note that for several months, there has been an influx of monk parakeets captured for commercial purposes, seized by law enforcement agencies and weakened by their transport and captivity conditions.

Diario El Libertador, December 26, 2022.<sup>37</sup>

## BOLIVIA

## October 18, 2022

### Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Province of Andrés Bón, Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia



Jhon Jhony Vargas Salvatierra was sentenced to 2 years in prison for the possession and sale of 4 greater rheas (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II) and 14 cliff parakeets (*Myiopsitta luchi*, Appendix II). Since his sentence was less than 2 years, he was released under the "light" procedure. In the event of a repeat offence, he will have to serve the full sentence.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, October 20, 2022.<sup>38</sup>



October 19, 2022

**Cochabamba, Province of Cercado, Department of Cercado, Bolivia**

Seizure of 5 Darwin's rhea chicks (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I) at a market.

*Pterocnemia pennata*, n°1 p. 4, n°2 p. 7, n°4 p. 34, p. 91, p. 99, n°10 p. 22, p. 118, n°18 p. 48, p. 114, n°20 p. 34, n°21 p. 109, n°22 p. 109, n°23 p. 146, n°24 p. 85, n°25 p. 110, n°27 p. 43, p. 120, n°28 p. 73, p. 123, n°29 p. 92, p. 150, n°30 p. 88, n°31 p. 94, p. 186, n°32 p. 251, n°33 p. 223, n°36 p. 193 and n°37 p. 182.

Página Siete, October 19, 2022.<sup>39</sup>

October 19, 2022

**Buena Vista, Province of Ichilo, Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia**



A citizen's report alerts the department's Pofoma (Policía Forestal Medio Ambiental). The Hotel Santa Maria la Antigua is home to a kind of zoo designed to enhance the establishment's appeal, and word of mouth is favourable, with such prestigious creatures as the red-fronted macaw (*Ara rubrogenys*, Appendix I), the blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), the brown-throated three-toed sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II) and the Chilean flamingo (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*, Appendix II). There are also collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II). To be continued.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, October 19, 2022.<sup>40</sup>

December 6 and 9, 2022

**Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Province of Andrés Ibáñez, Department of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia**

- The Pofoma (Policía Forestal y Preservación del Medio Ambiente) seize 17 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), 3 yellow-chevroned parakeets (*Brotogeris chiriri*, Appendix II) and a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) at the Barrio Lindo market.

- Suspended sentence of 3 years' imprisonment.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, December 6 and 11, 2022.<sup>41</sup>

**BRAZIL**

Beginning of December 2022

**Bonito, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil**



By holding and kissing 3 hyacinth macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I) in videos and other promotional tools, Moacir Barbosa de Deus, owner of the Cachoeira Rio do Peixe seaside resort, attracted the wrath of Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) and collected a fine equal to 20,000 US\$ while 6 travel agencies collected a total fine equal to 98,500 US\$ for misuse of wild animals by exhibiting in particular videos of capuchins (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) eating from the hands, shoulders and heads of tourists.

In response to the businessman's postures, Edilson Soares da Silveira, doctor of biology and professor at the Federal Institute of Mato Grosso do Sul, says that wild animals can transmit diseases to human primates, that human primates can transmit diseases to wild animals, that feeding practices modify the natural behavior of animals and cause them to develop aggressiveness and that artificial foods given to wild birds alter their reproductive capacities, reduce the thickness of egg shells and the chances of survival of the chicks.

G1 MS, December 8, 2022.<sup>42</sup>





## BRAZIL

### Seizure of 4,347 birds between October 1 and December 31, 2022



Sources, see page 255, details page 133





1 blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). November 8, 2022. Pirapozinho, State of São Paulo



23 birds, including a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). October 13 and 17, 2022. Fortaleza, State of Ceará



48 animals, including red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*). November 21, 2022. Sertão de Alagoas, State of Alagoas



4 birds including 2 rufous-bellied thrushes (*Turdus rufiventris*). October 14, 2022. Samambaia, Federal District



60 great-billed seed finches (*Sporophila maximiliani*). November 17, 2022. Benevides, State of Pará



Around a hundred animals, including macaws (*Ara* spp., Annexe I or II). November 11, 2022. Morrinhos, State of Goiás, Brazil



## 4,347 birds seized in Brazil

### Map details

1,655 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*)  
 259 double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*)  
 205 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II)  
 179 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*)  
 166 yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*)  
 152 great-billed seed finches (*Sporophila maximiliani*)  
 130 red-headed cardinals (genus *Paroaria*)  
 103 green winged saltators (*Saltator similis*)  
 97 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II)  
 94 plumbeous seedeaters (*Sporophila plumbea*)  
 75 chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*)  
 65 buffy-fronted seedeaters (*Sporophila frontalis*)  
 64 copper seedeaters (*Sporophila bouvreuil*)  
 61 red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*)  
 61 black-throated grosbeaks (*Saltator fuliginosus*)  
 60 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, App. II)  
 43 blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*)  
 40 grassland yellow finches (*Sicalis luteola*)  
 38 rufous-collared sparrows (*Zonotrichia capensis*)  
 32 chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*)  
 27 bananaquits (*Coereba flaveola*)  
 24 lined seedeaters (*Sporophila lineola*)  
 22 rufous-bellied thrushes (*Turdus rufiventris*)  
 20 parrots (*Pionus* spp., Appendix II)  
 17 green-headed tanagers (*Tangara seledon*)  
 16 sooty-capped bush tanagers (*Chlorospingus pileatus*)  
 16 white-throated seedeaters (*Sporophila albogularis*)  
 15 sayaca tanagers (*Thraupis sayaca*)  
 10 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II)  
 10 caatinga parakeets (*Aratinga cactorum*, App. II)  
 10 plain parakeets (*Brotogeris tirica*, Appendix II)  
 10 toucans (family Ramphastidae)  
 10 seven-colored tanagers (*Tangara fastuosa*, Appendix II)

10 thrushes (genus *Turdus*)  
 7 Forbes's blackbirds (*Curaeus forbesi*)  
 7 Atlantic canaries (*Serinus canaria*)  
 6 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, App. II)  
 6 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, App. II)  
 6 hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*)  
 5 scaled doves (*Columbina squammata*)  
 5 red pileated finches (*Coryphospingus cucullatus*)  
 5 common waxbills (*Estrilda astrild*)  
 5 violaceous euphonias (*Euphonia violacea*)  
 4 chestnut-capped blackbirds (*Chrysomus ruficapillus*)  
 4 black tyrants (genus *Knipolegus*)  
 4 tanagers (family Thraupidae)  
 3 finches (family Fringillidae)  
 3 rosellas (*Platycercus* spp., Appendix II)  
 3 diademed tanagers (*Stephanophorus diadematus*)  
 2 red-browed amazons (*Amazona rhodocorytha*, Appendix I)  
 2 coal-crested finches (*Charitospiza eucosma*)  
 2 blue-winged parrotlets (*Forpus xanthopterygius*, Appendix II)  
 2 picazuro pigeons (*Patagioenas picazuro*)  
 2 toco toucans (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II)  
 2 white-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila leucoptera*)  
 2 tanagers (genus *Thraupis*)  
 1 yellow-faced amazon (*Amazona xanthops*, Appendix II)  
 1 red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, App. II)  
 1 dull-colored grassquit (*Asemospiza obscura*)  
 1 yellow-chevoned parakeet (*Brotogeris chiriri*, Appendix II)  
 1 glaucous-blue grosbeak (*Cyanoloxia glaucoerulea*)  
 1 campo troupial (*Icterus jamaicae*)  
 1 caica parrot (*Pionopsitta caica*, Appendix II)  
 1 rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)  
 1 green-billed toucan (*Ramphastos dicolorus*, Appendix III in Argentina)  
 1 Temminck's seedeater (*Sporophila falcirostris*)  
 1 palm tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*)  
 453 unidentified birds



*Ara ambiguus*



*Amazona autumnalis*

## COSTA RICA

### Mid-October 2022

**Calero Island, Limon Province and Delta Costa Rica, Heredia Province, Costa Rica. Border with Nicaragua.**

- Seizure of a great green macaw (*Ara ambiguus*, Appendix I) and of a red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II).
  - Seizure of a great green macaw.
  - Seizure of a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I).
- In 2017, a woman from the canton of Pococí in Limon province was ordered to pay 852,000 colons (1,300 US\$) for the possession of 2 red-lored amazons.

La Teja, October 16, 2022; Noticias Fortuna, October 16, 2022.<sup>43</sup>

### November 29, 2022

**District of Peñas Blancas, Alajuela Province, Costa Rica**



The Herrera family ran a clandestine bird breeding operation on their farm, red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), great curassow (*Crax rubra*, Appendix III in Guatemala, Honduras and Colombia), Egyptian geese (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*), common pigeons (*Columba livia*), quails (family Phasianidae) and ducks (family Anatidae), which she traded in, and a four-toed hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*). The head of the family was brought before the public prosecutor and the animals were taken in charge by Sinac.

CRHoy.com, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

## End of October 2022

### Orosí, Cartago Province, Costa Rica

Seizure by the OIJ (Organismo de Investigación Judicial) in 13 households in Orosí (9,000 inhabitants) of 47 birds, including an orange-fronted conure (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), 8 black-faced solitaires (*Myadestes melanops*) and 12 seedeaters (genus *Sporophila*).

AM Prensa, October 31, 2022.<sup>45</sup>

## EL SALVADOR

### December 31, 2022

**Candelaria de La Frontera, Santa Ana Department, El Salvador**

The national civil police confiscated 2 parakeets (*Psittacara* spp., Appendix II) and 2 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II). Police handed them over to the Ministry of the Environment, who released them into protected habitats. The Ministry calls on all witnesses of wild animal mistreatment and captivity to call the alert number 7850-1474.

El Mundo (El Salvador), December 31, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

## ECUADOR

### October 4, 2022

**Guayaquil, Guayas Province, Ecuador**

Seizure in a shoebox of 3 skinny and plucked red-masked conures (*Aratinga erythrogenys*, Appendix II). Ch. R. and V. S. were sentenced to one year in prison, a fine equal to 4 months' basic salary and a public apology to the Ministry of the Environment.

El Telégrafo, October 4, 2022; Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, October 4, 2022.<sup>47</sup>





## FRANCE (GUYANE)

December 4, 2022

Matoury, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France



The 4.5 kg male harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*, Appendix I) was found in a ditch, not far from its nest. It bore the impacts of 9 bullets and traces of machete blows on its back. Its talons had been cut off. The necropsy also revealed an old, healed bullet wound. The OFB investigation was closed at the end of January 2023 due to a lack of evidence to identify the shooter. This is a great loss for the local eagle population (estimated at between 1,000 and 2,000 individuals in 2018), but also for ornithologists. The nest of this individual is the only one whose location is known in French Guiana. The pair, bold enough to approach a residential area, were still looking after their chick, born in January. Despite the adversity, the female continues to care for the chick. Harpy eagles are among the largest eagles in the world. They can grow to more than a metre long, with a wingspan of over 2.5 metres and weigh between 4 and 9 kg. Pairs are faithful.

Harpy eagle, see "On the Trail" n°32 p.160 and n°33 p.160.

France-Guyane, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.<sup>48</sup>

## MEXICO

Mid-October 2022

Mexico, Mexico

Singer Belinda doesn't only have fans. She has been accused by neighbours in the Coyoacán district of keeping spider monkeys (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) and a white cockatoo (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II) in her home. During the search under a Profepa warrant, the cockatoo was discovered and seized. She faces a fine or prison sentence if not paid. In 2017, Belinda gave the Mexico Zoo a lion she could no longer care for and whom she had acquired as a cub.

Terra México, October 19, 2022; El Telégrafo, October 21, 2022.<sup>49</sup>

November 4, 2022

State of Morelos, Mexico

Three military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I) on a stick in an iron cage were royally bored in the company of a red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II). They have been transferred to a specialized UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) where they will hopefully receive the attention and care they need. Profepa acted on a report from the public.

Profepa, November 4, 2022.<sup>50</sup>

November 10, 2022

State of Querétaro, Mexico

Two olive-throated conures (*Eupsittula nana*, Appendix II) and an orange-fronted conure (*Eupsittula canicularis*, synonym of *Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) in an iron cage were bored stiff. They were transferred to a specialized UMA to receive the attention and care they needed, or so we hope. Profepa acted on a tip-off from the public. Profepa, November 10, 2022.<sup>51</sup>

Beginning of December 2022

Pachuca, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

The URFS (Unidad de Rehabilitación de Fauna Silvestre) and the municipal police together, under Profepa's supervision, rescued 48 birds from a salesman, including 2 parakeets (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II). Their feathers had been dyed yellow to disguise them as yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I). The 48 birds were locked inside 2 cages. Daniel Monroy Lazcano, head of the URFS, abhors how songbirds and parrots are still being sold en masse at the Tizayuca and Actopan markets, and that eagles and hawks are being shot for fun and so-called reprisals.

On the morning of this particular rescue, Profepa announced that several ringtails or cacomistles (genus *Bassariscus*), mammals of the raccoon family, had been intercepted "in a residential area", thanks to confidential information. Many believe that seeing a ringtail is a sign of success for the day and for the future.

El Sol de Hidalgo, December 6, 2022.<sup>52</sup>



**December 16, 2022**

**State of Querétaro, Mexico**

Officials confiscate 2 parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II), one emerald toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) and one eagle (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II) from an individual. They have been entrusted to a UMA.

Profepa, December 16, 2022.<sup>53</sup>

**December 22, 2022**

**State of Veracruz, Mexico**

Following a report, 5 red-lore amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) were confiscated from an individual and handed over to a UMA.

Profepa, December 22, 2022.<sup>54</sup>

**December 26, 2022**

**Otay Border Post, Tijuana, State of Baja California, Mexico. Border with the United States of America.**

A man and a woman attempted to smuggle 2 keel-billed toucans (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II) into the United States. They hid them in tights and a travel bag inside their car. The birds and car were confiscated.

Radarbc, January 11, 2023.<sup>55</sup>

**PERU**

**Mid-October 2022**

**District of Pucusana, Province of Lima, Department of Lima, Peru**



Seizure of 19 Darwin's rhea chicks (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I) in the baggage compartment of a coach. A passenger, presenting himself as a tourist, bought them at a market in Moquegua for 150 soles a pair (38 US\$) and was on his way home to Trujillo (1,659 km and at least 26 hours' travel time). He says he knows nothing about the species, not even its name, and is therefore unaware that it is in danger of extinction.

Serfor, October 18, 2022.<sup>56</sup>

**November 26, 2022**

**Provinces of Chincha and Pisco, Department of Ica, Peru**

Seizure of 6 white-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II), 3 red-masked conures (*Aratinga erythrogenys*, Appendix II) and 2 Pacific parrotlets (*Forpus coelestis*, Appendix II) in various markets. The operation was carried out by the ATFFS (Administración Técnica Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) with the support of the national police force.

Serfor, November 26, 2022.<sup>57</sup>

**THE CARIBBEAN**

**JAMAICA**

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**October 11, 2022**

**Montego Bay, Cornwall County, Jamaica**



Chad Headley pleaded guilty to breaching the Wildlife Protection Act for which he was fined 50,000 Jamaican dollars or 335 US\$. Exotic birds, that included 90 endangered species, and other wildlife were seized by police on June 15 along with about 11 kg of cocaine. The animals had been allegedly given as a gift from his neighbour. The Gleaner, October 11 and 12, 2022.<sup>58</sup>

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**November 10, 2022**

**Saint Joseph, Tunapuna-Piarco Region, Trinidad and Tobago**

A shot aplomado falcon (*Falco femoralis*, Appendix II) with a bullet wound to the wing was recovered by Pet Life Veterinary Hospital, where it underwent surgery.

Aplomado falcons prefer treeless terrain and arid habitats near the cliffs where they nest. They sometimes breed in alpine tundra at an altitude of 3,700 meters. Their range extends from southern Alberta to northern Mexico and Texas.

El Socorro Center for Wildlife Conservation, November 11, 2022.<sup>59</sup>

**December 1, 2022**

**Point Lisas, Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Region, Trinidad and Tobago**

An osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II), severely wounded after being shot in the left wing, was put down. This marks the third osprey to be admitted to the San Fernando veterinary clinic in 8 days.

"Please stop shooting our raptors and please know that they are not eating chicken. They eat fish exclusively. Just imagine they flew all the way from New York or New Jersey only to be shot in Trinidad." El Socorro Center for Wildlife Conservation, December 2, 2022.<sup>60</sup>

## KAZAKHSTAN

**October 20, 2022**

**Besagash, Jambyl Region, Kazakhstan. Border with Kyrgyzstan.**

An attempt to smuggle 9 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) into Kyrgyzstan was foiled by border police and forest and wildlife protection officers. The traffickers were arrested.

Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, October 21, 2022.<sup>61</sup>

### TRIBUTE TO THE STEPPE EAGLE

**October 21, 2022**

**Kazakhstan**

Account by Igor Karyakin, ornithologist, Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan.

"Not so long ago, it was hard to imagine that if you went from Pavlodar to Karaganda or from Samara to Uralsk, you wouldn't see a single steppe eagle [*Aquila nipalensis*, Appendix II]. Today, this has become an ordinary reality. The steppe eagle used to be one of the main species of birds of prey in the steppe zone of northern Eurasia. Today, its populations are dwindling due to the many threats facing the species. Eagles are electrocuted, poisoned, hit by wind turbine blades, shot by idiots for sport. But there is also a little-known component of the common threats in the Middle East: the sale of birds of prey for trophy-making. The leaders in this market are Syria and Iraq, which were discarded by the "civilized world" and have sunk into feudalism in recent years. As these countries try to emerge from the ruins, the eagle trade has become the sole source of income for many natives. Markets for these animals are therefore booming.



Today, an Iraqi colleague sent me photos of a Baghdad market, where over a hundred steppe eagles are for sale. Many eagles are captured in territories not controlled by the government. Buyers purchase them for a few pennies and take them to the Baghdad market. All these eagles will be slaughtered to obtain trophies that will decorate for a few years the houses of poor people, but richer than those who sell eagles on the market. In a few years' time, they will be eaten by moths and beetles of the Dermestidae family, dumped in a landfill and their owners will return to the market to buy more eagles. It's a scourge that local authorities can do nothing about. According to initial estimates, some 5,000 eagles end up like this every year. Not to mention those which are poisoned by professional taxidermists by spreading poisoned bait in their eyries.

Our eagle Aina regularly crosses this oasis of obscurantism and has managed to avoid the nets and poisoning for the past 4 years, unlike other eagles that have crossed Iraq. This year will be its fifth migration through this country. At present, Aina is in western Kazakhstan, but will soon be heading south. Let's hope that once again, it will be protected by its guardian angel".

Igor Karyakin, October 21, 2022.<sup>62</sup>



© Omar Al-Sheikhly



© Nepal Bird Tours

## UZBEKISTAN

**November 11, 2022**

**Tashkent Independent City, Uzbekistan**



Two hunters pose with a dead cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II). The prosecutor wants to know the exact place, date, and circumstances of the crime. "Whatever the case, crime against animals and birds must not go unpunished. We call on the State Committee for Ecology and the Ministry of the Interior to investigate the situation and identify those involved in this act," said the environmentalists.

General Prosecutors' Office of The Republic Of Uzbekistan, November 11, 2022; Podrobno.uz, November 11, 2022.<sup>63</sup>

**November 22, 2022**

**Sariosiyo District, Surxondaryo Region, Uzbekistan**



Seizure from a private home of a griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II). The bird of prey had been "rescued" by "a friend" in the mountains near the Sangardak waterfall, in the Hissar Mountains, a mountain range stretching 200 km between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, with its highest point at 4,643 meters. M.O. is said to have cared for it and kept it on an interim basis for 2 to 3 months, unaware that the griffon vulture is a bird protected by national law and threatened with extinction. The griffon vulture was temporarily handed over to Termez zoo, 200 km from its mountains.

News from Uzbekistan, November 22, 2022; UPL.UZ, November 23, 2022.<sup>64</sup>

**Mid-December 2022**

**Navoiy Region, Uzbekistan**

After bragging about poaching a cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) with photos on social media, Shuhrat Boboqulov was questioned by the police.

KUN.UZ, December 13, 2022.<sup>65</sup>

**Mid-December 2022**

**Uzbekistan**

A group of hunters posted a video of them capturing a Himalayan griffon (*Gyps himalayensis*, Appendix II) on social media. The Telegram channel ekolog.uz, covering only environmental news, is calling on the State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection as well as Ministry of Internal Affairs to identify the suspects. ekolog.uz, December 16, 2022.<sup>66</sup>

**End of December 2022**

**Tashkent Independent City, Uzbekistan**

An eagle (*Aquila* spp., Appendix I or II) is confiscated from an owner who kept it in their apartment. The owner is issued a warning and the eagle sent to the city zoo.

UZ24, December 27, 2022.<sup>67</sup>

## TAJIKISTAN

**November 19, 2022**

**Istiqolol, Sughd Region, Tajikistan**

From Tajikistan to Algeria, via the Netherlands and Provence in France, European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) are hunted down for their melodious songs. Several of them were in the hands of 2 Khujand residents.

Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, November 19, 2022.<sup>68</sup>

## EASTERN ASIA

### CHINA

**October 28, 2022**

**Qingmao Border Post, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.**

58,2 kg of "bird's nests" in a truck, i.e. 4,160 to 19,400 nests based on 3 to 14 grams per nest. Gongbei Customs, November 4, 2022.<sup>69</sup>

**November 7, 2022**

**Wenzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China**

948 sparrows (genus *Passer* or *Petronia* *Petronia*) and 13 bubbling thrushes were killed by "Wu", aged 39. He was arrested after being reported with 2 large bags filled with dead birds on a motorcycle. Wu used 2 small sound recorders to attract his live preys in a trap. It was, he says, for his own personal consumption. Sparrows are protected animals in China, having been almost eradicated during the Mao era in the 50s and 60s. International Business Times, November, 22 2022.<sup>70</sup>





**November 9, 2022**  
**Gongbei Border Post, Zhuhai Prefecture,**  
**Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.**



Officials retrieve 23.55 kg of “bird’s nests” hidden in the chassis of a 7-passenger vehicle entering China, driven by a Macanese.

Chinese Customs, November 14, 2022.<sup>71</sup>

**December 22, 2022**  
**Gongbei Border Post, Zhuhai Prefecture,**  
**Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.**

A Macau resident attempted to smuggle 20.5 kg of “bird’s nests” into Guangdong. They were wrapped in aluminium foil, divided into 30 packages, and hidden in a false compartment in the back seat of his vehicle. Chinese Customs, December 26, 2022.<sup>72</sup>



**December 2022**  
**Weifang Prefecture, Shandong Province, China**  
 Customs intercept a shipment containing 1.13 tonnes of “bird’s nest” products from Thailand worth 256,000 yuan or 35,720 US\$ (31.6 US\$/kg). Chinese Customs, January 5, 2023.<sup>73</sup>

## MONGOLIA

**November 20, 2022**  
**Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

Sentencing of E. to a fine of 10 million tugriks (2,955 US\$) and damages of over 13 million tugriks (3,880 US\$) for attempting to sell Dalmatian pelican beaks (*Pelecanus crispus*, Appendix I) via Facebook. He had posted an advert on February 22, 2022 at the request of a relative and without knowing that it was illegal, according to himself. Dalmatian pelicans are the largest of the pelicans. They can reach 1.6 to 1.8 meters in length, with a wingspan of 3 meters. Their range extends from the Balkans to eastern China.

Poaching for their beaks is a major threat to Dalmatian pelicans in Mongolia. They are traditionally prized for grooming sweaty horses after strenuous exercise because the pelican beak is said to transmit strength and speed. According to a field study conducted in the summer of 2005, a single pelican beak can be bartered for 10 horses or 30 sheep, and the value increases as the individuals become rarer. The Dalmatian pelicans are thought to be fewer than 150 in Mongolia.

“Conservation of the critically endangered east Asian population of Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* in western Mongolia”, BirdingASIA n°7, 2007; Electronic database of court decisions of Mongolia, November 20, 2022; iSee.mn, November 22, 2022.<sup>74</sup>



## SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

### CAMBODIA

**November 21, 2022**  
**Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary, Mondulhiri**  
**Province, Cambodia. Border with Viet Nam.**



Two men on motorbikes were arrested with 39 Oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) stashed under their jackets. They had intended to sell them to a Vietnamese trader at the border. The Phnom Penh Post, November 24, 2022.<sup>75</sup>

**December 5, 2022**  
**Siem Reap Province, Cambodia**



A raid on a bird broker's home led to the rescue and release of 75 birds, including great myna (*Acridotheres grandis*), purple swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*), lesser whistling duck (*Dendrocygna javanica*) and white-breasted waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*).

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 5, 2022.<sup>76</sup>

## INDONESIA

**October 17, 2022**  
**Pelalawan Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**



Bambang Apriyanto and Junaidi were sentenced to 10 months in prison and fined 20 million Indonesian rupiahs (1,320 US\$) for attempting on Thursday, June 30, 2022 to transport on board a Daihatsu Luxio between Kualanamu, North Sumatra Province, and the Lampung province in the south of the island (1,600 km) on behalf of a man called Heri, 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II except 4 species), 2 blue-crowned hanging parrots (*Loriculus galgulus*, Appendix II), 22 Chinese hwameis (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II), 40 blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*), 104 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), 38 white-crested laughingthrushes (*Garrulax leucolophus*), 46 blue-masked leafbirds (*Chloropsis venusta*), 25 brown-cheeked bulbuls (*Alophoixus bres*), 118 Javan blue flycatchers (*Cyornis banyumas*), 2 Asian fairy-bluebirds (*Irena puella*), 4 Sunda laughingthrushes (*Garrulax palliatus*) and 100 white-eyes (family Zosteropidae), making a total of 503 birds and 2 fennec foxes (*Vulpes zerda*, Appendix II). Bambang claims to have received from Heri a commission of 600,000 rupees (40 US\$) and an allowance of 3 million rupees (206 US\$) for travel expenses. The final destination of the cargo was the island of Java.

Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, October 17, 2022; FLIGHT – Protecting Indonesia's Birds, November 7, 2022.<sup>77</sup>

**October 20, 2022**  
**Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia**



Zainal Arifin has been sentenced to 8 months' imprisonment and a fine of 50 million rupiah (3,300 US\$) which, if not paid, will be replaced by a further 2 months' imprisonment and 2,000 rupiah (0.13 US\$) in court costs for attempting to transport 4 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II) between the port of Tanjung Perak and Jakarta.

The birds, hidden in 4 fruit crates, had been disembarked on the evening of Wednesday, April 27 from a car ferry from Makassar (Sulawesi island) after 40 hours at sea. Arifin was intercepted. He had received a commission of one million rupiah (70 US\$) to deliver the hornbills to a certain Mr Maunk in the Indonesian capital. If the trafficking scenario had succeeded, the birds would have been transported for more than 50 hours in particularly difficult conditions.

Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, October 20, 2022.<sup>78</sup>

**October 27, 2022**  
**Sorong Natural Park, West Papua Province, New Guinea Island, Indonesia**

Release of 83 birds in Sorong Natural Park (900 hectares), including 20 sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II), 41 black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), 7 dusky lorries (*Pseudeos fuscata*, Appendix II), an orange-breasted fig parrot (*Cyclopsitta guliemitertii*, Appendix II) and 5 yellow-faced mynas (*Mino dumontii*) seized at airports, on car ferries, in coaches or other vehicles or as discarded pet birds. All have undergone training to relearn how to live in the wild. The quarantines, veterinary care, transit cages and staff training have been funded by the State-owned oil and gas company Pertamina and its Kasim refinery, located around 70 km from the Sorong Natural Park.

Kompas.com, October 31, 2022.<sup>79</sup>



**November 22, 2022**

**Bandar Lampung, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**

Windhu Wilantara bin Suherman sentenced to 5 months' imprisonment and a fine of 2.5 million rupiah (160 US\$) which, if not paid, will be replaced by one additional month in prison and 2,000 rupiah (0.13 US\$) in court costs for attempting to transport 19 blue-rumped parrots (*Psittinus cyanurus*, Appendix II), 51 red-breasted parakeets (*Psittacula alexandri*, Appendix II) and 41 hanging parrot (*Loriculus* spp., Appendix II). On Thursday, August 4, at around 9.30 p.m., he was stopped by a road patrol in Gedung Harapan, 315 km from Palembang, a journey of more than 4 hours. The police intervened after receiving information from NGO FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds. Three blue-rumped parrots, 25 red-breasted parakeets and 7 hanging parrots were already dead.

FLIGHT – Protecting Indonesia's Birds, November 28, 2022; Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, November 29, 2022.<sup>80</sup>



**November 26, 2022**

**Gunung Sahuwai Nature Reserve, West Ceram Regency, Maluku Province, Maluku Archipelago, Indonesia**

The trees are regaining color. Release of 6 salmon-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I), 2 coconut lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*, Appendix II), 4 red lorises (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II), 7 black-naped fruit doves (*Ptilinopus melanospilus*) and of a reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), all seized on the island of Ambon or even in the ports of East Java or even voluntarily handed over to the Authority by repentant inhabitants in the presence of the village chiefs of Nagalema and several administrators and students from Pattimura University.

BKSDA Maluku, November 30, 2022.<sup>81</sup>



10 salmon-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I). October 4, 2022. Seizure aboard a ferry. Liang, Central Maluku Regency, Maluku Province, Maluku Archipelago

**December 13, 2022**

**Kalianda, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Indonesia**

Two bus drivers and 2 bird traffickers were sentenced to 8 months in prison, a fine of 2 million rupiah (142 US\$), an additional 2 months' imprisonment if the latter is not paid, and 5,000 rupiah (0.35 US\$) in court costs. The bus drivers worked along the route linking the islands of Sumatra and Java. The Putra Remaja bus made 2 stops in the town of Jambi to load 18 plastic crates and 33 cardboard boxes into the luggage compartment. They contained a total of 598 birds: 20 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), 50 purple-throated sunbirds (*Leptocoma sperata*), 5 long-tailed shrikes (*Lanius schach*), 9 crested jays (*Platylophus galericulatus*), 40 bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*), 40 munias (genus *Lonchura*), 4 Sumatran laughingthrushes (*Garrulax bicolor*), 7 Sunda laughingthrushes (*Garrulax palliatus*), 120 Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*), 58 blue-masked leafbirds (*Chloropsis venusta*), 30 Sunda bulbuls (*Ixos virescens*), 40 black-naped orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*), 6 bulbuls brès (*Alophoixus bres*), 32 blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*), 6 Asian fairy-bluebirds (*Irena puella*), 19 lesser green leafbirds (*Chloropsis cyanopogon*), 100 white-eyes (family Zosteropidae), 4 "brinjis" and 8 ashy drongos (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*).

At 3 a.m. on August 24, 2022, police checked a vehicle in a restaurant parking lot, after it arrived at Bakauheni port and before it boarded a car ferry bound for Java. They arrested 3 men and the investigation subsequently gathered sufficient evidence for the court to pass a sentence. After a statutory quarantine, the surviving birds were released.

Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, December 13, 2022; FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, December 20, 2022.<sup>82</sup>



10 birds, including 1 salmon-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*) and 1 yellow-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*, App. I). November 10, 2022. Port of Yos Sudarso, Ambon, Maluku Archipelago

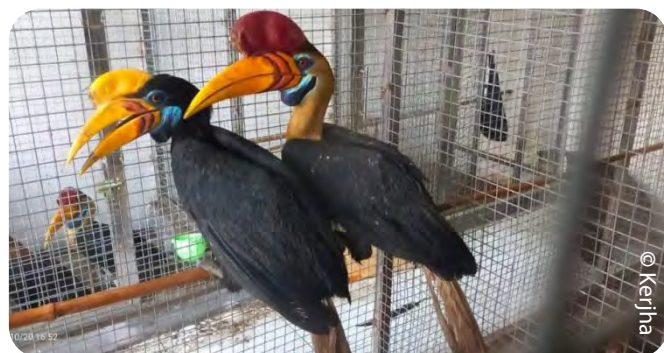
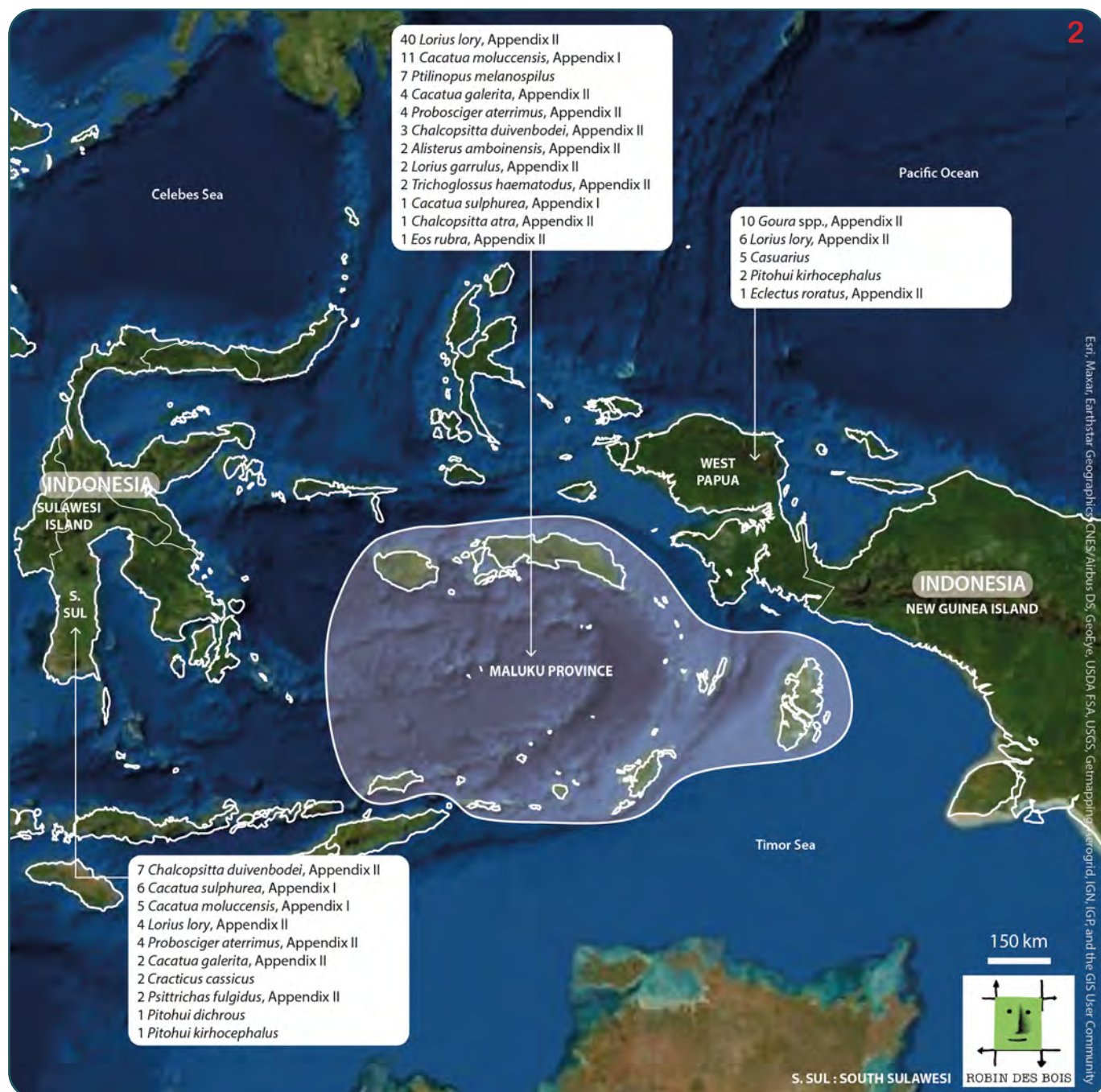


Indonesia. Seizure of 7,129 birds between October 1 and December 31, 2022



Sources see page 255, details page 144





12 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II)  
October 20, 2022. Port of Tanjung Perak, Surabaya,  
East Java Province, Java Island



5 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II).  
November 20, 2022. Port of Tanjung Perak, Surabaya,  
East Java Province, Java Island





Knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*)

## 7129 birds seized in Indonesia Map details

754 purple-throated sunbirds (*Leptocoma sperata*)  
 469 hummingbirds (Trochilidae, Appendix I or II)  
 460 Oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*)  
 110 blue-masked leafbirds (*Chloropsis venusta*)  
 100 white-eyes (family Zosteropidae)  
 80 blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*)  
 66 lesser green leafbirds (*Chloropsis cyanopogon*)  
 51 red-breasted parakeets (*Psittacula alexandri*, Appendix II)  
 50 black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II)  
 41 hanging parrots (*Loriculus* spp., Appendix II)  
 40 magpie-robins (genus *Copsychus*)  
 27 Sunda bulbuls (*Ixos virescens*)  
 26 eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II)  
 25 olive-winged bulbuls (*Pycnonotus plumosus*)  
 23 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*)  
 20 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*, Appendix II with reservation from Indonesia)  
 19 brown-cheeked bulbuls (*Alophoixus bres*)  
 19 white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II)  
 17 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II)  
 17 blue-crowned hanging parrots (*Loriculus galgulus*, Appendix II)  
 16 salmon-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I)  
 15 crimson sunbirds (*Aethopyga siparaja*)  
 15 ashy drongos (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*)  
 15 long-tailed sibilas (*Heterophasia picaoides*)  
 15 long-tailed shrike (*Lanius schach*)  
 14 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I)

10 brown lorries (*Chalcopsitta duivenbodei*, App. II)  
 10 crowned pigeons (*Goura* spp., Appendix II)  
 10 lesser birds-of-paradise (*Paradisaea minor*, Appendix II)  
 10 golden-mantled racket-tails (*Prioniturus platurus*, Appendix II)  
 10 ornate lorikeets (*Trichoglossus ornatus*, App. II)  
 9 palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, App. II)  
 8 king birds-of-paradise (*Cicinnurus regius*, App. II)  
 7 black-naped fruit doves (*Ptilinopus melanospilus*)  
 6 sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II)  
 6 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II)  
 5 cassowaries (genus *Casuarius*)  
 4 drongos (genus *Dicrurus*)  
 3 variable pitohuis (*Pitohui kirhocephalus*)  
 3 white-breasted babblers (*Stachyris grammiceps*)  
 2 Ambon king-parrots (*Alisterus amboinensis*, Appendix II)  
 2 common green magpies (*Cissa chinensis*)  
 2 hooded butcherbirds (*Cracticus cassicus*)  
 2 Sumatran treepies (*Dendrocitta occipitalis*)  
 2 chattering lorries (*Lorius garrulus*, Appendix II)  
 2 black-naped orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*)  
 2 crested jays (*Platylophus galericulatus*)  
 2 Javan scimitar babblers (*Pomatorhinus montanus*)  
 2 Pesquet's parrots (*Psittichas fulgidus*, Appendix II)  
 2 coconut lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*, Appendix II)  
 1 black lory (*Chalcopsitta atra*, Appendix II)  
 1 red lory (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II)  
 1 Asian fairy-bluebird (*Irena puella*)  
 1 hooded pitohui (*Pitohui dichrous*)  
 4,500 unidentified birds



## PHILIPPINES

**October 21 and 26, 2022**

**Balamban, Province of Cebu, Philippines**

facebook

Montemayor was arrested for attempting to sell Palawan hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa palawanensis*, Appendix II) for 12,500 pesos or 213 US\$ per bird online via Facebook. Posing as interested buyers of mynas, NBI agents organised a meet up with Montemayor on October 21, Montemayor came with 2 mynas and revealed that he had 6 other birds at his home. He then agreed to sell all 8 birds at a discounted price, 7,000 pesos or 120 US\$, to the undercover officers, and agreed to carry out the transaction on October 26 at his home. He was arrested there. He was released immediately after his arrest on bail of 39,000 pesos (700 US\$). The birds were released back into the wild.

SunStar, October 27, 2022.<sup>83</sup>

**End of October 2022**

**Pasay, Pasig, Manila and Caloocan, National Capital Region, Philippines**

Six wildlife vendors were arrested during control operations. Seizure of:

- hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) and 2 cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*).
- 9 crested mynas (*Acridotheres cristatellus*) and 32 hanging parrots (*Loriculus* spp., Appendix II).
- a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II).

GMA Network, October 26, 2022.<sup>84</sup>

## THAILAND

**End of December 2022**

**Ban Na Sub-District, Mueang Chumphon District, Chumphon Province, Thailand**

Madame Pornphit was reported by "a good citizen." Officials confiscated 37 wild birds in cages, including 19 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), 10 golden-crested mynas (*Ampeliceps coronatus*), 6 white-breasted waterhens (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) and 2 blue whistling thrushes (*Myophonus caeruleus*). An investigation is underway to find out if a trading scheme was involved.

Thai Reference, December 27, 2022.<sup>85</sup>

## VIET NAM

**Mid October 2022**

**Dat Do District, Ba Ria Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

A crested serpent eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II) and 2 purple swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) are confiscated from an individual and released.

ENV, October 17, 2022.<sup>86</sup>

**October 21, 2022**

**Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**



Mr Nang says he bought 2 Oriental pied hornbills (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II) from a street vendor for 2.5 million dong, or 107 US\$. The scene took place in September. Nang was walking along National Road 10 and quickly realised that the birds, 700 grams for the male and 1 kg for the female, were aggressive and could not stand captivity. He spontaneously handed them over to the forest wardens. They were transferred to the Cu Chi refuge. They are due to be released.

Ho Chi Minh City Law Journal, October 21, 2022.<sup>87</sup>

**December 2, 2022**

**Near Phu My, Baa Ria-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

A total of 40 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) are confiscated from a pet shop and sent to Dong Nai Nature Reserve, a 2-hour, 100-km drive to the north.

ENV, December 25, 2022.<sup>88</sup>

**December 3, 2022**

**Thua Thien Hue Province, Viet Nam**

ENV notified authorities of a bird shop selling red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) and enicures (genus *Enicurus*). When the local Forest Protection Department arrived on site, they seized 10 red-whiskered bulbuls.

ENV, December 3, 2022.<sup>89</sup>

**December 5, 2022**

**Ha Giang Province, Viet Nam**

The Yen Minh Forest Protection Department released 2 crested serpent eagles (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II) held in a motorcycle garage.

ENV, December 5, 2022.<sup>90</sup>

**December 21, 2022**

**Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Phan Nguyen Tuan is sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for trading grey peacock-pheasants (*Polyplectron bicalcaratum*, Appendix II) and shipping them by bus. The 6 specimens were handed over to the Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Center.

The grey peacock-pheasant is a discreet pheasant species that lives in forests from northeast India to southern China. Its name comes from the 2 spurs that are located on each leg for males. Their greyish-brown plumage is dotted with numerous metallic blue-green eye-spots, which are more discreet on females. Males do a peacock-like cartwheel during courtship.

Grey peacock-pheasants, see "On the Trail" n°34 p.155 and n°37 p.144.

ENV, December 23, 2022.<sup>91</sup>



**SOUTHERN ASIA**

**AFGHANISTAN**

**October 4, 2022**

**Qala e Naw District, Badghis Province, Afghanistan**

A group of poachers are arrested and their captured birds released, including at least one falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II).

National Environmental Protection Agency, October 4, 2022.<sup>93</sup>

**October 6, 2022**

**Shahjoi District, Zabul Province, Afghanistan**



Authorities capture 3 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) from poachers and release them in an "appropriate place."

National Environmental Protection Agency, October 6, 2022.<sup>94</sup>

**October 22, 25 and 27, 2022**

**Bahrabad, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan**

Several falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) were successively released after traffickers, looking to export them to Pakistan, were stopped at the Torkham Border Crossing: 2 falcons were released on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, one on the 25<sup>th</sup>, and 2 on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

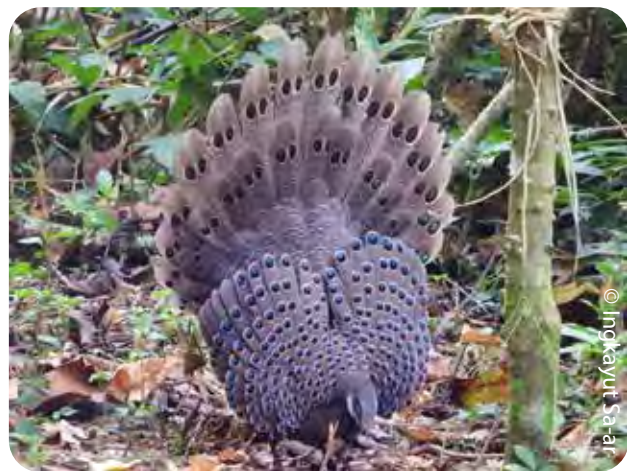
National Environmental Protection Agency, October 22, 23, 25 and 27, 2022.<sup>95</sup>

**November 2022**

**Archi District, Kunduz Province, Afghanistan. Border with Tajikistan.**

The smuggling of 80 eagles (Accipitridae, Appendix II) was foiled. They have been released. The offenders are being prosecuted.

National Environmental Protection Agency, November 28, 2022.<sup>96</sup>



**End of December 2022**

**La Gi, Binh Thuan Province, Viet Nam**



A travelling salesman had cages and birds on display in town and transported them on the back of his motorcycle. The environmental police intervened and seized 96 birds, including an Oriental pied hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II), 4 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), 8 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*), 6 black bulbuls (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*), 4 Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*) and 18 red-billed leiothrix (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II). All were handed over to a specialized institution. An ENV supporter sent the alert and an hour later, the police intervened. ENV, December 28, 2022.<sup>92</sup>



## BANGLADESH

October 12, 2022

### Chilahati, Nilphamari District, Rangpur Division, Bangladesh

Abul Hossain, head of an organised gang of poachers and bird traffickers from Chilahati and nearby villages, was fined 1,000 takas (10 US\$) and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment. He was taken to Nilphamari prison in the afternoon, escorted by Inspector Hamidul Islam. The Daily Star, October 12, 2022.<sup>97</sup>



## INDIA

December 2022

### Guntur and Chittoor Districts, State of Andhra Pradesh; Chennai, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

It's the season to "pick" Alexandrine parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) chicks from fruit trees. Members of the Narikurava tribe, from the Tiruvallur district in Tamil Nadu, flood into the districts of Guntur and Chittoor to capture the chicks. A bird activist named Krishnan says that Narikurava members will climb trees at night and collect around 50 tiny Alexandrine parakeets over roughly 10 climbs. They usually take night trains to Chennai, jumping onto the tracks before the main station to evade police and Operation Wilep squads. They'll sell a pair of birds for 2,000 rupees (24.50 US\$) to wholesalers, or alternatively in stalls or on the roadside for 6,000 rupees (73.50 US\$). Female Alexandrine parakeets can lay 4 eggs, which hatch after a month-long incubation period. However, supply is still insufficient to meet the increasingly oppressive market demand. In 10 years, their populations have descended from of "least concern" to "near threatened". Andhra Pradesh's WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) remains powerless in preventing the decline, and there are calls for Alexandrine parakeet traffickers to be treated under the Goondas Act. This well could deter the Narikurava from engaging in illegal trafficking, which for them comprises an important, albeit seasonal, source of income. The Goondas Act, established in 1982, allows repeat offenders to be detained for one year as a preventive measure. It also applies to first-time offenders in cases of public order disturbance or violence. Since 1988, forestry offenders have also been included. The term "Goonda" refers to a person hired to commit a crime.

The News Minute, October 3, 2022; The Times of India, December 26, 2022.<sup>98</sup>

## Poaching and seizures of birds in India Map details

800 munias (family Estrildidae)  
76 parakeets (*Psittaciformes*, Appendix I or II except 4 species)  
60 cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)  
93 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*)  
70 Indian rollers (*Coracias benghalensis*)  
58 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*),  
35 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan)  
27 Amur falcons (*Falco amurensis*, Appendix II)  
10 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II)  
10 pigeons (genus *Columba*).  
9 fulvous whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna bicolor*, Appendix III in Honduras),  
8 white-breasted kingfishers (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)  
5 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II)  
4 black cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus* spp., App. II)  
4 flame bowerbirds (*Sericulus ardens*),  
4 yellow-throated toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus*)  
2 sun conures (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II)  
1 barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Annexe II)  
1 marabou stork (*Leptoptilos crumeniferus*)  
128 unidentified birds



121 parakeets, including cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*). December 15, 2022. Nadia District, State of West Bengal



15 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). November 29, 2022. Mugavanur, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu



## India. Poaching and seizures of birds (1,416) between October 1 and December 31, 2022



Sources, see page 255, details page 147.





© Border Security Force South Bengal

4 black cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus* spp., Appendix II, endemic to Australia), 4 yellow-throated toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus*, Central America and northern South America) and a marabou stork (*Leptoptilos crumeniferus*). 11 October 2022. Daikota border outpost, Birbhum district, State of West Bengal



© BSF SOUTH BENGAL

221 birds including 93 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II). November 5, 2022. Betai and Rangiapota Border Outposts, Nadia District, State of West Bengal



© WCCB

1 barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) December 22, 2022. Valsad District, State of Gujarat

## IRAN

### October 2022

#### Dalaki, Bushehr Province, Iran

Seizure of 5 falcons, including a saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) and a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), 8 bustards (family Otidae) and a Land Cruiser. The driver and smuggler came from the province of Fars and was heading for the port of Bushehr to take the birds to the Gulf countries.

Mehr News Agency, October 15, 2022; Eghtesad Online, October 19, 2022.<sup>99</sup>

### October 2022

#### Jam County, Bushehr Province, Iran

Seizure of 2 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II). One arrest. Saham Salehi, deputy chief of police for the province, told Tasnim News Agency that "obtaining information on the poaching of falcons, their purchase, sale and transfer to Persian Gulf countries is on the police agenda". He appreciates the people's cooperation.

Tasnim News Agency, October 22, 2022.<sup>100</sup>

### November 2022

#### Dowqarun, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran. Border with Afghanistan.

Iranian customs officials foiled an attempt to smuggle a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) into Afghanistan. The smuggler, an Afghan national, faces a fine of 60 to 120 million rials (1,430 to 2,860 US\$).

Sahebkhavar.ir, November 19, 2022.<sup>101</sup>

## PAKISTAN

### Beginning of October 2022

#### Allama Iqbal International Airport of Lahore and Lahore, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

- Customs officers confiscate a falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) at the airport. It was being smuggled to a country not listed in the Punjab Wildlife and Parks Directorate's press release, probably a Middle Eastern country.

- In a restaurant, officials seize 4 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III) and 12 grey francolins (*Ortygornis pondicerianus*) and fine the suspect 12,000 rupees (50 US\$).

- Authorities seize 3 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) and accessories for hunting wild quail. Fine of 70,500 rupees (300 US\$).

In all 3 cases, legal proceedings have initiated.

Veterinary News and Views, October 10, 2022.<sup>102</sup>



### October 2022

#### Lahore and Faisalabad and Muzaffargarh Districts, Province of Punjab, Pakistan



The province's National Parks Department adheres to the Forest, Wildlife & Fisheries Department's directives. Three wild bird sellers were fined 8,000 rupees (34.50 US\$) and 4 men attempting to capture falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) were fined 45,000 rupees (194 US\$). A total of 14 poachers and hawkers were fined 150,000 rupees.

Veterinary News and Views, October 12, 2022.<sup>103</sup>

### October 2022

#### Around Rawalpindi, Province of Punjab, Pakistan



- Officials arrest 7 falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) and black francolin (*Francolinus francolinus*) hunters and one passerine hunter. They were fined 107,000 rupees (460 US\$).

- Officials arrest 10 falcon and quail hunters and fine them one million rupees (4,300 US\$).

Veterinary News and Views, October 17 2022.<sup>104</sup>

### October 10, 2022

#### Taunsa Barrage Bridge, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

Arrest of Nadeem. Seizure of 2 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III) and 16 partridges (family Phasianidae) and their chicks.

Dawn, October 11, 2022.<sup>105</sup>

### October 11, 2022

#### Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan



The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department foiled an attempt to smuggle falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) during a passenger bus check on Indus Highway. The falcons were to be sold to foreigners at Karachi, the largest market in the country for these rare birds. They were released in Kotal Wildlife Park.

Samaa, October 12, 2022.<sup>106</sup>



**Mid-October 2022**  
**Daraban Tehsil, Province of Khyber**  
**Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**



Two kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) are intercepted from a wildlife trafficker. Dera Ismail Khan Wildlife Division, October 17, 2022.<sup>107</sup>

**October 26, 2022**  
**Ratta Kulachi, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**

A laggar falcon (*Falco jugger*, Appendix I) is confiscated from an individual. Dera Ismail Khan Wildlife Division, October 26, 2022.<sup>108</sup>

**October 27, 2022**  
**Province of Sindh, Pakistan**

In the wake of the catastrophic floods that have devastated the population and the natural environment, the government has issued a notification confirming the ban on hunting for the 2022-2023 season, with the exception of falconry and sport hunting practised by eminent politicians from the Persian Gulf and their entourages. The Sindh government is said to have bowed to pressure from the federal government and generous donors from Arab countries.

Dawn, October 28, 2022.<sup>109</sup>

**End of October 2022**  
**Province of Punjab, Pakistan**

- 5 falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) and passerine poachers were fined 49,000 rupees (210 US\$).

- Authorities arrest 3 parrot (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II except 4 species) and quail poachers in Fort Abbas and Haroonabad, and fine them 34,000 rupees (146 US\$).

Veterinary News and Views, October 30, 2022.<sup>110</sup>



## WESTERN ASIA

### AZERBAIJAN

**December 1, 2022**  
**Jeyranchol, Shamkir District, Azerbaijan**

Three UAE nationals were found in possession of 4 little bustards (*Tetrax tetrax*, Appendix II). The men were riding across the arid steppe in a luxurious limousine. They are being held in the country until the end of the procedure. Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan, December 1, 2022.<sup>111</sup>



### CYPRUS

**October 1-2, 2022**  
**Karpas Peninsula, Famagusta District, Cyprus**

The activists from Taşkent Park, a non-profit organisation that takes in animals, cares for them and then releases them back into the wild, and which refuses to be confused with a zoo, neutralised 7 poaching sites throughout the night and seized 14 nets and 7 electronic bird calls. They extracted around fifty birds, including Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common redstarts (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*), mountain leaf warblers (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), masked shrikes (*Lanius nubicus*), common nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), barn swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) and collared flycatchers (*Ficedula albicollis*). Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 3, 2022.<sup>112</sup>



**Beginning of October 2022**  
**Famagusta District, Cyprus**

The trapping site was easy to locate thanks to the electronic song of the Eurasian blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine). The police seized 212 limesticks. The 3 bird "gluers" will at best inherit a fine of 200 € (194 US\$), a fine or rather a right to trap.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 10, 2022.<sup>113</sup>



### Mid-October 2022

#### Mazotos, Larnaca District, Cyprus

The female long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) was "taped" to the branches by several glue traps. This is the fate of many nocturnal birds that are attracted by the calls of passerines that have been glued or caught in nets.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, Oct. 18, 2022.<sup>114</sup>



## GEORGIA

### Beginning of October 2022

#### City of Tbilisi, Georgia

Good news from the NGO Sabuko. The lesser-spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*, Appendix II) whose plight was reported in "On the Trail" n°36 p.141 has taken to the skies again. Thanks to the vets at Tbilisi Zoo, the fractures have been reduced with prostheses and its wing has been restored. Sabuko, October 11, 2022.<sup>115</sup>

## ISRAEL

### Mid-October 2022

#### Agamon Hula Nature Park, Northern District, Israel

A lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*, Appendix II) with a gunshot wound has been cared for by veterinarians. It should be returned into the wild.

Ynetnews, November 8, 2022.<sup>116</sup>

### December 2022

#### Ramla, Central District, Israel

Inside the basement of a residential building, located in the city center (Ramla has 80,000 inhabitants), 50 exotic birds were locked up, including macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), amazon parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), conures (*Aratinga* spp., Appendix II) and parakeets (genus *Psittacula*). Without care, daylight or fresh air, they were all in poor condition and destined for the black market. They were transferred to an institution run by the Ministry of Agriculture and National Parks.

Israel Nature and Parks Authority, Dec. 21, 2022.<sup>117</sup>

## LEBANON

### Beginning of October 2022

#### Miniyeh-Danniyeh District, North Governorate, Lebanon

Near Tripoli, into a triangle of death by poaching for birds, CABS activists found the feathers, beaks and other remains of some fifty honey buzzards (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*, Appendix II), Eurasian golden orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European nightjars (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), European rollers (*Coracias garrulus*), corn crakes (*Crex crex*) and bee-eaters (family Meropidae).

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 7, 2022.<sup>118</sup>

### Beginning of October 2022

#### Nabi Osman and Jabboule, Baalbek-Hermel Governorate, Lebanon

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon and the Middle East Sustainable Hunting Center have dismantled 500 metres of nets, rescued a Eurasian golden oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 5 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine), a common cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), 2 garden warblers (*Sylvia borin*), 3 common chiffchaffs (*Phylloscopus collybita*), one willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), 2 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and 6 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). Many others were already dead.

Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, October 5, 2022.<sup>119</sup>



### October 26, 2022

#### Baalbek, Baalbek-Hermel Governorate, Lebanon. Border with Syria.

The Society for the Protection of Nature, the Middle East Sustainable Hunting Center and police dismantled several nets equipped with electronic decoys. Dozens of freshly captured European golden orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common cuckoos (*Cuculus canorus*), masked shrikes (*Lanius nubicus*) and other finches (family Fringillidae) were released back into the wild. The Beqaa Valley is a long-standing hot spot for bird poaching. A few weeks later, the same NGOs removed even more nets from the area.

Beqaa Valley lies between Mount Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. It has an altitude of 900 meters and covers a 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> area. It is a fertile agricultural region that grows cannabis and opium poppy and is located at the intersection of Beirut-Damascus road and crossroads with Syria. The area was under Syrian rule until 2005, and many Syrians found refuge here. Baalbek is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Ruins of Roman temples to Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus can be seen here.

Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, December 2, 2022.<sup>120</sup>





**Beginning of November 2022**  
**Keserwan District, Keserwan-Jbeil Governorate, Lebanon**

Whisky on the engine block, bonnet raised by firearms, lesser-spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*, Appendix II) hung up like drying laundry, aperitif with a dead black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), the staging was perfect but the blurring



of the large SUV's number plate did not prevent the police, guided by the NGOs SPNL (Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon) and MESHC (Middle East Sustainable Hunting Center) and the public, from unmasking the perpetrator. He has been summoned to appear before the military court. Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, November 4, 2022.<sup>121</sup>

**SYRIA**

**November 26, 2022**

**Near As-Suwayda, As-Suwayda Governorate, Syria**



The Fondacija za zaštitu ptica grabljivica (Foundation for the Protection of Birds of Prey - Serbia) released it at the end of the summer and the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) was shot at in Syria after flying and stopping for 2,000 km. It has a broken wing and refuses to eat. If it survives, the refuge for birds of prey in Lebanon is offering to take it in.

Fondacija za zaštitu ptica grabljivica, Nov. 27, 2022.<sup>122</sup>

**TÜRKIYE**

**Mid-October 2022**

**Çobanbey Border Post, Kilis Province, Türkiye. Border with Syria.**

Customs seized 900 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) captured in Türkiye and a net from a vehicle heading for Syria. They were released. The trafficker has received 2 fines totalling 1.173 million lire (63,000 US\$). International protection for goldfinches needs to be stepped up. For the time being, it is only listed in Appendix III of CITES in Ukraine.

Anadolu Agency, October 23, 2022; Ensonhaber, October 23, 2022.<sup>123</sup>



**Mid-December 2022**

**Seyhan, Adana Province, Türkiye**

The province's Public Security Department, alongside Nature and Animal Protection Service Officials, seized 20 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) from the home of Ali al-Diyab, a Syrian national. He was fined 26,000 lira (1,395 US\$) and the birds were released.

Cumhuriyet, December 12, 2022; AksAlser.com, December 26, 2022.<sup>124</sup>



**December 25, 2022**

**Çatalca, Istanbul Province, Türkiye**

Not long after a cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) was poached south of Harmanli (see page 165), another one has just been shot near Istanbul. This stems from the Cinereous Vulture program introducing more specimens into Central Europe, Anatolia and the Middle East. The cinereous vulture is a federator protected by authorities and loathed by the international poachers union. After flying over northern Greece, central Bulgaria and the Strandja mountain range straddling Bulgaria and Turkey, "Arda" was killed after 7 weeks of free flight. Bulgarian ornithologists were alerted by anomalies in its locator beacon and contacted their Turkish colleagues, who found it dead and wounded on the ground.

The Cinereous Vulture program began a year ago and is implemented by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, the Bulgarian foundation "Rewilding Rhodopes" and the Spanish NGO GREFA (Grupo de Rehabilitación de la Fauna Autóctona y su Hábitat). It aims to restore the cinereous vulture as a breeding species in the Bulgarian part of the Eastern Rhodopes. In mid-November, 14 vultures were transferred from Spain and released near Madjarovo, after having adapted to the area for nearly 6 months. Turkish vulture specialist Cansu Özca was appalled: "Many European countries, including Bulgaria, are leading conservation efforts to make the cinereous vulture a breeding species in their countries. In Türkiye, there are 4 vulture species. The cinereous vulture is the largest, with a wingspan of 3 meters. It is believed 150 to 200 pairs of cinereous vultures breed in Türkiye."

Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, December 28, 2022; Habertürk, Dec. 30, 2022.<sup>125</sup>

## NORTHERN EUROPE

### IRELAND

**Week of November 21, 2022**

**Kildare, County Kildare, Ireland**

It's the weekend's buzzard, a variable common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II). What could be nicer than shooting a buzzard on a day when you've got nothing to do?

Kildare Wildlife Rescue, November 24, 2022.<sup>126</sup>

**November 2022**

**Between Lough Ramor, County Cavan, and Lough Sheelin, County Westmeath, Ireland**



After being released in 2021, a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) was fatally poisoned by carrion sprayed with carbofuran, the latter of which has been banned in Ireland since 2010. Many hope that the male and female eagles released in 2020, which also frequent the county's lakes, will live to the age of 5, reach sexual maturity, mate and produce chicks so that the wild dream of reintroducing the species to Ireland becomes a reality.

The Irish Times, January 22, 2023.<sup>127</sup>

### LITHUANIA

**Mid-December 2022**

**Klaipeda, Klaipeda County, Lithuania**

A live crimson rosella (*Platycercus elegans*, Appendix II) is listed for sale online. Officials confiscate the parakeet and fine the seller 300 €.

Environmental Protection Department, December 19, 2022.<sup>128</sup>

### NORWAY

**Week of November 28, 2022**

**Viken County, Eastern Norway Region, Norway**



A 40-year-old man is fined 14,000 kroner (1,355 US\$) or sentenced to 14 days in prison if the fine is not paid. He had imported 6 neck feathers of a male grey junglefowl (*Gallus sonneratii*, Appendix II) via the UK Internet in June 2021, without taking into account the CITES Appendix II listing of the species native to India and banned without an import certificate. The gallinaceous neck feathers are sought after for tying salmon flies. CITES statistics show that between 1975 and 1999, 72,544 feathers were legally traded internationally. Between 2000 and 2010, this figure climbed to 273,620 feathers, reflecting a considerable increase in demand. A batch of 6 grey junglefowl neck feathers sells for between 10 US\$ and 15 US\$.

And yet, at the request of the CITES Animals Committee, a proposal to delete the listing of the grey junglefowl was presented to the CITES plenary conference in Bangkok in 2013 and to the disappointment of sport fishermen around the world rejected.



© Jo Esten Hafsmo / Miljødirektoratet

Grey junglefowl feathers for fishing flies, see "On the Trail" n°10 p.26.

Fiskeavisen, June 8, 2021 and December 1, 2022.<sup>129</sup>



© NYPL Digital Collection

### UNITED KINGDOM

**October 5, 2022**

**Norwich, Norfolk County, England, United Kingdom**



Matthew Stroud, a gamekeeper, managed to avoid prison and was instead sentenced to 200 hours of community service and £1,220 (1,320 US\$) in fines, damages and court costs.

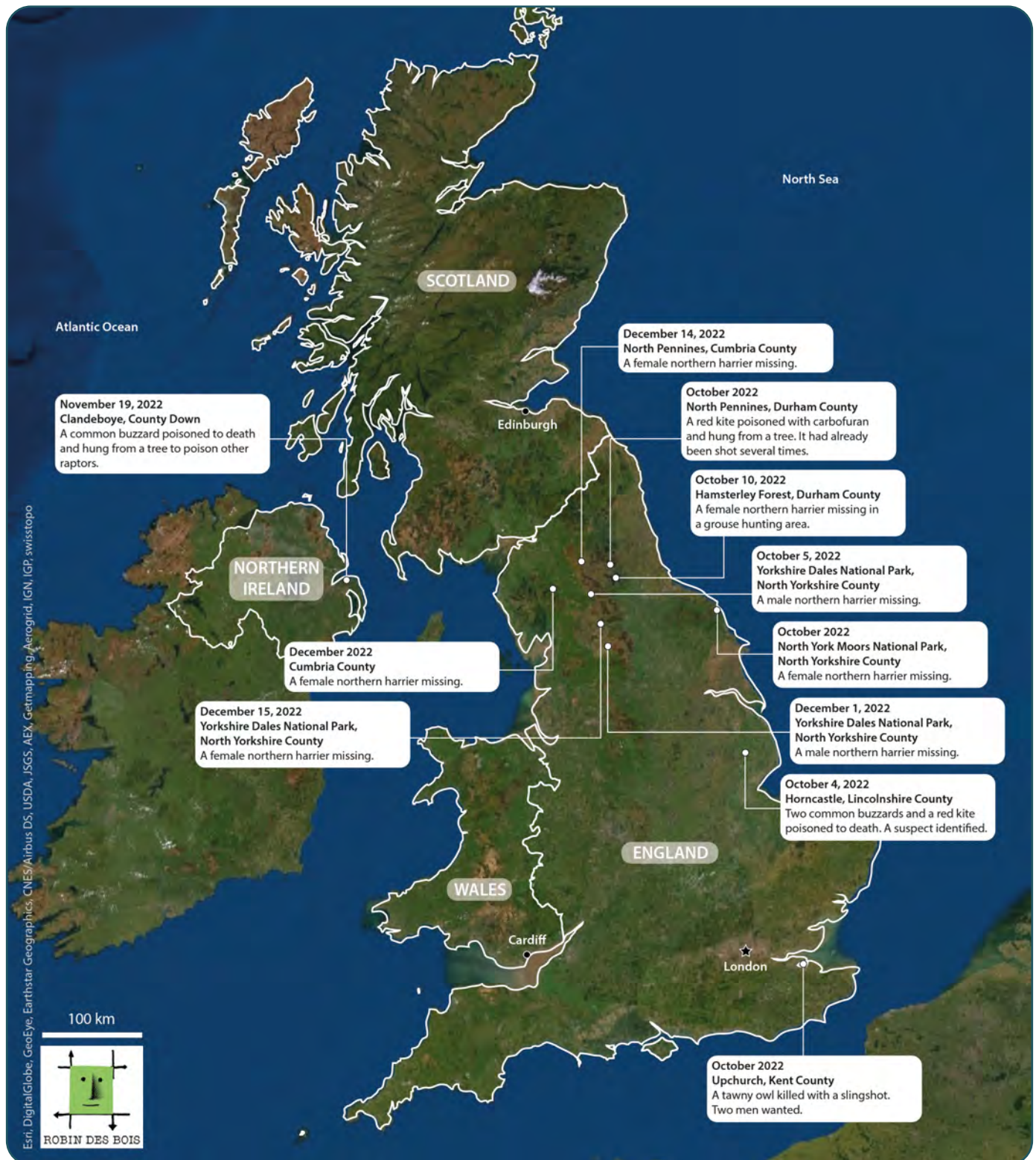


On Fengate Farm, a private hunting estate in Weeting, Stroud eliminated birds of prey so that customers could shoot as many farmed pheasants and red-legged partridges (*Alectoris rufa*) as possible. He acted under pressure from the hunting society's managers. His favourite weapons were strychnine – which he always kept in his ATV's glove compartment – as well as phosphine, a fumigant he carelessly placed in a shed exposed to winds. At his home, county police seized 4 dead common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II). Autopsies revealed very high levels of strychnine. On his cell phone, investigators uncovered photos of 5 dead buzzards and a northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II). Stroud has admitted his guilt.

Norfolk Constabulary, October 6, 2022.<sup>130</sup>



## United Kingdom. Poaching of raptors between October 1 and December 31, 2022



"Missing": bird with a GPS that stopped transmitting  
 7 northern harriers (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II)  
 3 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II)  
 2 red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II)  
 1 tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II)

Sources, see page 256

GERMANY

**Weeks of November 21 and December 14, 2022**

**Münster, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany**



Police are appealing for witnesses following the discovery of 3 dead peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) on the Münster television tower, 90 meters above ground. It turns out that the birds of prey had been poisoned with carbofuran. The insecticide has been banned since 2006. A complaint was lodged for breaches of the Animal Protection Act, the Federal Nature Conservation Act and the Chemicals Act.

Less than a month later, a pair of peregrine falcons poisoned with carbofuran was discovered again at the same location.

Münster Police, November 29 and December 16, 2022.<sup>133</sup>

**December 2, 2022**

**Hütschenhausen, Rhineland-Palatinate State, Germany**

A red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) was pierced by some projectile. The body was found between Landstuhler Straße and Weidenstraße. An appeal for witnesses has been launched to solve the mystery.

Hütschenhausen Local Community, December 5, 2022; Rhineland-Palatinate Police, December 7, 2022.<sup>134</sup>

**December 7, 2022**

**Lengerich, Lower Saxony State, Germany**



A farmer-hunter is caught red-handed severely mistreating a northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II). After pulling it out of a trap he set and baited with live pigeons, he hit it twice with a crowbar and twice on the rear bumper of his van. Why so much rage? "To protect the small wild mammals and my chickens", he replies.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, December 8, 2022.<sup>135</sup>



1 northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II)  
October 10, 2022. Hamsterley Forest, Durham County, England, United Kingdom



1 red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II)  
October 2022. North Pennines, Durham County, England, United Kingdom

**November 8, 2022**

**Amber Valley District, Derbyshire County, England, United Kingdom**

The police are searching for 2 men who were seen baiting mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) with bread. They obviously wanted to stuff them into a bag. They fled when approached by witnesses.

Derby Telegraph, November 9, 2022.<sup>131</sup>

**November 2022**

**Suffolk County, England, United Kingdom**

A young peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) has been set free in a secret location after a thief stole it from its nest. The bird was found at the thief's home in Lowestoft in June 2022 (see "On the Trail" no. 36 p.143) and learned to be exposed to living in the wild without being tainted by human activities and smells.

Eastern Daily Press, December 13, 2022; Suffolk Constabulary, December 13, 2022.<sup>132</sup>



## BELGIUM

### OPERATION THUNDER 2022

October 2022

#### Belgium

Customs seize a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) valued at over €1,000 (970 US\$).

Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, December 6, 2022.<sup>136</sup>

## FRANCE

### September through the beginning of November, 2022

#### Department of Pas-de-Calais, France

The body of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) shot with a firearm is discovered, marking the 8<sup>th</sup> bird of prey to be shot in the Department since September. Previous victims include a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and a short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*, Appendix II).

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, November 9, 2022.<sup>137</sup>

#### October 4, 2022

##### Nérac, Department of Lot-et-Garonne, France

A man was taken into custody. He was keeping parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except for 4 species) without a licence and was breeding dogs in excessive number. He is being investigated for concealed work, fraud, falsification of documents and possession of protected species without permit.

Sud Ouest, October 4, 2022.<sup>138</sup>

#### October 4 and 5, 2022

##### Poilly-lez-Gien, Department of Loiret, France

Search warrant at the home of a breeder of red-billed leiothrixes (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II) and harlequin ducks (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) suspected of tampering with the traceability of his birds.

La République du Centre, October 12, 2022.<sup>139</sup>

#### October 5, 2022

##### Le Rheu, Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, France

Rescue of a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) wounded in the left wing by shotgun pellets.

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, October 5, 2022.<sup>140</sup>

#### October 12, 2022

##### Vannes, Department of Morbihan, France

René Robio received a 3-month suspended prison sentence, a fine of 600 € (580 US\$), and was ordered to pay 1,000 € (970 US\$) in damages to ASPAS for poaching a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and possessing and using leghold traps.

ASPAS, spring 2023.<sup>141</sup>



#### October 13, 2022

##### Villevieille, Department of Gard, France

Arrest of a poacher who had lured with a decoy-bird and caught European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine).

Gendarmerie from Gard, October 14, 2022.<sup>142</sup>



#### October 14, 2022

##### Bourg-en-Bresse, Department of Ain, France

On September 2, 2020, Salah Bouzid, Housseyn Hamdi and Ayyoub Kebbab were caught capturing European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) with limesticks set up near watering holes. Though OFB officers caught them red-handed, they denied the offence. They claimed they were either jogging (in flip-flops) or fishing (without a rod). See "On the Trail" n°30 p.120.

Salah Bouzid received a 3-month suspended prison sentence while Housseyn Hamdi and Ayyoub Kebbab were hit with a 120-day fine of 10 € (i.e. €1,200 and 1,165 US\$). They must also compensate for damages endured by the France Nature Environnement and ASPAS.

France Nature Environnement Ain, October 31, 2022; Le Progrès, November 27, 2022; ASPAS, Spring 2023.<sup>143</sup>



#### October 22, 2022

##### Saint-Paul-la-Roche and Mayac, Department of Dordogne, France

Fourteen raptors, including a Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II), several barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), several common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), and several kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) were discovered by the French Biodiversity Agency and the gendarmerie in the home of 2 female British nationals. Due to avian flu, they were not seized. Only one of the 2 women was in possession of the proper permit to keep raptors. They will be prosecuted in particular for animal abuse.

Gendarmerie of Dordogne, November 6, 2022; South West, November 7, 2022.<sup>144</sup>



**October 24, 2022**

**Montpellier, Department of Hérault, France**

Mohamed Benramdane and Zaïd Yahiaoui were sentenced for trafficking in European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) on September 7, 2021 respectively to 300 day fines of 15 € (i.e. 5,310 US\$) and 18 months in prison, 12 of which were suspended with obligation to carry out work of general interest in an animal protection organisation. They have just been ordered to also pay jointly 1,000 € (970 US\$) in damages to ASPAS. ASPAS, Summer 2023.<sup>145</sup>



**October 31, 2022**

**Troyes, Department of Aube, France**

Conviction of Mr. El Minoud Guenani to a fine of 500 € (520 US\$) for birdlime poaching using live European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) as decoys. He must also pay 250 € in damages to ASPAS. ASPAS, Summer 2023.<sup>146</sup>



**November 3, 2022**

**Perpignan, Department of Pyrénées-Orientales, France**

Rivesaltes glue poacher sentenced to a suspended prison sentence of 3 months and a 300 € (300 US\$) fine (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.137). The GOR (Groupement Ornithologique du Roussillon) also petitioned for ecological damages and obtained 5,800 € in compensation. L'Indépendant, November 23, 2022.<sup>147</sup>



**November 15, 2022**

**Savenès, Department of Tarn-et-Garonne, France**

Nearly 40 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) were seized along with 83 cages and mist nests from the home of a 55 year-old Algerian national. Since October 2021, start date of the investigation, the suspect had been filmed capturing almost 100 goldfinches with live decoy birds, nets, as well as a smartphone that played bird song. He kept only the singing males, which he stuffed into his pockets, and released the others.

La Dépêche du Midi, November 17 and 18, 2022.<sup>148</sup>



**November 20, 2022**

**Saint-Michel-de-Saint-Geoirs, Department of Isère, France**

A golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) wounded by pellets lodged in its right wing had to be finished off on December 12.

LPO Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes has recorded 23 birds of prey shot or poisoned since the beginning of the year. Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, Dec. 5, 2022.<sup>149</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENCE / FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**November 30, 2022**

**Montpellier, Department of Hérault, France**

Caught red-handed in February 2022 with European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and other passerines in hedges and thickets (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.137), the man, a habitual offender in the neighbouring Gard Département, who was also assisted by his minor son, was sentenced to 18 months in prison with an immediate committal order.

French Biodiversity Agency, December 1, 2022.<sup>150</sup>



**November 2022**

**Montauban, Department of Tarn-et-Garonne, France**

Agents from the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) successfully identified the man who shot at night on June 14 a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I). The bird was taken to the national veterinary school in Toulouse where it had to be finished off. The employee of a pigeon control company claims to shooting the falcon mistakenly with his night vision rifle. The OFB believes that such a mistake is unacceptable on the part of a professional.

La Dépêche du Midi, November 23, 2022; Sentinelles de la nature, November 24, 2022.<sup>151</sup>

**End of December 2022**

**Verdon Gorge, Department of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and Var, France**



It was found at the edge of a river in Mercantour National Park, completely weakened, on September 24. After an emergency operation and 3 months of patient and intensive care, the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) injured by a shot finally found freedom in the company of 2 of its peers. The rehabilitation was not easy: it spent several weeks without being able to hold its head up because of the impact of the bullet in the back of its neck. It is one of the 22 birds of prey victims of illegal shooting counted by the LPO (League for the Protection of Birds) for the year 2022.

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux PACA, January 16, 2023.<sup>152</sup>



**December 31, 2022**

**Paris, France**

A bird market on Paris' Ile de la Cité finally closed. Every Sunday it attracted hawkers who sold European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) to onlookers (see "On the Trail" n°9 p.30), despite being just a short distance from the Préfecture de police de Paris.

City of Paris, September 26, 2022.<sup>153</sup>

**THE NETHERLANDS**

**November 19, 2022**

**Elspeet, Province of Gelderland, The Netherlands**

Death was a long time coming for the male parrot crossbill (*Loxia pytyopsittacus*) irreparably bound to a cursed glue-coated branch. Its mate is now in the hands of the specialists at "Ambulance Animale." It's not certain it'll survive. Parrot crossbills are rare in the Netherlands. They sometimes come down from the far north when the winters are harsh to find food or death. But beware! Lime is taking hold in the Netherlands. Omroep Gelderland, November 19, 2022.<sup>154</sup>



**SOUTHERN EUROPE**

**CROATIA**

**November 24, 2022**

**Croatia**

A glimmer of despair. The Kvarner islands in the northeast Adriatic are home to the last viable nucleus of griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) in Croatia. A few venture into northern Italy, others into the Slovenian Alps. This one, to its misfortune, headed south to historic nesting sites on the Croatian mainland and was fatally shot near Imotski, 260 km from the Kvarner Islands.

A glimmer of hope. A colony of griffon vultures is taking root atop Zagreb's skyscrapers.

Biom Association, November 29, 2022; Split-Dalmatia Police Department, November 29, 2022.<sup>155</sup>

**SPAIN**

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Valencia, Valencian Community, Spain**

Rescue of 5 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and 2 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) used as live decoys by the poacher. In very poor condition, they were transferred to the "La Granja del Saler" (Salerm Farm) care center with the goal of being released. Seprona (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) agents seized the ground net, cages, and other trapping accessories.

Seprona, October 8, 2022.<sup>156</sup>

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Cantalpino, Province of Salamanca, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain**



The Guardia Civil and foresters are pursuing 3 men. They found 11 dead birds among several adjacent fields, mostly red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II). An Antitoxin procedure confirmed that carbofuran was involved, which can kill any animal or human from contact or ingestion. Diario de Castilla y León, October 3, 2022.<sup>157</sup>

**October 16, 2022**

**Valencia, Valencian Community, Spain**

Arrest of a poacher by the Seprona. Seizure of 7 dead and 12 live birds, common linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), which were immediately released. Seizure of a clap net and electronic bird calls.

Seprona, October 17, 2022.<sup>158</sup>

**October 24, 2022**

**Autonomous Communities of Valencia and Catalonia, Spain**

Seizure by the Guardia Civil at 10 active trapping sites of 450 lime sticks, 9 mist nets, 80 trap cages, dozens of dead song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), warblers (genus *Sylvia*), and one live scops owl (*Otus scops*, Appendix II).

Guardia Civil, October 25, 2022.<sup>159</sup>

**November 1 to 22, 2022**

**Cádiz, Province of Cádiz, Autonomous Community of Andalusia and Strait of Gibraltar, Spain**



Seizure by Seprona and environmental protection officers of 9 clap nets, 143 snap traps, a marten trap, and 3 mist nets. Dismantling of 2 aviaries and release of 68 goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 58 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 6 Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 7 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 5 serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 4 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 9 sparrows (genus *Passer*) and 5 sardinian warblers (*Currucula melanocephala*). They were all wearing false breeding rings.

La Voz de Cádiz, November 16, 2022.<sup>160</sup>

**End of November 2022**

**Tenerife South-Reina Sofia International Airport, Province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain**

There were 119 birds - Tenerife blue chaffinches (*Fringilla teydea*), bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*), and Atlantic canaries (*Serinus canaria*) - in the luggage of 4 passengers living on the islands and flying to the European mainland. A gang of endemic bird traffickers is on the bad way. The 118 surviving birds were handed over to the "La Tahonilla" refuge for examination. Many are in poor condition.

Radio Televisión Canaria, November 29, 2022.<sup>161</sup>

**End of November 2022**

**Pamplona, Chartered Community of Navarre, Spain**

Man charged. He was using traditional methods to capture European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine).

Diario de Navarra, November 30, 2022.<sup>162</sup>

**December 5, 2022**

**Terrassa, Province of Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain**



Forestry officers were stacking out an olive grove where 44 spring-loaded traps were set. This Monday, the poacher came to collect his harvest: 14 birds, European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), black redstarts (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), finches (genus *Fringilla*), stonechats (genus *Saxicola*) and sardinian warblers (*Sylvia melanocephala*). The poacher was arrested.

ElCaso.cat, December 7, 2022.<sup>163</sup>

**GREECE**

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Region of Crete, Greece**



Several animals including a griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) were transferred to the NGO Anima's veterinary clinic.

Anima, October 4, 2022.<sup>164</sup>

**October 8, 2022**

**Region of Crete, Greece**



The Natural History Museum of Crete sent a poisoned griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) to the NGO Anima for treatment. Ten days later, the bird had fully recovered and was set free, equipped with a GPS transmitter.

Anima, October 20, 2022.<sup>165</sup>



**End of October 2022**

**Rhodes Island, Region of South Aegean, and Chios Island, Region of North Aegean, Greece**



A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and a steppe buzzard (*Buteo buteo vulpinus*, Appendix II) were sent to the NGO Anima after being trapped by limestick. They had been attracted by the smaller birds caught in the trap. Steppe buzzards, slightly smaller than common buzzards, are distinguishable by their red tails with dark stripes.

Anima, October 25, 2022.<sup>166</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Chios Island, Region of North Aegean, Greece**



A total of 541 nets and other traps, along with 12 electronic decoys, are removed. The traps targeted European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), thrushes (genus *Turdus*) and common quails (*Coturnix coturnix*).

Dasarxeio.com, November 4, 2022.<sup>167</sup>

**November 8, 2022**

**Chania Regional Unit, Region of Crete, Greece**

A peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) seriously wounded by a bullet to the left wing was transferred to the NGO Anima's refuge. It cannot be released.

ANIMA, November 18, 2022.<sup>168</sup>



**Sunday, November 27, 2022**

**Perama, Region of Attica, Greece**

A raid by game wardens, forestry officers, and veterinarians caused panic among bird sellers who thought they were protected by customary law at the Schisto Bazaar. 370 songbirds were seized, including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), tits (family Paridae), and black-headed buntings (*Emberiza melanocephala*). They were entrusted to the Anima care centre, which, after examination, gradually released the most willing specimens, taking account of the weather conditions. The operation was commissioned and acclaimed by the Ministry of the Environment.

Anima, November 27 and 30 and December 5, 2022; Ministry of Environment and Energy, November 30, 2022.<sup>169</sup>



**November 30, 2022**

**Santorini Island, Region of South Aegean, Greece**

Again at the request of the Ministry of the Environment, a brigade of game wardens from the mainland combed the island, seizing and destroying illegal nets near small bodies of water designed to attract passing birds. "Santorini, a place loved and welcomed by thousands of people from the 4 corners of the world, cannot and must not be inhospitable to migratory or endemic birds," declared the Deputy Minister of the Environment after the action.

Ministry of the Environment and Energy, November 30, 2022.<sup>170</sup>



**December 4, 2022**

**Perama and Korydallós, Region of Attica, Greece**

Game Guard Body agents seized traps and European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) at the bazaar in Schisto. The same day, bird lovers brought to Anima shelter a European sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) trapped on a lime-twig. Penalties for poaching are insufficient and advertisements for poached songbirds abound on the Internet.

ANIMA, December 5, 2022.<sup>171</sup>



**December 28, 2022**

**Skala, Region of Peloponnese, Greece**

A female marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II) was shot and wounded. It was initially taken to the wildlife NGO Tulipa goulimy but later transferred to the Anima refuge.

Anima, January 5, 2023; Zoosos.gr, January 5, 2023.<sup>172</sup>

**December 31, 2022**

**Phthiotis Regional Unit, Region of Central Greece, Greece**

A cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) has been fatally poisoned by a pesticide. Born at Prague Zoo, it had been released at Silven in Bulgaria.

ANIMA, January 3, 2023; Vulture Conservation Foundation, January 19, 2023.<sup>173</sup>



## ITALY

**October 20, 2022**

**La Spezia, Province of La Spezia, Region of Liguria, Italy**

A hermit ibis (*Geronticus eremita*, Appendix I) was traveling from Germany to Tuscany when one day, it was found dead on the ground in the Marinella plain. Police and the public suspected a sharp shooter from Castelnuovo. A rifle and pellets were seized from his home, which matched the pellets on the hermit ibis. However, his lawyer, a black robe from La Spezia, stressed that the shot could not be traced to a particular rifle model. In short, the fatal shooting could have resulted from thousands or even millions of culprits. The case of the hermit ibis (1.25 to 1.35 meter wingspan) was subsequently dismissed.

La Nazione, October 20, 2022.<sup>174</sup>

**November 7, 2022**

**Piano di Sorrento, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy**

Killing common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) is not just a pleasure for some, it's also a source of income. A common buzzard displayed on polystyrene stone with a 5-foot wingspan can sell for 100 euros, and sometimes much more.

A common buzzard at Piano di Sorrento almost saw that fate. After it was shot, it was, fortunately, only wounded, and flew away again after treatment.

Il Mattino, November 7, 2022.<sup>175</sup>

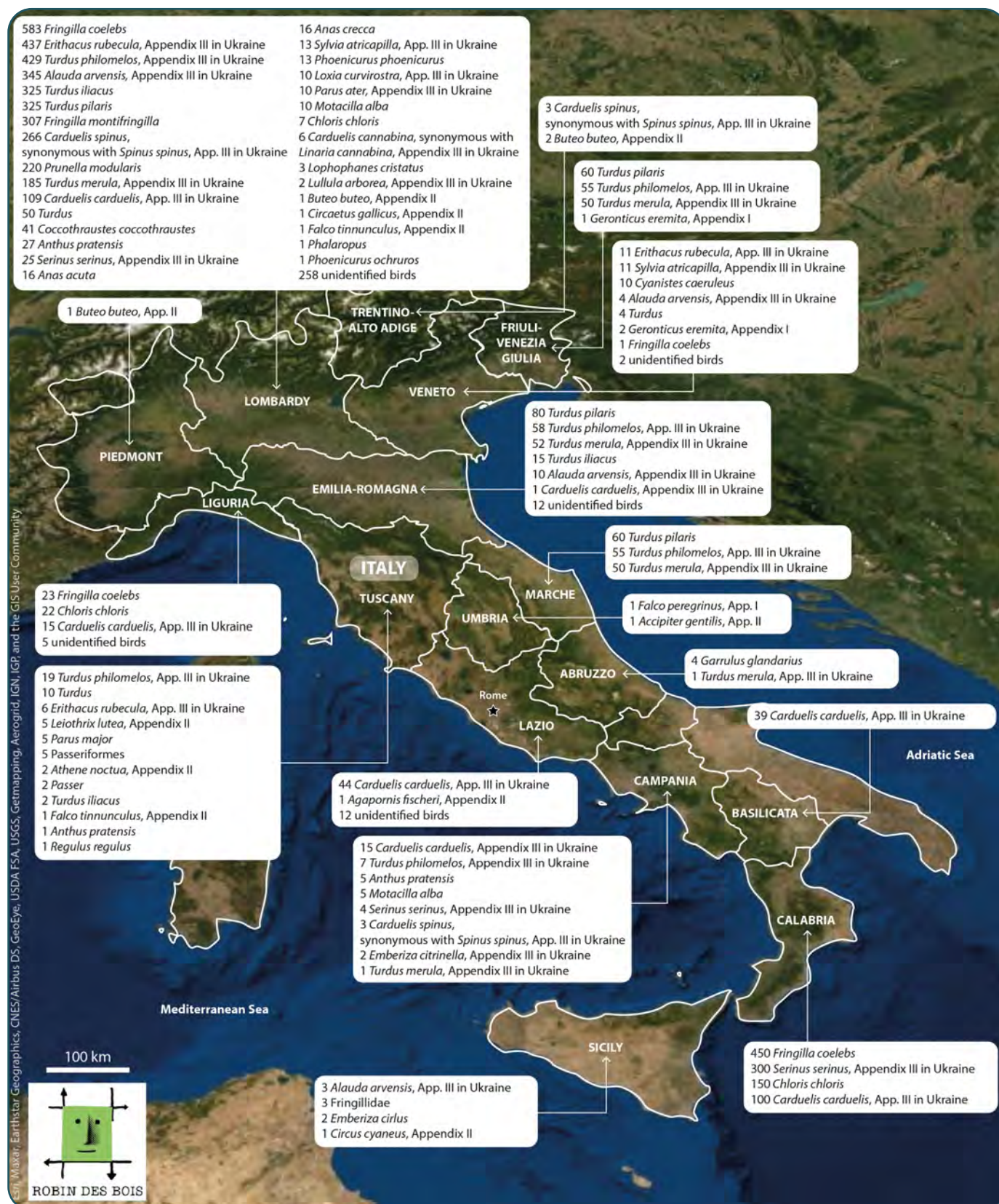
**November 24, 2022**

**Paspardo, Province of Brescia, Region of Lombardy, Italy**

Early in the morning, members of the Wild Animal Rescue Centre released a juvenile male peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), which was shot a few months earlier. It took off in the direction of Concarena (2,549 meters above sea level).

Corriere Brescia, November 24, 2022.<sup>176</sup>

## Italy. Poaching and seizures of birds (5,936) between October 1 and December 31, 2022



Sources, see page 256. Details on next page.





1 northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II)  
November 2022. Metropolitan City of Rome  
Capital, Region of Lazio



2 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine). October 1-15, 2022. Zone, Treviso  
Bresciano and Preseglie, Province of Brescia,  
Region of Lombardy

### Birds poached or seized - Map details

623 song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
525 fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*)  
454 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
362 Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
342 redwings (*Turdus iliacus*)  
339 common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
329 serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
323 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
307 bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*)  
272 Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
220 dunnocks (*Prunella modularis*)  
179 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*)  
64 thrushes (genus *Turdus*)  
41 hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)  
33 meadow pipits (*Anthus pratensis*)  
24 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine),  
16 northern pintails (*Anas acuta*)  
16 Eurasian teals (*Anas crecca*)  
15 white wagtails (*Motacilla alba*)  
13 common redstarts (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)  
10 red crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*, Appendix III in Ukraine)

10 coal tits (*Parus ater*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
10 Eurasian blue tits (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)  
6 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
5 red-billed leiothrixes (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II)  
5 great tits (*Parus major*)  
5 passerines (order Passeriformes)  
4 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II)  
4 Eurasian jays (*Garrulus glandarius*)  
3 hermit ibis (*Geronticus eremita*, Appendix I)  
3 common reed buntings (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)  
3 European crested tits (*Lophophanes cristatus*)  
3 finches (family Fringillidae)  
2 northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II)  
2 little owls (*Athene noctua*, Appendix II)  
2 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II)  
2 wood larks (*Lullula arborea*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
2 yellowhammers (*Emberiza citrinella*, Appendix III in Ukraine)  
2 ciril buntings (*Emberiza cirilus*)  
2 sparrows (genus *Passer*)  
1,057 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*)  
1 peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I)  
1 northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II)  
1 short-toed eagle (*Circus gallicus*, Appendix II)  
1 Fischer's lovebird (*Agapornis fischeri*, Appendix II)  
1 Eurasian hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)  
1 phalarope (genus *Phalaropus*)  
1 goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)  
1 black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)  
289 unidentified birds

## MALTA

### Beginning of October 2022

#### Kercem and Xewkija, Gozo Region, and Birzebbuga, South Eastern Region, Malta



Joint operations by the police and CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter).

- On the shores of Lake San Raflu, a guy had set up shop with a large net and live decoys. The lake is home to waterfowl. Knowing he'd been spotted, he quickly packed up and was identified. He will now stand trial.

- Near Xewkija, the police intervened to remove a cage with a Eurasian siskin (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), which was being used as a decoy. It will soon be released.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, Oct. 8, 2022.<sup>177</sup>

### October 3, 2022

#### Comino Island, Gozo Region, Malta

Another osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II) victim of poachers.

BirdLife Malta, October 6, 2022.<sup>178</sup>

### October 8, 2022

#### Rabat, Northern Region, Malta

A honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II) migrating south was shot down while passing over the island. It was fitted with a GPS. It was found in a private garden riddled with lead pellets

BirdLife Malta, October 14, 2022.<sup>179</sup>

### REPEATED OFFENCE

#### Mid-October 2022

##### Malta

Five bird trappers were convicted after being caught red-handed. Authorities seized 10 clap-nets and 39 live birds, common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), and European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*). Two of the poachers were repeat offenders.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 19, 2022.<sup>180</sup>



### October 20 to December 5, 2022

#### Gozo Island, Malta

The Environmental Protection Service and the Gozo police catch 30 poachers red-handed and seize 45 clap nets. 368 birds are released from the nets, mainly European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), thrushes (genus *Turdus*), and other Fringillidae. CABS accuses the Maltese government of circumventing the European Birds Directive by inducting a so-called research program on migratory birds and giving hunters and poachers the bogus status of "scientists."

MaltaToday.<sup>181</sup>



## November 23, 2022

### Valletta, South Eastern Region, Malta



Jesmond Zammit was sentenced to pay a fine 1,200 € or 1,195 US\$ and having his trapping licence revoked during 2 years. This close advisor to Foreign Affairs Minister Ian Borg was filmed trapping finches (family Fringillidae) and was arrested on March 26, 2021, by the anti-poaching unit with a 20-meter long clap-net.

The Shift, November 23, 2022.<sup>182</sup>

## Week of November 28, 2022

### Valletta, South Eastern Region, Malta



In March 2022, 5 men poached European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and other songbirds. They were sentenced to pay 1,000 € to 1,500 € (995 US\$ to 1,490 US\$) in fines and relinquish their hunting and trapping licences for 2 years.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, December 2, 2022.<sup>183</sup>

## SERBIA

### October 24, 2022

#### Rijeka Crnojevića, Nisava District, Serbia

Two men, ages 42 and 50, were arrested for poaching. Authorities found bird calls, nets and 33 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) locked in 8 cages. The birds were released.

Juzne Vesti, October 25, 2022; Telegraf, October 25, 2022.<sup>184</sup>

## End of November 2022

### Selenc, Southern Backa District, Serbia



Five white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I), 2 red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), and 3 dogs are found dead, their heads covered with earth and convulsing. Carbofuran acts on the central nervous system. One of the dogs may have been used as bait.

Poisoning in Serbia, see "On the Trail" n°35 p.143 and n°36 p.155.

BirdLife Serbia, November 22, 2022; Danas, November 23, 2022.<sup>185</sup>



**December 28, 2022**

**Skupljen, Mačva District, Serbia**

A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) is still alive, but with an open fracture in its left leg, after being trapped.



It was first transferred to a district veterinary surgeon and then to the Belgrade veterinary clinic 70 km away. The buzzard had its left leg amputated and is now learning to walk on the ground and perch with just one leg. A few hours after the crime, M. N. (54) was arrested and charged with animal mistreatment, harassment, killing a wild animal and destroying national heritage. Six pigeons were used as bait in this incident. The Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia explains, "A buzzard eats several thousand small rodents in a year. It is a valuable auxiliary for agriculture".

Kurir, January 12, 2023; Flight for Survival, February 13, 2023.<sup>186</sup>



**EASTERN EUROPE**

**BULGARIA**

**Mid-December 2022**

**Harmanli, Haskovo Province, Bulgaria**

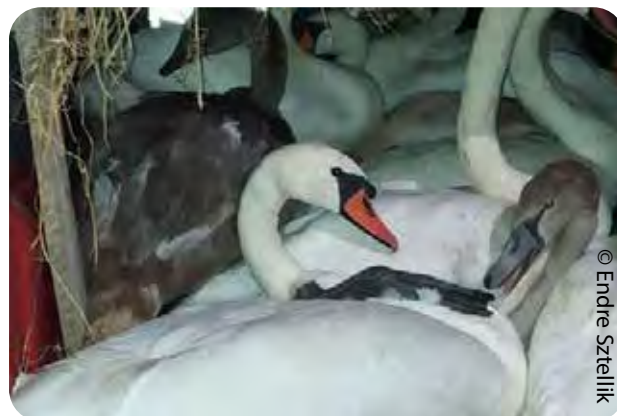
A female cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) didn't survive long in the wild. It was previously rescued alongside 13 other cinereous vultures after spending 6 months in an aviary, traveling between Madzharovo and Ivaylovgrad. At the end of November, the 14 vultures were released, but the female was soon found dead south of Harmanli, 35 km from its take-off point. It fell victim to night poachers who used headlamps and thermal scopes, and was found with bloody feathers strewn across the forest and vehicle tracks on the paths.

Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, December 14, 2022.<sup>187</sup>

**HUNGARY**

**October 4, 2022**

**Hercegszántó, Bács-Kiskun County, Hungary.  
Border with Croatia and Serbia.**



The 2 Italians were transporting 20 mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) in their vehicle. In the evening, they were transferred to the Szeged wildlife park. The value of each specimen is estimated at 25,000 forints (57 US\$).

Direction of the Danube-Dráva National Park, October 5, 2022.<sup>188</sup>

**October 28, 2022**

**Gödöllő, Pest County, Hungary**

The complex investigation by the National Police, Environmental Crimes and Misdemeanors Subdivision, began in 2019 when the management of Duna-Ipoly National Park lodged a complaint about the plundering of its natural resources. Northern goshawk chicks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) were regularly stolen from nests 20 to 30 meters up in the treetops. By mapping and recording the locations of the vandalism, 3 men and one woman were caught red-handed. The decryption of the suspects' cell phones and computers led to 9 further arrests and the uncovering of an exceptional organised gang. Falconry enthusiasts, the raiders raised birds of prey and trained them to hunt rabbits, wild ducks, and foxes in low-flying, rural and semi-urban areas. At their homes, police seized 8 northern goshawks, 2 Harris's hawks (*Parabuteo unicinctus*, Appendix II) and 2 spotted eagle-owls (*Bubo africanus*, Appendix II) alive, and one northern goshawk, a Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), a marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II), and a stuffed Eurasian golden oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*, Appendix III in Ukraine). The investigation is now complete. It has been forwarded to the district prosecutor. Charges are pending against the 13 Hungarian citizens.

Hungarian Police, October 28, 2022.<sup>189</sup>

**November 9, 2022**  
**Szeged, Csongrád-Csanád County, Hungary**



A foreigner turns up at the Szeged border post. He has nothing to declare, but in a box a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) is hidden. The date was May 29, 2022. Today he is charged with violating the Nature Conservation Act. The certificate accompanying the parrot did not match the band it was wearing on its leg. Szegedma.hu, November 9, 2022.<sup>190</sup>

**November 16, 2022**  
**Nagykorös, Pest County, Hungary**

A foreign worker buys an air rifle and a slingshot with steel balls. While out and about with friends, he spots a beautiful bird perched on a pole. The car stops. He rolled down the window and shot the European roller (*Coracias garrulus*), a protected species valued at 500,000 forints (1,210 US\$), from the back seat. Hunters observed the scene and requested police intervention. The Prosecution Service of Hungary, November 16, 2022.<sup>191</sup>



**December 5, 2022**  
**Kisvárd, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, Hungary**



Vulture friends remember that one of their protégés, a cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II), was shot near Hortobágy Park (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.93). Its body was found in the thickets on the banks of the Tisza River, a tributary of the Danube, thanks to the nose of Carlo, a Malinois shepherd mobilized by the Hungarian Society for the Protection of Birds.

The police investigation has just led to the dismantling of a plot against raptors. A professional hunter-beater from Kisvárd and 2 game wardens acting at the request of the president of the Durbák hunting society were tasked with liquidating birds of prey in the area suspected of taking farmed mallards and pheasants and reducing the attractiveness of the hunting business.

In addition to the cinereous vulture pausing in northeastern Hungary, near the border with Ukraine, at least 4 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) were fatally poached. Given the determination of all sides to shoot birds of prey in eastern Europe, the European Union project "The Bright Future for Black [Cinereous] Vulture" is in trouble.

PannonEagle LIFE Project, December 5, 2022; Hungarian Police, December 5, 2022.<sup>192</sup>

**December 10, 2022**  
**Hegyeshalom Border Post, Győr-Ménfőcsanak County, Hungary. Border with Austria.**



When agents searched a 31-year-old Bulgarian's vehicle at a border crossing at 5 p.m., they discovered 15 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine). They were kept in 3 small cages and one of them had died. The contraband is worth an estimated 375,000 forints, or 950 US\$. This is further evidence of intra-European goldfinch trafficking, and motivation for individuals who support the species' listing in CITES, Appendix II. Hungarian Police, December 12, 2022.<sup>193</sup>



**December 15, 2022**

**Fejér County, Hungary**

Two Romanians driving back from Galati (on the Black Sea, over 1,000 km away) had 600 frozen fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*) inside their trailer. They planned to drive the birds to Rome, Italy, where they would be cooked for the festive season. The total journey would have been 2,200 km, crossing at least 3 European Union borders without any certificate of origin or veterinary certificate. Hungarian customs estimate the total value at 15 million forints, or 38,250 US\$, and 60 US\$ per bird.

Fieldfares are distinguishable from other thrush species in that their plumage is more colorful (brown, grey, black and white) and they tend to nest in colonies rather than separate pairs. They typically nest in northern Europe and spend autumn and winter in western and southern Europe. They live and migrate in groups of up to several hundred individuals, and welcome other thrush species into their midst.

Index.hu, December 16, 2022; National Tax and Customs Administration of Hungary, December 19, 2022.<sup>194</sup>



**POLAND**

**November 2, 2022**

**Dołhobyczów, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.**

A grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) is confiscated from a Ukrainian citizen entering Poland. The bird was entrusted to the Zamość Zoo. Tax Administration Chamber in Lublin, November 3, 2022.<sup>195</sup>

**November 22, 2022**

**Medyka Border Post, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.**

A red lory (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II) held in a cage was confiscated from a woman in Ukraine and sent to the Zamosc zoological garden.

Tax Administration Chamber in Rzeszów, November 22, 2022.<sup>196</sup>

**ROMANIA**

**October 19, 2022**

**Batogu, Braila County, Romania**

In the hunting reserve, the 72-year-old Italian shot 68 Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), exceeding the authorized quota by 43 specimens. The 68 dead birds were seized. The gun and ammunition were seized as evidence.

Obiectiv Vocea Brailei, October 21, 2022.<sup>197</sup>

**RUSSIA**

**October 6, 2022**

**Petrovskaya, Krasnodar Krai, Russia**

The wing of an imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix I) was riddled with pellets. It was frozen to the side of the road, and people driving by noticed it and called for help. The vets treated it. The shot was removed. The imperial eagle is recovering. There are no fractures. It may be released.

The Imperial Eagle's Russian name translates literally as "cemetery eagle." It is thought to have originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as Russian naturalists exploring the Aral Sea region and Kazakhstan frequently observed it perched near burial mounds and mausoleums.

Petrovskaya Animal Disease Control Station, October 7, 2022.<sup>198</sup>

**October 14, 2022**

**Moscow Federal City, Russia**

Three barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) escape the slavery of the street. They were in the hands of an itinerant photographer, although their natural habitats are in the Kaliningrad Oblast and Crimea. Since the beginning of 2022, 32 animals, including 25 raptors, have been seized and rescued from photographic prostitution on the streets of Moscow. Only 15% of those rescued have been released. The overwhelming majority, because of mutilation or dependence on the human species, are kept in zoos or other places where they are deprived of their freedom.

MIR24, October 14, 2022.<sup>199</sup>

**October 22, 2022**

**Verkhneursky District, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia**

Police seized 27 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) in self-made cages at a private individual's home. The investigation is ongoing. Is he a collector or a high-flying trafficker?

Chelyabinsk Oblast Police, October 22, 2022.<sup>200</sup>

**October 28, 2022**  
**Moscow Federal City**



A long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) was seized from street photographers and entrusted to a local wildlife rehabilitation centre. Moscow Municipal Economic Complex, October 28, 2022.<sup>201</sup>

**November 3, 2022**  
**Moscow Federal City, Russia**

Photographers were offering passers-by the chance to have their portrait taken with a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) near the zoo. The owl was seized and handed over to the wildlife rehabilitation center.

Moscow Municipal Economic Complex, November 3, 2022.<sup>202</sup>

**November 11, 2022**  
**Moscow Federal City, Russia**

A tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) on a leash was confiscated from photographers on Sadovaya-Samotechnaya street. Tawny owls are the most commonly used species for this type of activity. Moscow Municipal Economic Complex, November 11, 2022.<sup>203</sup>

**Mid-November 2022**  
**Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Kamchatka Krai, Russia**

In November 2021, 3 men who specialized in capturing gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I) and intended to sell them to a Middle Eastern national were arrested. "On the Trail" n°34 p.177 reported on this. They have just been given suspended prison sentences ranging from 30 to 42 months.

BezFormata, November 18, 2022; Kamchatskoye Vremya, November 19, 2022.<sup>204</sup>



**November 20, 2022**  
**Moscow Federal City, Russia**

In the evening, 2 long-eared owls (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) were taken from street photographers: one near the Oleg Tabakov theatre, the other near the Nations theatre. They were transferred to the local wildlife rehabilitation centre.

Moscow Municipal Economic Complex, November 21, 2022.<sup>205</sup>

**December 2022**  
**Moscow Federal City, Russia**



A long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) and a short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*, Appendix II) are saved from photographers. They will receive "all necessary assistance" at the Municipal Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre.

Moscow Municipal Economic Complex, December 25, 2022.<sup>206</sup>



**December 12, 2022**

**Altai Krai, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.**

The FSB issued a statement highlighting that peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) are listed in Appendix I of CITES, and that a 34-year-old poacher kept 5 live specimens in his home in hopes of selling them to a sheikh in Saudi Arabia. He read online that a falcon had been sold for 173,000 US\$ at an auction there. On the Russian black market, a peregrine falcon, depending on age and sex, sells for between 5,000–50,000 US\$. This marks the first ever falcon poaching report in the krai. The falcons were handed over to the NGO “Noah’s Ark” in accordance with the court order.

Vesti Altai, December 12, 2022; Amitel, December 13, 2022; Federal Service of the National Guard Troops of the Russian Federation (FSB), December 13, 2022; Izvestia Mordovii, December 23, 2022.<sup>207</sup>

**December 28, 2022**

**Kamchatka Krai, Russia**



The FSB confiscated 5 gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I) in a parking lot. They were in 2 cars, swaddled in 2 Leroy Merlin boxes. Soon after, 2 falcons and 5 others, locked in a cellar, were seized from a private home. Three individuals were arrested, including one foreign national. The freshly captured birds of prey were released after a veterinary examination.

Komsomolskaya Pravda, December 28, 2022; Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB), December 28, 2022.<sup>208</sup>

**CZECHIA**

**October 13, 2022**

**Břeclav, South Moravian Region, Czechia. Border with Austria.**

A 73-year-old man who injected carbofuran into pigeon eggs and carcasses was handed a 3-year suspended prison sentence. He placed the items around his loft and henhouse “with the intention of destroying parasitic animals”.

Two red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II), 2 red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) and 3 beech martens (*Martes foina*) paid the price. During a May 2022 search, the CSO (České společnosti ornitologické, Czech Ornithological Society) canine brigade unearthed a bag of carbofuran, syringes and poisoned eggs. Poisoning wild (or domestic) animals using banned agricultural toxins is very active in the Czech Republic, as in most European Union countries.



Between January 1 and December 21, 2022, many active baits were spotted and neutralized thanks to a single canine brigade, led by Klára Hlubocká, containing 2 Chesapeake Bay retrievers, Victory and Irbis. The CSO extracted the corpses of 21 land mammals and 36 poisoned birds from the natural environment to avoid a cascade of necrophagous animals. The main victims were white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I), marsh harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II), common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), common otters (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I), foxes, dogs and domestic cats. CSO canine brigade, see “On the Trail” n°32 p.195 and n°37 p.147.

České společnosti ornitologické, December 21, 2022.<sup>209</sup>



Victory and Irbis are trained. They mark the baits and move away immediately to avoid inhaling toxic fumes and physical contact.

**OCEANIA**

**NEW ZEALAND**

**November 10, 2022**

**Dunedin, Otago Region, New Zealand**

Four northern royal albatross (*Diomedea sanfordi*) eggs have mysteriously disappeared from the Taiaroa Head Colony. There is not the slightest trace of an animal that could have eaten the eggs.

The northern royal albatrosses are endangered. They are vulnerable to extreme weather and anthropogenic threats such as fishing and hunting. They mate for life and only breed in New Zealand. The rest of their time is spent off the coast of South America.

Department of Conservation, November 14, 2022.<sup>210</sup>

## AMERICA

### BOLIVIA

**November 16, 2022**

**Department of La Paz, Bolivia**

A man was selling, via social networks, exotic animals that are forbidden to be present and traded in Bolivia except in approved zoos. In his basket were snakes and Guichenot's giant geckos (*Rhacodactylus ciliatus*) from New Caledonia. The Pofoma intervened. The trafficker has been charged with public health offences.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, November 16, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### COLOMBIA

**Mid-December 2022**

**Medellín, Department of Antioquia, Colombia**

In a house, Gelma (Grupo Especial para la Lucha contra el Maltrato Animal) seized a Meso-American slider (*Trachemys venusta*), a red-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), a matamata (*Chelus fimbriatus*, Appendix II with Guyana's reservation), a python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix I or II) and a stuffed balloonfish (family Tetraodontidae).

Agencia de Periodismo Investigativo, December 17, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 26, 2022**

**State of Texas, United States of America**

Jason Lee Wagner was indicted on charges of organised reptile trafficking between Mexico and the United States via the US Postal Service and other courier services. The USFWS is leading the investigation.

Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, November 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**November 1, 2022**

**Riverton, State of Wyoming, United States of America**

Arrest in a motel of a 33-year-old mother possessing pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II), corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*), "horned" frogs (genus *Ceratophrys*), geckos (infraorder Gekkota), a dog and a cat. She was accompanied by her 3 unclothed and bruised children aged between 10 and 4. The geckos and about 30 knotted snakes in poor condition were stuffed into pillow cases in her car. A python probably pregnant was in the hotel room's bathtub. The reptiles and amphibians were taken to a pet store where they will be sold, meanwhile the cat and dog were taken to an animal shelter and the children put in the custody of family services.

Cowboy State Daily, November 2, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**November 18, 2022**

**State of Florida, United States of America**



Chun Ku was sentenced to one year and one day in prison followed by 2 years of supervised release and fined 20,000 US\$ for his involvement in reptile trafficking from the United States. Ku, under the guise of Dynasty Reptiles in Miami, was a member of an organised gang that smuggle green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), and other CITES-protected species with an aggregate retail market value of over 5 million US\$ to Asia between 2014 and 2021.

Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, December 2022.<sup>5</sup>

### MEXICO

**October 7, 2022**

**Santiago de Querétaro, State of Querétaro, Mexico**

Seizure of a Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II) and a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II). They were about to be sold at a market.

Profepa, October 7, 2022.<sup>6</sup>



## ASIA

### INDIA

**Thursday, October 6, 2022**

**Mumbai International Airport, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India**



Major coup by the DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence). Seizure of 665 exotic animals in a vehicle leaving the airport's cargo area, including pancake tortoises (*Malacochersus tornieri*, Appendix I), Cape leopard turtles (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II), Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), Komodo monitors (*Varanus komodoensis*, Appendix I), tegus (*Salvator* spp., Appendix II), green grass lizards (*Takydromus smaragdinus*), leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*), iguanas (family Iguanidae), and alligators (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II). 117 were already dead. The wildlife cargo came from Malaysia. The total value is estimated at 30 million rupees, or nearly 370,000 US\$. The forestry services, the WCCB and the NGO RAWW (Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare) took part in the species inventory. On Sunday night, the survivors were transferred to a facility specializing in the rescue and rehabilitation of wild animals at Moti Khavdi in Gujarat, 800 km from Mumbai. The fact remains, however, that all these immigrants cannot be released back into the Indian wild. They will spend their lives in zoos, at the risk of being reintroduced into the underworld. The reptiles were concealed in a shipment of aquarium fish. Immanuel Raja, director of Zion Aquatic, the consignee, was arrested. He received 900,000 rupees (11,000 US\$) in commission from a certain Lobo, who was also arrested. The 2 suspects were released on bail. Their lawyers argued that the value of the contraband was overestimated. Ministry of Finance, October 8, 2022; Hindustan Times, October 9, 2022; Mid-Day, October 10, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**November 11 and December 4 and 6, 2022**

**Imphal East District, State of Manipur, and Jorabat, Kamrup District, State of Assam, India**



The interception of 70 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), 8 tegus (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II, endemic to South America) and 6 mangrove snakes (*Boiga dendrophila*, endemic to Southeast Asia) from Argentina, Indonesia and Malaysia confirms the Indian bourgeoisie's interest in exotic animals. They are no longer pets, but rather, objects of curiosity. Justice struggles with such complexities. The Indian Wildlife Protection Act applies exclusively to endemic animals born in India, while zoos and other interim care facilities must contend with veterinary and dietary difficulties, unknown behaviors and climatic incompatibilities. The animals are slowly dying, despite the help of reptile experts in Kolkata. This tragic event turned into a burlesque. Under the NGO People for Animals' responsibility, along with New Delhi's and the CZA's approval (Central Zoo Authority), the survivors were driven to a zoo in Jamnagar, Gujarat, over 3,000 km from Imphal. However, Assam police halted the convoy in Jorabat and seized the poor reptiles, now dying of cold and malnutrition, for a second time. The "smuggler" was released on bail.

Imphal Free Press, December 7, 2022; E-Pao!, December 6, 2022; Guwahati Plus, December 7, 2022; The Sangai Express, December 7, 2022; The Sentinel, December 7, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

### PHILIPPINES

**October 4, 2022**

**Pasay, National Capital Region, Philippines**



Conviction of the consignee of "Lego toys," which were in fact 41 reptiles with an estimated total value of 280,000 pesos (5,790 US\$), to 7 months' imprisonment and a fine of 125,000 pesos (2,130 US\$). The parcel came from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (see "On the Trail" n°33 p. 186).

Bureau of Customs, October 17, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

## VIET NAM

**Mid-December 2022**

**Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam**

Continuing its “places of worship” mission, ENV released a clouded monitor (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I) and yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II). They were part of the church’s “furniture” and the parish priest agreed to let them go.

ENV, December 17, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

## EUROPE

### FRANCE

**October 31, 2022**

**Châteauroux, Department of Indre, France**

Sentencing of a young man to fines totalling 3,000 € or 3,300 US\$ for the selling and mistreatment of exotic animals. In September 2020, a search of his residence in Issoudun lead to the discovery of turtles including red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) in a state of decay, geckos (infra-order Gekkota), 2 snakes which had died from skin infections, and dead scorpions in a plastic container. The OFB investigation started in 2019 after some of his ads were detected on Facebook and Leboncoin. He admitted to all the facts except selling a vine snake (genus *Ahaetulla*). La Nouvelle République, October 31, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

facebook



### POLAND

**December 2022**

**Wroclaw, Lower Silesian Voivodeship, Poland**



Police knocked on the door of a woman offering exotic leather goods for sale on the Internet and seized 2 handbags and a wallet made of alligator (*Alligator* spp., Appendix I or II) and python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) skins.

Lower Silesia Police, December 23, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## SERBIA

**October 27, 2022**

**Smederevo, Podunavlje District, Serbia**



Ljubiša Vasić, nicknamed “The Fringe” or “Serbia’s First Hairdressing Prize,” is back in the news. Regularly accused by the press and the justice system of employing “exotic” dancers in his Mihajlovac tavern and selling sexual services to customers, it now turns out that he also sells exotic animals. At his home, 4 reticulated pythons (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), a Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II), 4 Nile monitors (*Varanus niloticus*, Appendix II), a savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II), an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) and a marmoset (*Callitrichidae*, Appendix I or II) were seized. On his Instagram account, he sells southern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys volans*) for 300 € (290 US\$).

Northern flying squirrels are native to North America and highly sought-after as pets, see “On the Trail” n°31 p.109.

Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia, October 27, 2022; Kurir, October 28, 2022; Telegraf, October 31, 2022.<sup>13</sup>



## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

**November 25, 2022**

**Sidney, State of New South Wales, Australia**

Zheyuan Qiu, at a time when sanctions for wildlife crimes and the plundering of natural resources are being stepped up in his home country, throughout Asia, and in Africa, is enjoying the benevolence and almost apologetic treatment of the Australian justice system. For attempting to smuggle 17 parcels containing 48 endemic reptiles to Hong Kong and Taiwan, he was sentenced to 5 years in prison in February 2021 (see “On the Trail” n°28 p.38 and n°32 p.199). The Court of Appeal has just reduced his sentence to 3 years and 10 months, with the possibility of parole after 2 years. Qiu justified himself by saying that his family needed money in China and he apologized for having committed acts of cruelty towards animals. The Court of Appeal considered Qiu’s sentence to be “unreasonable or plainly unjust.” Dungog Chronicle (with Australian Associated Press), Nov. 25, 2022.<sup>14</sup>





# TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES

## Most important seizures of the quarter:

2040 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)  
763 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II)



Gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). Photo markc666

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**November 2022**

**Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa**  
Seizure of a tortoise with a hole drilled in its carapace to insert a kind of lead. It is believed to be a leopard tortoise (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II). Bloemfontein SPCA, November 22, 2022; The South African, November 26, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### MADAGASCAR

**October 27, 2022**

**Ivato, Analamanga Region, Madagascar**  
Authorities arrested 2 suspects looking to sell 10 juvenile tortoises (*Astrochelys* spp. or *Pyxis* spp., Appendix I) for 30,000 ariarys (7 US\$), or 0.70 US\$ per turtle. L'Express de Madagascar, October 28, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## SUDAN

**Mid-October 2022**

**Khartoum International Airport, Khartoum State, Sudan**



Consecutive seizures of 24 and 25 tortoises including radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) bound for Cairo, Egypt. Hadramaout Net, October 19, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## UNION OF THE COMOROS

**October 23, 2022**

**Prince Said Ibrahim International Airport, Hahaya, Grande Comore Island, Union of the Comoros**

Seizure of 23 Madagascar radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) in a cooler transported by an Egyptian woman with the complicity of a Chinese man and a Madagascan. The first 2 were taken into custody, while the latter was placed under judicial supervision.

Habari Za Comores, October 23, 2022; National Gendarmerie of Comoros, October 28, 2022; Al-Watwan, October 31, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**November 1, 2022**

**Mbachile, Grande Comore Island, Union of the Comoros**

Have the coasts of the archipelago become a base for trafficking in radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I)? The large island is 250 nautical miles from the Comoros. A shipment of 130 turtles, 5 of which were dead, was discovered at the top of the beach. They were collected by the Institut National de Recherche pour l'Agriculture, la Pêche et l'Environnement (INRAPE). They were in poor health and dehydrated. Three have died since their arrival at INRAPE. Contacts are being made with Madagascar to consider the best survival option for the turtles from this seizure and those from October 23 (see above).

Al-Watwan, November 4, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

## NORTHERN AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Mid-October 2022**

**John C. and Mariana Jones/Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area, State of Florida, United States of America**

A softshell turtle caught by 2 fishermen was released and the fishermen were cited to appear in court. Florida has 3 softshell turtle species, all of which are listed in CITES Appendix II since February 23, 2023: the Florida softshell turtle (*Apalone ferox*), smooth softshell turtle (*Apalone mutica*), and spiny softshell turtle (*Apalone spinifera*).

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, October 20, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**Mid-October 2022**

**Port St. Lucie, State of Florida, United States of America**

Two people cast 10 lines in a pond known to house softshell turtles (*Apalone* spp., Appendix II since February 23, 2023). By the time the agents caught up with them, they had already managed to catch 2 specimens. The capture of soft-shelled turtles has been totally banned in Florida since August 26, 2021, due to a bunyavirus epidemic whose effects on turtle populations are still poorly understood. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, October 20, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**November 30, 2022 and May 16, 2023**

**Saint Augustine and Saint Petersburg, State of Florida, United States of America**

Two 5-year-old Galapagos giant tortoises (*Chelonoidis niger*, Appendix I), worth 10,000 US\$ each, were stolen from the St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park. Two people managed to hide them in a baby stroller and to leave the park unnoticed.

A few months later, police arrive at the home of 46-year-old Joshua McCarty-Thomas. He is suspected of selling precious books via eBay, which he had allegedly stolen in Florida and Indiana. During the search, officers find one of the tortoises in his freezer and the other alive in the yard. They are identified by their microchips. McCarty-Thomas is taken into custody.

FOX 35 Orlando, December 7, 2022; Tampa Bay Times, May 16, 2023.<sup>8</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**

**Columbia County, State of Florida, United States of America**

An agent at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission received a call for assistance from his colleagues at the sheriff's office. They had just arrested a car thief and discovered a gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II) during the raid.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, December 8, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**Beginning of December 2022**

**St. Lucie County, State of Florida, United States of America**

Following a tip-off, authorities arrested a man who cast 4 lines with bait in a lake to capture softshell turtles (*Apalone* spp., Appendix II since February 23, 2023). He was already known to law enforcement for similar acts.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, December 8, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

## LATIN AMERICA

### CHILE

**Mid-October 2022**

**Colchane, Tamarugal Province, Tarapacá Region, Chile**

Two bags filled with 50 river turtle eggs (*Podocnemis* spp, Appendix II) are discovered by customs on a bus coming from Bolivia. The SAG (Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero, Department of Agriculture and Livestock) deemed the eggs no longer viable and ordered their destruction.

elboliviano.net, October 12, 2022.<sup>11</sup>



## ECUADOR

**November 16, 2022**

**Quito, Pichincha Province, Ecuador**

Four years' imprisonment in the first instance for S.L. and L.L. They were in possession of 2 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) and were trying to sell them. The species is exotic in the country. It is notably present in Brazil. Over the past 10 months, 677 specimens of protected species including boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), South American river turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II), armadillos (family Dasypodidae), sea cucumbers, and birds have been seized. Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, November 16, 2022.<sup>12</sup>



## PERU

**November 15, 2022**

**District of La Molina, Province of Lima, Department of Lima, Peru**

Following a citizen's report, the Serfor (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) of Lima and district agents visited the Las Lagunas leisure club and seized 3 yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II). Serfor, November 15, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

## ASIA

### BANGLADESH

**November 3, 2022**

**Natore, Natore District, Rajshahi Division, Bangladesh**

An Indian narrow-headed softshell turtle (*Chitra indica*, Appendix II) weighing 23 kg wrapped in plastic was seized during the inspection of a bus bound for Dhaka.

United News of Bangladesh, November 4, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

## CHINA

**October 21, 2022**

**Gongbei Border Post, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.**

Seizure in the concealed compartment of a coach of 2 razor-back musk turtles (*Sternotherus carinatus*, Appendix II) and 2,015 juvenile red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), a species considered invasive by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), China and almost all other countries. When they first colonized the world, they originated in the southeastern United States. Gongbei Customs, November 17, 2022.<sup>15</sup>



**November 17, 2022**

**Gongbei Border Post, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macao.**



A passenger disembarks with 2 takeaway cups containing a baby turtle in his luggage, and 8 more in his handbag.

This was repeated 3 minutes later with 2 cups and 7 turtles in the handbag. Ten days later, customs experts clearly identified the species. They were leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) from Central, Southern, and East Africa. Guangdong Customs, December 8, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**November 29, 2022**

**Jinan, Shandong Province, China**

Four Chinese stripe-necked turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China) were found inside a package from abroad said to contain "children's food".

Chinese Customs, December 1, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

## INDIA

### OPERATION WILEP

**October 3, 2022**

**Sahibganj, Sahibganj District, State of Jharkhand, India**

Railway police confiscate a turtle at a railway station before it could be stewed. Per the Railway Protection Force, "one can measure the greatness and the moral progress of a nation by looking at how it treats its animals."

Railway Protection Force Eastern Railway, October 4, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**October 14 and 16, 2022**

**Rajghat and Jalasoharia, Balasore District, State of Odisha, India**

- On October 14, Mantu Maiti, aged 52, was intercepted in a bus on the Rajaghat bypass on the NH-60 route. He was carrying 40 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) to West Bengal.

- On October 17, 111 turtles were seized from Gouranga Kati Mandal's house. He too wanted to sell them at a good price in West Bengal.

KalingaTV, October 14, 2022; The Pioneer, October 16, 2022; The Print, October 17, 2022; Orissa Post, October 18, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

**October 18, 2022**

**Ballia, Bahraich District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Authorities rescue 15 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) destined for death onboard express train 13138 (running every Tuesday from Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, to Kolkata, West Bengal).

Railway Protection Force - Varanasi Division, October 19, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

#### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**October 18, 2022**

**Varvand, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India**

The Savant family, Dada, Nana, Bhimrao, and Shankar, were about to cook and eat turtles. They were prevented from doing so by foresters who had just been informed by a phone call.

The Indian Express, October 21, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

**October 23, 2022**

**Maroda Bhilai, Durg District, State of Chhattisgarh, India**

Arrest of 6 people, aged 22 to 65. They wanted to sacrifice the next day an Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) for the Diwali festival. They wanted to attract wealth and prosperity. The group was checked in an SUV. The turtle had been bought in Nagpur in Maharashtra.

The Print, October 24, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

**October 31, 2022**

**Gorakhpur, Gorakhpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

The Railway Protection Force seizes 21 live turtles, most likely Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I).

Railway Protection Force, October 31, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

#### **OPERATION WILEP**

**November 19, 2022**

**Katihar, Katihar District, State of Bihar, India**

Following a tipoff, RPF agents were waiting for the Garib Nawaz Express to pull into the station. There they discovered 7 burlap bags containing 165 turtles, probably Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). The smuggler(s) had disappeared, but the reptiles were handed to the Forestry Department. The Garib Nawaz Express connects Kishanganj in Bihar with Ajmer in Rajasthan in 39 hours.

Railway Protection Force, November 19, 2022; Lagatar News, November 20, 2022.<sup>24</sup>

#### **OPERATION WILEP**

**November 23, 2022**

**Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Nagar Railway Station, Chandauli District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

RPF feds, alongside State railway police officers, came across 4 abandoned bags containing 62 turtles – Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) based on the photos –, which were trying to survive.

Railway Protection Force East Central Railway, November 24, 2022.<sup>25</sup>

**Night of Wednesday 23 to Thursday 24 November 2022**

**Kalichak, Malda District, State of West Bengal, India**

Police made a surprise nighttime visit to a private home and seized bags filled with calipee, 270 kg in all, bound for Bangladesh 130 km away. Calipea is the light-yellow fatty, cartilaginous material that surrounds the lower shell of soft-shelled turtles. It is said to have curative and aphrodisiac properties, and is used in “turtle soups.” It sells for 115 /kg on the international market. According to the WCCB, calipea often crosses the border as dried bark.

Calipee, see “On the Trail” n°20 p.25, n°26 p.24, n°31 p.151 and p.152 and n°34 p.189.

Hindustan Times, November 27, 2022.<sup>26</sup>

#### **REPEATED OFFENCE**

**November 24, 2022**

**Indore, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Seizure of 14 turtles, Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) and Indian roofed turtle (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I). The real sellers and the fake buyers (undercover police officers) had agreed on a total price of 20,000 rupees (240 US\$). The 2 sellers claim to have found the turtles in a roadside box. They are in police custody for 15 days. Naidunia, November 24, 2022; The Free Press Journal, November 25, 2022.<sup>27</sup>

**November 28 and December 1, 2022**

**Lakhimpur Kheri District; Madhotanda, Pilibhit District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

A man is arrested by the STF with 155 juvenile freshwater turtles. Neeraj Dixit presented himself as a courier responsible for transporting a consignment from one place to another. He was originally from Bihar and had come from Nepal. The police are trying to find out more about the ringleaders. The turtles were released into the Gomati River in Uttar Pradesh, 115 km from Lakhimpur Kheri.

There are 16 species of freshwater turtle in Nepal, including red-crowned roofed turtles (*Batagur kachuga*, Appendix I), tricarinate hill turtles (*Melanochelys tricarinata*, Appendix I), Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I), Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), Indian peacock softshell turtles (*Nilssonina hurum*, Appendix I), crowned river turtles (*Hardella thurjii*, Appendix II), Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II), Indian narrow-headed softshell turtles (*Chitra indica*, Appendix II), and Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II).

Newsroom Odisha, November 30, 2022; The Times of India, December 2, 2022.<sup>28</sup>



## OPERATION WILEP

December 5, 2022

State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The Railway Protection Force intercepted a consignment of 90 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) aboard the Yog Nagari Rishikesh Express from Udaipur (Rajasthan) to Rishikesh (Uttarakhand). No arrests were made, as is often the case with train trafficking. Either the cargo was traveling alone or the trafficker(s) fled at the sight of uniforms.

Indian Police, December 5, 2022; Railway Protection Force, December 7, 2022.<sup>29</sup>



December 12, 2022

Surroundings of Bagnan, Howrah District, West Bengal State, India

In a joint operation by the WCCB and the Forest Department, 13 live Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) and a trafficker are intercepted.

WCCB, December 13, 2022.<sup>30</sup>

December 12, 2022

Borivali, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India



A 33-year-old man was arrested for carrying 20 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) worth an estimated 350,000 rupees, or 214 US\$ per specimen.

The Free Press Journal, December 13, 2022; Hindustan Times, December 14, 2022.<sup>31</sup>

December 14, 2022

Siliguri, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

A man driving a motorcycle with a turtle as a passenger got into an accident. The turtle fell and freed itself from the crate or bag, and remained unharmed. Witnesses picked it up and handed it over to forestry officials. Whether the driver was a trafficker or transporter, he learned at the end of his route that his hostage or package had run off.

Hindustan Times, December 14, 2022.<sup>32</sup>

December 19, 2022

Paralakhemundi, Gajapati District, State of Odisha, India

A man leaving the district fishery warden's office with his arms full was approached by locals. He was leaving with some 20 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). It's an open secret in Paralakhemundi that anti-poaching officials are involved in turtle capture and trafficking. The turtles were handed over to forestry officers, who declined to comment on this matter. They merely said that they will take the necessary legal measures against the suspects. The man by whom this minor corruption scandal was uncovered took off on his motorbike. Villagers revealed to the local press that fishery wardens also sell fish and fingerlings.

Odisha Bhaskar, December 19, 2022; Odisha TV, December 19, 2022.<sup>33</sup>

December 21, 2022

Bahjoi, Sambhal District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Officials seized around 40 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I). The 2 suspects claimed they capture in the district and sell in other States.

Outlook India, December 21, 2022; Asian News International, December 22, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

December 27, 2022

Dineshpur, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Juvenile Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) were found in 6 bags. They were worth 10,000 rupees/kg or 122 US\$/kg; 284 kg or 34,650 US\$. Three male suspects, one of whom escaped, used to collect the turtles from Etah and Mainpuri in Uttar Pradesh and sell them in their district 250 km away.

Daily News Post India, December 28, 2022; Hindustan Times, December 28, 2022.<sup>35</sup>

**December 29, 2022**  
**Barauni, Begusarai District, State of Bihar, India**



On the Godda-Asansol Express, 27 suspected Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonia gangetica*, Appendix I) were seized from the baggage car.  
Argus News, December 29, 2022.<sup>36</sup>

**December 29, 2022**  
**Kamarpukur, Hooghly District, State of West Bengal, India**



A truck was loaded with rice and 1,000 turtles, most if not all of them Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). Three individuals were arrested. The truck came from Uttar Pradesh, over 1000 km away.

Ei Samay, December 30, 2022; Asianet News, December 31, 2022.<sup>37</sup>

## VIET NAM

**October 2022**  
**Buon Ma Thuot, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam**

Thanks to the insistence and expertise of ENV volunteers, 20 invasive and banned Reeves' turtles (*Mauremys reevesii*, Appendix III in China) and 25 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) were seized from an aquarium fish dealer.  
ENV, October 26, 2022.<sup>38</sup>

**October 11, 2022**  
**Ha Giang Province, Viet Nam**

Two keel-backed turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II) were up for sale on the side of the road. Worse, they were hanging from an umbrella on a wire. They should be released back into their natural habitat.  
ENV, October 12, 2022.<sup>39</sup>

**November 17-18, 2022**  
**Huong Tho, Thua Thien Hue Province, Viet Nam**



Fine of 6 million dongs (240 US\$) for the operator of a restaurant where 11 live giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II) and one dead muntjac (genus *Muntiacus*) had been seized.  
Báo Thừa Thiên Huế, November 19, 2022.<sup>40</sup>

**December 9, 2022**  
**Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

A yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) was attracting attention at a coffee shop. The Forest Protection Department picked it up and took it to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Center.  
ENV, December 9, 2022.<sup>41</sup>

## REPEATED OFFENCE

**December 12, 2022**  
**Dien Hong, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam**

Vu Truong Thi was arrested at 9:25 p.m. on a bridge. He admitted to buying the 75 big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I) he was transporting in Laos, over 150 km away.  
Bao Nghe An, December 13, 2022.<sup>42</sup>

**December 26, 2022**  
**Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

Monks at the Thien Vien Pho Hien Buddhist temple transferred a yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) and a giant Asian pond turtle (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II) that worshippers had bought from street vendors and left there to the Cu Chi rescue centre.  
ENV, December 26, 2022.<sup>43</sup>



## EUROPE

### GERMANY

**December 29, 2022**

**Weeze International Airport, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany. Border with the Netherlands.**

A Ryanair flight from Marrakech had a surprise in store for crew and several passengers who, in the centre aisle and under their seats, caught a glimpse of a small creature just a few centimetres across. Fortunately, it wasn't a tarantula, but a 2 to 3-month-old Greek tortoise (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II). No passenger claimed ownership. German Customs, January 2, 2023; Rheinische Post, January 2 and 6, 2023.<sup>44</sup>



### SPAIN

**November 21, 2022**

**Palma de Mallorca International Airport, Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands, Spain**

The police, called to the rescue by airport employees, found 2 turtles in a bag. Their "owner," having been denied boarding with her animals, preferred to leave the premises without them, but she was nevertheless identified. The suspected Horsfield's tortoises (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II) were handed over to the Balearic Islands wildlife centre.

Turtle seizures in the Balearic Islands, see "On the Trail" n°15 p.118, n°22 p.25, n°29 p.136, n°33 p.195 and n°34 p.191.

Diario de Mallorca, November 26, 2022.<sup>45</sup>

### HUNGARY

**October 12, 2022**

**Szeged, Csongrád-Csanád County, Hungary**

The district prosecutor starts proceedings against foreigners who on June 6, 21 and 29 entered the Röszke border crossing (border with Serbia) concealing Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II).

The Prosecution Service of Hungary, October 12, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

## ITALY

**Mid-October 2022**

**San Donà di Piave, Metropolitan City of Venice, Region of Veneto, Italy**



Venice CITES carabinieri recover 12 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), 2 males, 1 female, and 9 juveniles, from garbage cans. They were entrusted to the San Canzian d'Isonzo refuge. VeneziaToday, October 20, 2022.<sup>47</sup>

**November 2, 2022**

**Metropolitan City of Rome, Region of Lazio, Italy**

In a concrete squat littered with garbage and occupied for years by immigrants, the remains of some forty land tortoises were discovered by Marco Doria, Rome's ex-environmental delegate. A supermarket cart was used as a barbecue. As a reminder, there are 3 species of wild land tortoises in Italy: Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II), and marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II).

In April, 7 of these turtles were tortured in the Calimera Park, where Romans abandon large numbers of red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) that have become too cumbersome.

Il Corriere della Città, November 2, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

**November 30, 2022**

**Catania, Metropolitan City of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy**

Inside a garage and tire store, officials intercepted several animals protected under the law, including 4 turtles. The store operator was breaching hazardous waste management rules and exacerbating pollution. The country's 2 most heavily trafficked species are Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II).

lasiciliaweb, December 2, 2022.<sup>49</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Nocera Inferiore, Province of Salerno,**  
**Region of Campania, Italy**



A Scafati resident received an 8-month suspended prison sentence for selling tortoises (*Testudinidae*, Appendix I or II) over the Internet. Officials seized 28 specimens from his home.

L'Occhio di Salerno, December 13, 2022; Le Cronache, December 22, 2022.<sup>50</sup>

**OPERATION SARDEGNA MERIDIONALE**  
**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**End of December 2022**

**Molentargius Pond, Metropolitan City of**  
**Cagliari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy**

Authorities seized 3 live marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II), 3 live Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and 135 dead common starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). They arrested 3 suspects who were already known to law enforcement for identical offences and handling stolen goods.

The 1400-hectare wetland, separated from the sea by a dune belt, is listed in the Ramsar inventory. However, it has been degraded by sewage, industrial waste and urbanization.

Sky TG24, December 29, 2022.<sup>51</sup>

**SERBIA**

**December 23, 2022**

**Indija, Srem District, Serbia**

A man known as D. B. (36) was arrested in possession of 59.9 grams of a powdery substance believed to be amphetamine, 10.8 grams of a dried plant substance believed to be marijuana, and 6 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II).

Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, December 23, 2022.<sup>52</sup>

## SNAKES

**AFRICA**

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**November 25, 2022**

**North West Province, South Africa**

The Johannesburg veterinary clinic received 3 South African pythons (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II) resulting from a joint operation by SAPS and the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The 2



owners were convicted in January 2022. This event serves as further evidence of python trafficking for commercial and breeding purposes.

National Council of SPCAs, November 25, 2022; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, November 30, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**AMERICA**

**ECUADOR**

**November 21, 2022**

**Quito, Pichincha Province, Ecuador**

Delis Jadira is fined 1,700 US\$. She was "unknowingly" transporting an adult boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) between Latacunga and Quito, 100 km. She admits only to having "at the request of a friend of her daughter" transported a package without knowing the contents and without telling the law who the recipient was. She was stopped at a roadside checkpoint in Quitumbe, 30 km from Quito.

Diario Expreso (with EFE), November 21, 2022.<sup>2</sup>





## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 4, 2022**

**Albany, State of New York, United States of America**

Calvin Bautista, 26, has been charged with smuggling 3 Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) hidden in his pants between Canada and the United States. He was arrested at the Port Champlain Entry on July 15, 2018.

U.S. Attorney's Office - Northern District of New York, October 4, 2022; Detroit Legal News, October 7, 2022; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, November 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## ASIA

### INDIA

**October 16, 2022**

**Phansidewa, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India**

It is the superlative seizure, an absolute and dubious record. A man on a motorcycle on expressway 27 was arrested at 1 p.m. while he was transporting more than 2 kg of crystal snake venom estimated by the federal WCCB at more than 3 million US\$ in a glass jar labelled "Cobra SP, Red Dragon, Made in France Code No: 6097" and indeed deemed to have been fraudulently imported into India from France via Bangladesh with the final destination China via Nepal.

The Telegraph (India), October 17, 2022; WCCB, October 17, 2022.<sup>4</sup>



© Bengal Forest Department

**October 30 and November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**Kawal, Mancherial District, and Mirzapur, Nizamabad District, State of Telangana, India**

- A python (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) which had just feasted on a sheep after crossing a fence was prevented from leaving again. It got tangled in the barbed wire. Too bloated to sneak away, it was noticed by the shepherd's wife and a few men from the village rushed to kill it and try to extract its prey alive. But the operation ended in a double failure with the death of the python and the death of the sheep. When Poshanna went to the forestry services to ask for compensation for his lost sheep, he learned that he was liable to a fine or a prison sentence for having killed in conspiracy a specimen specially protected by federal law and an international convention.

- Another python wandering in Mirzapur was killed by locals with sticks.

The Times of India, November 3, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**November 13, 2022**

**Bileisarda, Balangir District, State of Odisha, India**

Bira Biswal, a charmer and also an alleged snake rescuer, was arrested for removing the fangs of an Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) with nail pliers, a feat he had bragged about via the Internet. When he happened to be asked to remove a cobra or a python from a home, he tortured them instead of releasing them into the forest.

Odisha Bytes, November 13, 2022; The New Indian Express, November 14, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**November 22, 2022**

**Gumgaon, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Ramesh Vitthal Barapatre was transporting a brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) on his motorbike and did not know that he was on the foresters' radar. The snake and the motorcycle were seized and Barapatre is behind bars. The intervention was led by Nagpur Chief Conservator of Forests, his deputy, Deputy Conservator of Forests Umred and officers Wade, Tawle, Jadhav, Shende, Gitey, Chavan and Tadam.

The Hitavada, November 23, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**November 23, 2022**  
**Kalibadi, Dakshin Dinajpur District, State of West Bengal, India**



Seizure of 2.14 kg of crystallised snake venom. 2.14 kg, once again with a “Made in France” origin “guaranteed” by an engraved metal plate attached to the lid of the cup. The value is estimated at 170 million rupees, or around 2 million US\$. Wrapped in a black plastic bag, the cup was hidden under a culvert. The Hindu BusinessLine is astonished by the “Made in France” label and wonder.



“The “Made in France” tag for apparel can give a high to any fashion aficionado. But can a “Made in France” tag for snake venom give a kick to some in India? Yes, it seems”, answers the Hindu BusinessLine. The mystery of the Red Dragon, Made in France jars, filled with snake venom persists. Its first appearance in “On the Trail” dates back to September 2014 near the border with Bhutan. The Red Dragon Origin France appeared again with its cobra or presumed cobra (*Naja* spp., Appendix II) venom in June 2015 (see “On the Trail” n°9 p.17), in September 2015 (see “On the Trail” n°10 p.19), in September 2016 (see

“On the Trail” n°14 p.22), in February 2019 (see “On the Trail” n°24 p.25), in November 2020 (see “On the Trail” n°31 p.156), in December 2020 (see “On the Trail” n°31 p.157), in February 2021 (see “On the Trail” n°32 p.213), in September 2021 (see “On the Trail” n°34 p.196), in February 2022 (see “On the Trail” n°35 p.161) and in September 2022 (see “On the Trail” n°37 p.164). The supply chain spans Bangladesh, India (particularly West Bengal), Bhutan, Nepal and China. In Calcutta, Bombay and other megacities, during Diwali festival, Valentine’s Day and the festive season, doses of powdered dried venom sold for up to 31,000 rupees (500 US\$) in 2013. In 2015, the scientific press (Indian Journal of Mental Health) expressed concern about the abusive consumption of snake venom at rave-parties as a psychotropic substance. Other sources say that snake venom is used in medicines for the treatment of thrombosis, cancer and hypertension. Analysis of a previous seizure confirmed the presence of traces of cobra, Russell’s viper (*Daboia russelii*, Appendix III in 12 Asian countries) and Indian saw-scaled viper (*Echis carinatus*) venom mixed in a neutral compound. According to the second-in-command of the BSF (Border Security Force), smuggling of liquid, dry and gelatinous venoms has been on the increase since 2017. The BSF seized around 7 kg of suspected venom in northern West Bengal in 2017 and around 8 kg of venom in 2021.

Border Security Force North Bengal, November 24, 2022; The Hindu BusinessLine, November 27, 2022; Vande Bharat TV, November 27, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**November 28, 2022**  
**Kozhikode, Kozhikode District, State of Kerala, India**

Suresh usurped the official title of snake catcher, a useful profession which consists of keeping venomous or non-venomous snakes away from inhabited places and, invited to a training session for nursing students, during his speech he brandished an Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) and kept its head close to the microphone. Some members of the audience reported his excesses and gave video testimony to the forest police. Suresh was charged with exhibiting a snake, mistreating animals and failing to report possession of wild animals dangerous to public safety. Earlier this year, Vava Suresh was hospitalized after being bitten by an Indian cobra he was trying to capture in a house in Kottayam district.

The Hindu, November 30, 2022.<sup>9</sup>



## Beginning of December 2022

### Malegaon, Nashik District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 2 “manduls”. Salim Musa Qureshi is remanded in custody for 48 hours. He was looking to sell them near the Labbaik hotel. Manduls are better known as sand boas (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II). Sakal, December 2, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

## December 5, 2022

### Bandra, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India

The police learnt that at 8 a.m. a sale was to take place opposite the Bhabha hospital and that the snake was already there, hidden in a bag in an ambulance. The police summoned Daksh Mukesh Beradiya and Sidharth Kambke, members of the Wildlife Animal Protection and Rescue Association, for immediate action. The snake in the bag was a Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix I) disguised as a sand boa. The sand boa is sold at a much higher price than the python. The fake sand boa is in very poor condition. Its tail has been amputated and its mouth sewn shut. There are many scams involving sand boas. They are most often sold to businessmen who know nothing about snakes. They have simply heard that owning one brings wealth and unsuspected treasures. The bigger they are, the higher the price. The average size of the Asiatic rock python is 3 metres, and the average size of the sand boa is 60 cm.

Mid-Day, December 9, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

## December 29, 2022

### Murliganj, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure by the 41<sup>st</sup> Border Battalion of the SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal) of approximately 2.5 kg of snake venom in a glass cup with a lid. The top was sealed. According to press reports, it is bulletproof! Two arrests: Moham-mad Kalimuddin and Zubair Khan, from West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Appearance at the Sili-guri court. The men were on motorbikes. The cargo's supposed route was Bangladesh-India-Nepal and, although it was not specified, probably China. Siliguri Times, December 30, 2022; WCCB, December 30, 2022.<sup>12</sup>



## PHILIPPINES

## October 26, 2022

### Cebu, Province of Cebu, Philippines

Joseph Vincent Derama, 21, was arrested for attempting to sell 2 live royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) for 12,000 pesos or 205 US\$. He was ambushed by undercover police officers. The pythons were seized.

Cebu Daily News, October 30, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

## TAJIKISTAN

## October 18, 2022

### Devashtich District, Sughd Region, Tajikistan

During a surveillance operation on the Dushanbe-Khujand road, police found that residents of Yakhtan, Khoja Bohir, Khujatair-Soliev Nurali, and Sharipov Elor were selling Tartary sand boas (*Eryx tataricus*, Appendix II) on the sly. This subspecies has a restricted range of 200 km<sup>2</sup> in Tajikistan. Females reach 120 cm in length and males 70 cm.

The exploitation of these non-venomous snakes as pets in the country represents a minor threat. On the other hand, they have been used in the miraculous recipes of traditional medicine since the time of Avicenna or Ibn Sina (980 to 1037), and are threatened with extinction. Their meat is presented everywhere as a panacea capable of curing digestive, cardiac, respiratory, and cancer problems. The Covid-19 pandemic has consolidated this unfortunate rumour. They are generally eaten in soup form with vegetables.

The Devashtich District Court is taking legal action against street vendors of Tartary sand boas, and the region's wildlife protection services have been ordered to step up the fight against their trafficking. Capturing and selling these snakes has been an institution for the district's inhabitants, including children, for decades. A specimen can sell for between 50 and 500 somoni (4.50 to 45 US\$), depending on its size and the season.

Faraj, April 10, 2021; Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, October 21, 2022.<sup>14</sup>



Tartary sand boa (*Eryx tataricus*). Photo Alvand Mohammadalizadegan

## VIET NAM

### Beginning of October 2022

#### Yen Bai Province, Viet Nam

Two Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) were seized from a couple by forest officers following an ENV report. They initially had 4 pythons, but they killed one and another escaped. ENV, October 4, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

### October 18, 2022

#### Huong Long, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Nguyen Thi Huyen, age 41, had been recruited to transport 9 dead king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) from Huong Trach to Huong Long (75 km). She was stopped on the roadside by police officers.

Báo Hà Tĩnh, October 21, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

### October 26, 2022

#### Dinh Trung, Vinh Phuc Province, Viet Nam

In the car controlled by urban police, there were 4 cobras, including 3 king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) and Cuong, age 35, Phu, age 36, and Thanh, age 34. The snakes were captured in the forest a month earlier.

Lao Dong, October 30, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

### December 3, 2022

#### Cao Xa, Phu Tho Province, Viet Nam

9:30 p.m. In the taxi being checked by the police, the passenger is looking rather grim. He was carrying in a jar a dead king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) weighing 10 kg. He was going to deliver it. He had just sold it for 31 million dong (1,254 US\$) on the Internet. VTV, December 6, 2022.<sup>18</sup>



## EUROPE

## GERMANY

### Beginning of December 2022

#### Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Germany

A postal parcel from Ukraine is intercepted for containing of a pair of leather boots made from either African rock python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) or South African python (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II). The consignee did not present a CITES permit.

German Customs, December 23, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

## AUSTRIA

### December 4, 2022

#### Linz, Upper Austria State, Austria

Eight boas (*Acrantophis* spp., Appendix I) were discovered dead in the cold of winter by someone walking their dog. The fire brigade and experts came to recover them. They were probably juvenile Madagascar boas (*Acrantophis madagascariensis*, Appendix I). The species is arboreal. In the eastern tropical forests, they are green. In the western dry forests, they are usually orange.

Kronen Zeitung, December 5, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

## FRANCE

### November 13, 2022

#### La Chapelle-Gauthier, Department of Eure, France

Report of domestic violence. Search carried out. Seizure of 2 boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II), tarantulas and about 20 firearms.

Paris-Normandie, November 16, 2022.<sup>21</sup>



## THE NETHERLANDS

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**May and October 26, 2022**

**Nijmegen, Province of Gelderland, The Netherlands**

The van Maasdijk couple runs a boutique for western fans under the Silverado name. In May, 14 boots made from python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) imported from Mexico were seized by customs at Amsterdam-Schiphol airport.

Silverado had ordered them from Corral Boots (León, Guanajuato State, Mexico) without the import certificate required by CITES, and on October 26 the NVWA (Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit, Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority) planned to seize the last 2 pairs of exotic boots that Silverado still had in stock. The inspectors came away with 4 boots cut into strips. The van Maasdijk couple had decided to shred them. "We have no certainty that the 14 pairs seized at Schiphol were destroyed and we thought it prudent to do it ourselves, it was a great pleasure," they explained to the local press. The reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) and Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), skins used by Corral Boots originate in Indonesia and arrive in Mexico via Singapore. Texas-based Corral Boots presents its style as "authentic, artisanal, and captivating, the essence of Western heritage and contemporary fashion, blending traditional Western elements with modern trends." The company, founded in 1999, has succeeded in setting itself apart from its competitors by offering a wide range of boots for women. De Stentor, October 27, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

## ROMANIA

**October 25, 2022**

**Oradea, Bihor County, Romania. Border with Hungary.**

Oradea, 183,000 inhabitants, the zoo city. Three royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) in a garbage can! Call to 112. The police arrive and investigate. A 22-year-old man had thrown them away. He thought they were dead. Two were still moving. He was fined 7,500 lei (1,470 US\$). He had 7 other snakes and rats to feed them. Their fate is unknown.

A few days later, another resident called the zoo. He claimed to have seen a snake enter the basement of a building on Rue Lacul Roșu.

Oradea is a snake pit. Four years ago, police and firefighters found a 4-meter-long anaconda (*Eunectes* spp., Appendix II) in the cellars of a building on Dacia Boulevard. In 2021, the environmental police discovered 9 breeding pythons (3 to 4 meters long) and 2 baby pythons in a resident's apartment. In another apartment occupied by a family with children, they also discovered a breeding farm of pythons, boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II) and anacondas. Oradea is also a lion's den. In 2018, an eccentric millionaire exhibited a lion cub (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II) in the streets. He had picked it up from a bankrupt circus manager based in the former bus station, where police and firefighters subsequently found 7 adult lions captive or abandoned.

Adevarul, October 25, 2022; Bihoreanul, November 1, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

**Beginning of December 2022 and April 11, 2023**

**Nichols Point and Mildura, State of Victoria, Australia**



Sentencing of a man to a fine of 5,600 Australian dollars or 3,490 US\$ for keeping an inland carpet python (*Morelia spilota metcalfei*, Appendix II) without a licence and in poor conditions. The alert was issued by the owner of the property.

Government of Victoria, December 19, 2022 and April 17, 2023.<sup>24</sup>

# MONITOR LIZARDS, GECKOS, CHAMELEONS ...



Beaded lizard (*Heloderma horridum*). Photo Leonardo Ponce

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**October 21, 2022**

**Randburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Three men had been arrested 9 months ago for killing a Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*, Appendix II) and a scrub hare (*Lepus saxatilis*) with hunting dogs. They found themselves in court. Two defendants aged 17 pleaded guilty and received a reduced sentence. Since their arrest, no other poaching acts have been reported in this area.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, October 19, 2022.<sup>1</sup>



**November 1, 2022**

**Randfontein, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Arrest of a man at the Tarlton intersection. He was trying to sell a flap-necked chameleon (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Appendix II) for 100 rand or 5 US\$. The chameleon was seized and released back into the wild after being cared for by the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital.

SPCA Randfontein & Westonaria, November 1, 2022; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital November 20, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



© SPCA

## AMERICA

### MEXICO

**December 20, 2022**

**State of Hidalgo, Mexico**

Instead of searching for prey in African trees, the flap-necked chameleon (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Appendix II) was stuck in a cardboard box on a sidewalk in Hidalgo. It was rescued thanks to someone passing by's report and transferred to a UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre).

Profepa, December 20, 2022; Netnoticias.mx, December 21, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## ASIA

### CHINA

**October 30, 2022**

**Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong and Macao.**

Officials find 3 plastic boxes containing 3 live geckos inside a traveller's pants pockets: 2 Guichenot's giant geckos (*Rhacodactylus ciliatus*) and a Bavay's giant gecko (*Mniarogekko chahoua*).

Chinese Customs, November 3, 2022.<sup>4</sup>



**November 20, 2022**

**Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China**

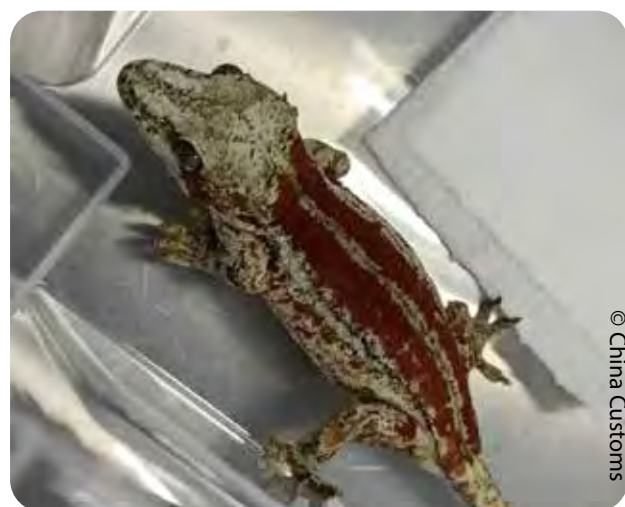
Officials seize 3 live shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*, Appendix III in Australia) from a postal parcel in transit. They were carefully concealed in a child's toy. Shingleback lizards only live in Australia. Chinese Customs, November 21, 2022.<sup>5</sup>



**November 2022**

**Ningbo Lishe International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China**

A postal parcel from abroad containing 34 giant geckos, including New Caledonian giant geckos (*Rhacodactylus leachianus*), New Caledonian bumpy geckos (*Rhacodactylus auriculatus*) and Bavay's giant geckos (*Rhacodactylus chahoua*), all concealed in aquarium filters, is intercepted. The 3 species are endemic to New Caledonia. Chinese Customs, November 28, 2022.<sup>6</sup>



## INDIA

**November 1, 2022**

**Lalgudi, Tiruchirapalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**



Stopped on the road between Lalgudi and Kumulur, P. Chinrasu, 22, and P. Thirumalai, 18, were arrested. They were carrying a Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) carcass on their motorcycle as well as 10 traps.

The Times of India, November 2, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**November 30, 2022**

**Baisi Community Development Block, Purnea District, State of Bihar, India**



Seizure of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) and 50 counterfeit bottles of cough syrup from a medical store.

New Delhi Television, November 30, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**December 17, 2022**

**Mokala, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India**

Eleven Hardwick's spiny-tailed lizards (*Saara hardwickii*, Appendix II) and 3 poachers including a minor in the arid desert... Demand for spiny-tailed lizards is very high. The meat and oil are believed to be an aphrodisiac. The 3 individuals were armed with sticks. Radheshyam Pemani, a defender of desert animals, deplores the leniency of the courts. Predators always get out of the clutches of the law very quickly.

The Times of India, December 19, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**December 27, 2022**

**Chirang District, State of Assam, India**

Two geckos (family Gekkonidae) were rescued by the SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal) and the 3 carriers were fined. Geckos are thought to be the descendants of dragons and are considered symbols of fertility and prosperity. *Cyrtodactylus jeyporensis*, *Gekko gecko* and *Phelsuma andamanense* are found in India and listed in Appendix II of CITES.

East Mojo, December 28, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

## MALAYSIA

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Mambang Di Awan, State of Perak, Malaysia**

"The mystery of the old freezer at the entrance to a house is solved." Five Perhilitan officers and 2 elements of the PGA (Pasukan Gerakan Am, General Operations Force) seized meat (26.8 kg) and fat from monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and 50.7 kg of stuffed meat and a wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) skull.

Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, October 17, 2022; Harian Metro, October 23, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

## VIET NAM

**October 18, 2022**

**Quynh Luu District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam**

On the evening of Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, the driver of a coach spotted 12 two-banded monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II) inside the luggage compartment. The bus was making a 1,320 km, 24-hour journey from

Dak Lak to Hanoi. The day prior, a woman loaded the monitors onto the coach in Pleiku – 170 km from Dak Lak. From there, they had travelled 910 km in appalling conditions. The Pu Mat National Park is in touch with the southern parks in order to send back the 12 travellers.

Bao Dân Viet, October 20, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## EUROPE

### BELGIUM

**OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

**October 2022**

**Belgium**

Customs confiscate a Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*, Appendix II) estimated to be worth over €1,000 (970 US\$).

Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, December 6, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

**October 2022**

**Brussels International Airport, Zaventem, Province of Flemish Brabant, Flemish Region, Belgium**

Authorities seize 2.62 kg of monitor lizard meat (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) from a passenger's luggage. There are 4 monitor lizard species in Central and West Africa: the grey monitor (*Varanus griseus*, Appendix I), the savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II), the Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*, Appendix II) and the ornate monitor lizard (*Varanus ornatus*, Appendix II).

Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, December 6, 2022.<sup>14</sup>



October 24, 2022

**Krasny Kamen Border Post, Bryansk Oblast, Russia. Border with Belarus.**

Seizure in a van coming from Homiel in Belarus and heading for Moscow (650 km) of beaded lizard (*Heloderma* spp., Appendix I or II) originating from America. The lizards were immediately returned to Belarus. The Belarusian citizen is being prosecuted in Russia.

There are 2 species of beaded lizard: the Mexican beaded lizard (*Heloderma horridum*, Appendix I or II, 3 subspecies) and the Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*, Appendix II). The former is found in Guatemala and Mexico, the latter in Mexico and the USA. They are venomous. They live mainly in arid zones. They feed on bird and reptile eggs, chicks, small mammals, and possibly insects. They are threatened both by persecution from local people who fear their venom and by capture for the exotic animal market.

Bryansk.NEWS, October 24 and 28, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

December 14, 2022

**Khyakta Border Post, Republic of Buryatia, Russia. Border with Mongolia.**



The Russian driver looked like a Michelin man when the customs officers asked him to get out of the car. Under his jacket, he was hiding a large plastic container containing 4 veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II) and 2 Guichenot's giant geckos (*Correlophus ciliatus*, synonymous with *Rhacodactylus ciliatus*) wrapped in nappies. He had bought them in Ulan-Ude in the Republic of Buryatia and wanted, he says, to give them to a friend in Mongolia.

Asia Russia Daily, December 14, 2022; Virtual Customs, December 14, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

NEW ZEALAND

Wednesday, November 23, 2022

**New Zealand**

Unlike Australia, whose exportation and trade of endemic reptiles and lizards is frequently mentioned in "On the Trail", New Zealand remains relatively discreet on the subject. Its biological heritage does not yet seem to be targeted by Asian and European collectors and traffickers. The only domestic or export trafficking (or attempted trafficking) reported in "On the Trail" concerns reptiles, marine mammals, abalone and sea cucumbers.

- N°6 p.23 describes the seizure of 23 geckos (*Naultinus* spp., Appendix II, and *Hoplodactylus* spp., Appendix III in New Zealand) from a collector in Germany in August 2014. Two jewelled geckos (*Naultinus gemmeus*) were returned in April 2015 (n°9 p.18). A network of reptile traffickers who sourced from New Zealand and elsewhere was dismantled in Spain in March 2018 (n°20 p.32).

- The jawbone of a beached sperm whale was stolen in April 2019 (n°25 p.20). A common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*, Appendix II) and a striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*, Appendix II) were found decapitated in September 2021 and June 2022 (n°34 p.270 and n°36 p.237).

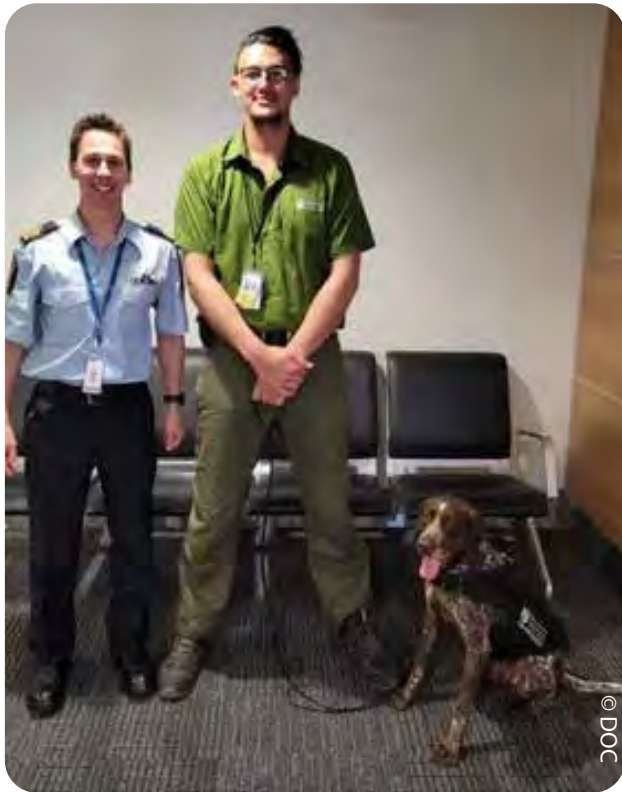
- A man was convicted in August 2020 of buying several thousand abalones and sea cucumbers from a poaching diver (n°30 p.179). A great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II) was also poached for its meat in May 2021 (n°33 p.276).

- There have also been cases of firearm poaching with no intention of recovering body parts against parrots (n°33 p.184 and n°34 p.179), a leopard seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) (n°22 p.16) and South Australian fur seals (*Arctocephalus forsteri*, Appendix II) (n°34 p.270).

However, New Zealand is not letting its guard down. In a November 23 publication entitled "Getting proactive with the Wildlife Crime Team" (WCT), the government states: "Wildlife crime is the fourth largest illegal trade in the world, and more common in New Zealand than you might think. In fact 18% of all offences in our enforcement database are under either the Trade in Endangered Species Act or Wildlife Act – which makes wildlife crime our second-most common offence behind Marine Reserve offending." This statement is made after the Wildlife Enforcement Group was just dismantled in August 2017. Its sole job was to combat animal and plant smuggling ("On the Trail" n°18 p.120).

.../...

The WCT focuses on detecting fauna imports, exports, purchases and sales on national territory and borders. It works in collaboration with customs, the Ministry of Primary Industries, its foreign counterparts and Interpol. It has 4 members: 3 humans, one of whom is an intelligence specialist, and a reptile-detecting dog, Toka, who proves a major asset in airports and mail centers. The government implies that the WCT's action and scope should become more proactive in the near future, and appeals to citizens' vigilance.



Among the WCT's recent successes, in May 2022 a man was ordered to pay 500 \$ (325 US\$) to the NGO Save the Kiwi after capturing a yellow-bellied sea snake (*Hydrophis platurus*) on a North Island beach. More recently, an audit into all reptile licence holders resulted in the confiscation of numerous geckos (family Gekkonidae), including at least one Northland green gecko (*Naultinus grayii*, Appendix II), one of the country's largest geckos, which lives only in the Northland region. Other checks were less successful, despite suspects' profiles. In July, authorities investigated a foreigner who toured the South Island, but had no reptiles on him. All indications suggested that he took a "test" trip before attempting to smuggle. In October, an Australian on vacation, who was convicted in Australia a few years earlier of smuggling 2 pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), was also thoroughly searched, and made no secret of his keen interest in spotted tuataras (*Sphenodon punctatus*, Appendix I) during questioning.



*Naultinus grayii*



*Sphenodon punctatus*

Tuataras are New Zealand's largest reptiles. They can weigh up to 1.5 kg and measure 0.5 m long. They live for 60 years on average, while some die in their hundreds. They have been protected since 1895, for they have been poached and exported by the hundreds to museums and private collectors. Poaching has never completely ceased. Department of Conservation, November 23, 2022.<sup>17</sup>



# ALLIGATORS, CROCODILES AND CAIMANS

## NORTHERN AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### Beginning of October 2022

##### Volusia County, State of Florida, United States of America

Two people boating on the Saint Johns River are ticketed for shooting an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) without affixing a tag bracelet to its carcass. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, October 13, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

#### Mid-October 2022

##### Palm Beach County, State of Florida, United States of America

An individual is indicted for possessing an American alligator skin (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) without the regulatory CITES marker. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, October 20, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

#### October 20, 2022

##### New Plymouth, State of Idaho, United States of America



At 20:30 Officer Brian Marek receives a call. There is reportedly a mysterious figure in the brush. It is in fact a 1-meter long American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II). After putting it in a safe place, Fish and Game is investigating where the reptile may have come from. It is forbidden to keep alligators are illegal in Idaho without the proper permits and it is also illegal to release them into the wild. There are no wild alligators in this State. Idaho Fish and Game, October 21, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

#### October 20 and 21, 2022

##### Lakebay, State of Washington, United States of America



After a report, discovery of an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) in a small tub and a sick calf inside a shipping container used as a home. The next day the agents came back with a warrant to seize the animals. The calf and the owner had disappeared. The alligator was taken to the Tacoma Humane Society and was taken in by a specialist in animal rehabilitation. It is in good health.

Pierce County Sheriff's Department, October 26, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

#### November 7, 2022

##### Bonnet Carré Spillway, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Daniel Duzac, 29, poached an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) after hunting season ended in October. The 2.36-meter-long carcass was recovered.

The Bonnet Carré weir was built between 1929-1931 to prevent flooding after the 1927 Mississippi flood induced record damage. It directs water into Lake Pontchartrain and, thereafter, the Gulf of Mexico.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, November 14, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

#### November 11, 2022

##### Bonita Springs, State of Florida, United States of America

An investigation has been launched following a video posted on social networks showing the slaughter of a juvenile American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) with a machete. The killers, aged under 18, will be prosecuted.

ABC7 Southwest Florida, November 12 and 14, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

## End of November 2022

### Dixie County, State of Florida, United States of America

Acting on information, agents at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission conducted several interrogations and found the 4 individuals responsible for shooting an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) in a private pond.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, December 1, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

## Beginning of December 2022

### Hendry County, State of Florida, United States of America

While patrolling a property in the South Florida Water Management District, an officer notices several people near a canal with a dead American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) in their vehicle's trunk. The shooter did not have a hunting licence.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, December 15, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## End of December 2022

### St. Johns County, State of Florida, United States of America

Acting on information, a dog squad approaches a vehicle, and 2 men confess that they poached an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II).

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, December 22, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

## LATIN AMERICA

### BRAZIL

## October 24, 2022

### Campo Grande, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Decat (Delegacia Especializada de Repressão aos Crimes Ambientais e de Atendimento ao Turista) intervened. The man was selling caiman skulls (Caimaninae, Appendix I or II) he had bought in the Pantanal and which gave off a strong smell of decay and death in the city's largest square. Fine of 500 reais (98 US\$).

G1 MS, October 25, 2022.<sup>10</sup>



## December 14, 2022

### Río de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The caiman (Caimaninae, Appendix I or II) died in slow agony. It had multiple hooks in its mouth. "The lagoon is used as a safari." "People hunt capybaras and caimans to trade in their meat." "Meat contaminated with cyanobacteria," adds Moscatelli, one of the biologists in charge of protecting the aquatic ecosystem, which extends over 280 km<sup>2</sup>. In Río de Janeiro, "we are becoming exterminators of symbols." "First there were the Guiana dolphins (*Sotalia guianensis*, Appendix I) of Guanabara Bay and now the caimans that gave their name to the lagoon."

O Dia, December 15, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

## COSTA RICA

## November 26, 2022

### Cuatro Millas, Limon Province, Costa Rica

A month after an American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I) was accused of carrying off an 8-year-old child while bathing with his family, locals tracked down the alleged culprit then killed and butchered him. They claim to have found hair and bones of the missing child in its entrails.

Seven months later, after DNA testing, Costa Rican authorities confirmed to the family that the remains were those of 9-year-old Julio Otero.

Tico Times, November 29, 2022; Teletica, December 15, 2022; 100%Noticias, May 18, 2023.<sup>12</sup>

## MEXICO

## October 13, 2022

### Cancún, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

The stench of a Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I) head alerted bathers, and the lifeguard contacted the tourist police and environmental authorities. The head measured 40 cm long and 20 cm wide, indicating it was severed at the first cervical vertebra.

In recent days, necropsies on 6 dead crocodiles in the Nichupté lagoon, a popular area for tourists in Cancún, revealed an overexposure to plastics. One of them had 85 bags in its stomach.

Novedades de Quintana Roo, October 12, 2022; Profepa, October 13, 2022.<sup>13</sup>



**October 31, 2022**  
**Pachuca, State of Hidalgo, Mexico**



The juvenile Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I), 31 cm long, was discovered in a parcel that had left Tlalnepantla de Baz in Mexico State for Francisco I Madero in Hidalgo State, 110 km away.

Profepa, October 31, 2022; Publimetro México, October 31, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**December 9, 2022**  
**State of Guerrero, Mexico**

An American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix II) with its snout tied is transferred to a UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre).

Profepa, December 9, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

## ASIA

### CHINA

**October 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**

Inside luggage from abroad, customs uncover 12 crocodile skin articles (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) including belts and bags. Total weight: 2.4 kg. Chinese Customs, October 27, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**November 24, 2022**  
**Changsha Huanghua International Airport, Changsha Prefecture, Hunan Province, China**

Seizure of 13 vials of crocodile (*Crocodylia*, Appendix I or II) oil inside 3 packages from abroad declared to contain "massage oil". Chinese Customs, November 26, 2022.<sup>17</sup>



## THAILAND

**November 9, 2022**  
**Prachinburi Province, Thailand**

Following reports from local residents, the Natural Resources and Environmental Crimes Enforcement Division arrived on the scene, and within days 145 Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) and 15 salt-water crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix I) were seized, with no further details as to their fate. The operator of the illegal farm has been arrested.

Thai PBS, November 10, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

## EUROPE

### GERMANY

**End of November 2022**  
**Gelsenkirchen, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany**



Four American alligator legs (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) mounted on wooden rods are confiscated from a USA-bound package. The back scratchers were sent as a gift to a 48-year-old man. German Customs, January 10, 2023.<sup>19</sup>

## POLAND

**October 5, 2022**  
**Warsaw Chopin International Airport, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland**

A woman returning from Gambia has 6 pendants with 7-cm-long crocodile teeth (*Crocodylia*, Appendix I or II) confiscated from her luggage. She said she bought the souvenirs for 6 US\$ each at a local craft store.

First Tax Office Warsaw-Śródmieście, October 5, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

## SLOVAKIA

**Beginning of December 2022**

**Zilina, Zilina Region, Slovakia**

Watch straps made from American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) and a hat with a strap made from salt-water crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix I in Australia) were seized in 2 postal parcels. The bracelets came from the UK and the hat from Australia - unusual and exotic gifts that won't end up as holiday presents. Financial Directorate of the Slovak Republic, December 14, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

## SWEDEN

**December 2022**

**Västmanland County, Sweden**

A caiman (Appendix I or II) is recovered from a private home. A report had already been made to the county administrative board in October. Aftonbladet, January 4, 2023; Sveriges Radio, January 4, 2023; Västmanlands Läns Tidning, January 5, 2023.<sup>22</sup>

# AMPHIBIANS

## AMERICA

### BOLIVIA

**Mid-November 2022**

**El Alto, Province of Pedro Domingo Murillo, Department of La Paz, Bolivia**

The man was selling on the street "liquor" made from the Titicaca water frog (*Telmatobius culeus*, Appendix I), which he claimed was ideal for migraines and sexual problems. Four specimens were saved on the edge by Pofoma agents. Frog juice or liquor, see "On the Trail" n°18 p. 28, n°22 p. 34 et n°5 p. 36. La Razón (Bolivia), November 21, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

## ASIA

### CHINA

**October 20, 2022**

**Huangdao District, Qingdao Prefecture, Shandong Province, China**

Ge and Song sentenced to 10- and 8-month suspended prison sentences. The couple were caught in the act of possessing and attempting to sell 1,006 Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*) and 17 black-spotted frogs (*Pelophylax nigromaculatus*) in May 2022. Qingdao Justice, October 26, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



**October 2022**

**Pengshan County, Meishan Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China**

Two sentences of 7 months' imprisonment and 6 months' imprisonment suspended for one year for capturing, holding and attempting to sell 183 Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*), which were immediately released into suitable habitats, except for 2 that had died. This irremediable ecological loss is set at 200 yuan or 14 US\$ per specimen. Meishan Intermediate Court, November 3, 2022.<sup>3</sup>



**November 15, 2022**

**Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China**

A total of 232 live spotted salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*) are intercepted from a package said to contain "children's clothing". Spotted salamanders live in North America in bogs, marshes, ditches and lakeshores. Adults measure between 15- and 25-cm-long, and the females are larger than the males. Chinese Customs, December 1, 2022.<sup>4</sup>



Spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*)



# INSECTS, ARACHNIDS AND ANNELIDS



*Trogonoptera brookiana*. Photo 葉烽

## ASIA

### CHINA

#### October 2022

##### Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 52 stinging scorpions of the species *Heterometrus spinifer*. Several died. The species is native to South-East Asia. It is a pet that has become popular in China and is available to the middle class at a price of 36 yuan for a 1 cm young scorpion and 100 yuan for an adult, i.e. between 5 and 14 US\$. The scorpions in the parcel were between 10 and 12 cm long, with thick, strong pincers.

Chinese customs are warning about the importation of live ants, beetles and scorpions. A batch of Mexican ants sells for 3,000 to 10,000 yuan (420 to 1,400 US\$) on Taobao. Ants arrive in Shenzhen and Shanghai. Eight exotic species are in great demand in pet shops: *Camponotus turkestanicus*, *Camponotus sanctus*, *Cataglyphis pallida*, *Myrmecocystus mimicus*, *Myrmecocystus mexicanus*, *Messor wasmanni*, *Messor capitatus*, *Gesomyrmex howardi*, *Stigmatoma rubiginosum* and *Ooceraea biroi*. Elephant beetle larvae (*Megasoma elepha*) from Central and South America sell for around 200 yuan (30 US\$). Packages from Russia contain *Lucanus dybowskii* stag beetles.

In 2021, China's State Council published a law on biosafety to regulate insect trafficking, making the release of invasive species into the wild a crime punishable by 3 years' imprisonment. The proliferation of fire ants is cited as an example of the threat to ecosystems. Hnntv.cn, November 5, 2022; Species Impact Victim Statements (SVIS), November 23, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

#### October 2022

##### Jiangning District, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

A package from abroad (likely Japan) said to contain "plastic toys" actually housed 2 live stag beetles (*Dorcus hopei*).

Chinese Customs, October 24, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

#### October 23, 2022

##### Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Two live *Serrognathus titan* *yasuokai* beetles are found inside an overseas package said to contain "plastic toys". Chinese Customs, October 30, 2022.<sup>3</sup>



**October 2022**  
**Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China**

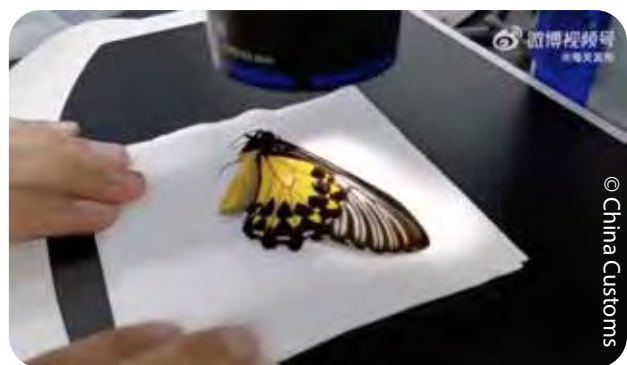


Authorities intercept 186 dead insects in a postal parcel weighing 2.5 kg.  
 Beijing Customs, October 31, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**October 2022**  
**Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China**  
 Four live *Prosopocoilus lumawigi* beetles are found inside a package said to contain “stationery supplies”.  
 Chinese Customs, October 31, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**October 2022**  
**Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China**  
 Six live beetles including *Dynastes hercules* are found in an incoming parcel.  
 Chinese Customs, October 31, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**October 2022**  
**Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China**



Officials seized 10 butterflies, including 4 *Troides rhadamantus* (Appendix II), 2 *Troides amphrysus* (Appendix II) and 2 *Trogonoptera brookiana* (Appendix II), all from Southeast Asia, from a postal item said to contain “accessories”.  
 Chinese Customs, November 2, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**October 2022**  
**Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China**  
 A Hercules beetle (*Dynastes hercules*) is confiscated from an overseas parcel.  
 Chinese Customs, November 2, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**October 2022**  
**Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China**



Officials confiscate 4 live beetles of the species *Lucanus hermani*, *Hexarthrius forsteri* and genus *Allotopus* from the incoming mail.  
 Chinese Customs, November 6, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**  
**Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China**  
 Officials discover 5 beetles inside 4 plastic boxes – 2 *Dorcus titanus* (synonym of *Serrognathus titanus*) and 3 stag beetles (family Lucanidae) – in a parcel said to contain “toys”. The shipper made sure to properly transport them with nutrient-rich moist wood shavings. The longest specimen measures 10 cm.  
 Chinese Customs, November 10, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**  
 A postal package is intercepted for containing 8 paradise birdwings (*Ornithoptera paradisea*, Appendix II), 5 goliath birdwings (*Ornithoptera goliath*, Appendix II), 3 Wallace’s golden birdwings (*Ornithoptera croesus*, Appendix II), 10 butterflies of the *Papilio deiphobus* species and 6 of the *Parthenos sylvia* species.  
 Chinese Customs, November 17, 2022; Guangzhou Customs, November 25, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**November 17, 2022**  
**Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China**  
 A package containing 47 tarantulas, including *Phormictopus cancerides*, *Chromatopelma cyaneopubescens* and *Theraphosa apophysis*, is seized.  
 Chinese Customs, November 18, 2022.<sup>12</sup>



**November 2022**  
**Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China**



Seizure in a postal parcel of 20 dune scorpions (*Smeringurus mesaensis*) in Tic Tac mints boxes and declared as "sweets".

Dune scorpions are native to southern California and northern Mexico. They live in their dens in the sand. They spend 97% of their time there. Posting themselves at the entrance to their hiding places, they sting and paralyse passing millipedes, centipedes, spiders and other insects. They are hunters, lookouts, stingers and cannibals.

Chinese Customs, November 21, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**November 2022**  
**Mengkang Border Post, Pu'er Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.**

Dried scorpions weighing 1,192.8 kg, belonging to the *Olivierus martensii* species, are found inside a shipment said to contain "tea".

Chinese Customs, November 30, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**November 2022**  
**Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China**

Officials confiscate 12 beetles including *Dorcus titanus* (synonymous with *Serrognathus titanus*) and Hercules beetle (*Dynastes hercules*) larvae from 3 packages sent from abroad.

Chinese Customs, December 2, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**November 2022**  
**Qianjiang, Hubei Province, China**



A package from abroad contains 7 beetles: 3 females and 4 larvae.

Chinese Customs, December 4, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China**

- Seizure in a shed of 200 beetles, including Hercules beetles (*Dynastes hercules*) originating from South America. The suspects had brought in a few breeders by parcel post and were then breeding and selling them over the Internet.

- Seizure of 4 live satanas beetle (*Dynastes satanas*, Appendix II) from South America declared as "snacks", each in a glass bottle lined with damp wood shavings.

Customs reminds us that, in accordance with the Biosafety Act, no foreign animal or plant species may be imported without authorisation.

Chinese Customs, December 26, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Guangzhou, Province du Guangdong, Chine**

A package from abroad reportedly containing "treats" actually houses 8 live beetles (3 *Serrognathus titanus yasuokai*, synonymous with *Dorcus titanus yasuokai*; 2 *Serrognathus titanus palawanicus*, synonymous with *Dorcus titanus palawanicus*, and 3 *Serrognathus titanus typhon*, synonymous with *Dorcus titanus typhon*). Each beetle was enclosed in a taped shut plastic box filled with wood shavings.

Chinese Customs, December 12, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Zhengzhou, Zhengzhou Prefecture, Henan Province, China**

Authorities intercept 4 live beetles belonging to the *Serrognathus titanus typhon* species from a package from abroad said to contain "toys". The beetles travelled economy class in individual plastic boxes barely larger than themselves.

Chinese Customs, December 15, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Fuzhou Prefecture, Fujian Province, China**

A live beetle belonging to the *Dorcus hopei* species is recovered from a package from Japan said to contain "make-up remover cottons".

Chinese Customs, December 15, 2022; Fuzhou Customs, December 27, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

**December 8, 2022**  
**Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China**



Officials confiscate 50 tarantulas, including *Chromatopelma cyaneopubescens* and *Theraphosa apophysis*, from a postal package in transit. They were hidden in a box of Hura Deli cakes.

Chinese Customs, December 13, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

## INDONESIA

October 14, 2022

**Surabaya International Airport, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia**

150 kg of dried *Lychas mucronatus* scorpions seized in 6 postal parcels awaiting export. Customs reminds us that smuggling is not the way to a company's prosperity.

Garda Animalia, October 20, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

## PHILIPPINES

November 21, 2022

**Aéroport Ninoy-Aquino International Airport, Manila, National Capital Region, Philippines**



Seizure of 23 tarantulas (family Theraphosidae) hidden in tins of potato crisps and other snacks in a postal parcel from Hanoi.

Manila Bulletin, December 2, 2022; Philippine News Agency, December 2, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

## EUROPE

### POLAND

November 18, 2022

**Budomierz Border Post, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.**



The luggage hold inside a bus from Ukraine contained cardboard boxes filled with canvas bags lined with damp newspaper. Inside, 8,500 Southern medicinal leeches (*Hirudo verbana*, Appendix II) (12 kg) were struggling to survive. The 24-year-old bus driver took responsibility for the smuggling and paid a fine of 2,000 zlotys (420 US\$). Rzeszów Tax Administration Chamber, November 18, 2022.<sup>24</sup>





# MULTI-SPECIES

Events concerning among others elephants, rhinos, felines, bears or pangolins and their by-products are indicated by these pictograms:



Cases concerning exclusively pangolins and elephants or rhinos see page 15; elephants and rhinos or hippos or felines, see page 38.

## EASTERN AFRICA

### TANZANIA

**November 22, 2022**

#### Arusha, Arusha Region, Tanzania

In January 2022, the government informed the Maasai chiefdom that 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> on the edge of Serengeti National Park were to be annexed and denied to the indigenous population. In a spectacular U-turn, the aim is to once again grant exclusive permits to a safari company based in the United Arab Emirates to attract foreign sport hunters of lions, leopards, elephants, buffalo and rhinoceros, whose exploits partly fund the Tanzania Wildlife Authority. The project threatens between 50 and 70,000 Maasai with expulsion.

On June 6, a Maasai chief is arrested, 700 riot troops set up around the village of Ololosokwan and violent clashes break out in the Ngorongoro district, leaving several Maasai injured and one Tanzanian dead.

The Arusha court has just dismissed the case against the 24 Masai who had been arrested, as the park had not provided sufficient evidence of their responsibility in the death of Corporal Garlus Mwita.

See "On the Trail" n°19 p.121 and n°36 p.187.

Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), November 17, 2022; HabariLEO, November 22, 2022; News24, November 24, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**November 2022**

#### Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II), meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*), and Smith's bush squirrels (*Paraxerus cepapi*) were seized and handed over to the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital.

The Smith's squirrels, also called bush squirrels or yellow-footed squirrels, are diurnal, arboreal and social omnivores. They are spread across the countries of southern Africa.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, November 29, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## End of November – Beginning of December 2022 Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The veterinary clinic welcomes several juvenile wild animals that had been kept as pets: leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II), vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), a meerkat (*Suricata suricatta*) and a white-tailed mongoose (*Ichneumia albicauda*).

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, December 2, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**December 28, 2022**

## Dumfries, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Vincent Eric Mengwati, 53, was sentenced to a fine of 2,500 rand or 150 US\$. He was arrested in possession of monkey meat (Primates, Appendix I or II), 3 dried Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II) skins, a frozen crocodile and hyena (family Hyaenidae) meat. SAPS, December 29, 2022.<sup>4</sup>



## NORTHERN AMERICA

### CANADA

## OPERATION THUNDER 2022

**October 2022**

### Canada

Confiscated are elephant tusks, hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) and warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*) teeth, other hunting trophies from Africa, crocodile fat (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II), live turtles, and byproducts from local species such as polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II), American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and narwhals (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II). Minister of Environment and Climate Change, December 6, 2022.<sup>5</sup>



© Environnement et Changement climatique

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## REPEATED OFFENCE

**October 24, 2022**

## Rexburg, State of Idaho, United States of America



Brayden Froelich was sentenced for several wildlife offences, including hunting without a licence, to 5 years' imprisonment and a lifetime ban on hunting in 49 States. He was also sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment for a burglary. He will first receive intensive education until December 5, 2022. He had already been convicted for similar offences in 2020.

He was accused of killing one pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico), one 5-point white-tailed buck (*Odocoileus virginianus*), one 2-point white-tailed buck, 3 white-tailed does, and one bull elk (*Cervus canadensis*) between July and August 2021.

Idaho Fish and Game, October 27, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**November 10, 2022**

## Washington Dulles International Airport, State of Virginia, United States of America

Seizure by CBP (US Customs and Border Protection) of giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II) and zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, present in Kenya) bones brought back from Kenya as souvenirs in the luggage of a woman living in Virginia.

US Customs and Border Protection, December 16, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**December 5, 2022**

## Ventura, State of California, United States of America

Martin M. Bravo, Martin Bravo Sr, Jaime Mendoza Avila, Gilberto Lopez Hernandez and Cristian Lopez Perez are locked up while Walfre Lopez y Lopez was issued an arrest warrant. The E-Bike Crew (6 members, 30-59-years-old) poached American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), bobcats (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. The bikers entered the Los Padres national forest, Sespe Condor Sanctuary, which is off-limits as a nesting site for endangered species, other sanctuaries, and oil and gas fields. At least one biker entered a loaded rifle slung over his shoulder. Authorities seized dozens of trophies, deer antlers, skulls, a bear about to be stuffed, and dozens if not hundreds of kilos of wild meat from freezers. They found these items either in their homes or areas they occupied across Oxnard and Thousand Oaks in December 2021. One of the skulls was a puma skull that Martin Bravo tried to pass off as a bobcat, knowing that big cat hunting is banned in California. .../...





They were aided and abetted by Juventino Guerrero, manager of Lizette's Market, a supermarket in Piru. He was licensed by the US Fish and Wildlife California to sell hunting permits but falsified some and reprinted them at a Walmart in Oxnard. He allegedly distributed 164 forged or falsified licences to the 6 E-Bike Crew members between June 2019 and June 2021. The crew shot many deer, even though California law prohibits any one hunter from killing more than 2 deer per year.



The 6 members of the E-Bike Crew, as well as Guerrero, are in custody. Bail for each is set at 200,000 US\$. They have been charged with filing a false or forged document, conspiracy, receiving stolen property, unlawful possession of untagged bear, and animal abuse or cruelty and allegedly producing the false and fake tags to hunt and take more deer, boars and bears than legally allowed by State law.

Ventura County District Attorney, December 5, 2022; Edhat, December 9, 2022; The Hill, December 9, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## LATIN AMERICA

### BOLIVIA

**October 19, 2022**

**Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia**



Seizure of a colpeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II) and a young opossum (genus *Didelphis*). They have been transferred to an establishment for wild animals. Perhaps they will be released or escape.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, October 19, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**Mid-November 2022**

**La Paz, Department of La Paz, Bolivia**



Seizures by Pofoma "uniforms" of 2 snakes and 3 flying squirrels (Tribe Pteromyini) at the Lanza market and of 22 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and 2 monkeys (Primates, Appendix I or II) in a bus coming from Caranavi (160 km).

La Razón (Bolivia), November 17, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**November 16, 2022**

**Caranavi, Province of Caranavi, Department of La Paz, Bolivia**

Seizure of 8 howler monkeys (*Alouatta* spp., Appendix I or II) and 20 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) in a vehicle coming from San Borja, 200 km away. One woman is in prison.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, November 16, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

## BRAZIL

**October 1, 2022**

**Ribeirão do Pinhal, State of Paraná, Brazil**



In a filthy, airless, and lightless pet shop, environmental police seized a boa (Boidae, Appendix I or II), 4 black-bellied sliders (*Trachemys dorbigni*), and 20 swamp ghost crabs (*Ucides cordatus*) bathed in filth. Trafficking and mistreatment were rife. There were also 398 dead ornamental fish and 516 still alive in plastic bags filled with water inside polystyrene boxes stacked on top of each other. The main ornamental fish species caught and sold in Brazil are angelfish (*Pterophyllum scalare*), suckermouth catfish (*Hypostomus plecostomus*), and guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*).

Tribuna do Vale, October 3, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**October 7, 2022**

**Araçoiaba da Serra, State of São Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure of some forty parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), other birds, and tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II). They all ended up at the wild animal sorting center in São Paulo, a pound with a reputation for being overcrowded, undersized and underfunded. The suspect is on trial at the city's police station for poaching, mistreatment and illegal sale of wild animals.

G1 Sorocaba e Jundiaí, October 7, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

## OPERATION POROROCA

October 21, 2022

### Abaetetuba, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure of 14 tonnes of salted pirarucu meat, better known as arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), and of caiman meat (*Caiman* spp., *Melanosuchus* spp. or *Paleosuchus* spp., Appendix I or II), a shipment valued at 500,000 reais or 94,000 US\$. After sanitary examination, the consignment was distributed to charitable organisations. Seven arrests. Abaetetuba is crossed by the Rio Tocantins.

Pororoca is the local name for tidal bore, a phenomenon of rising water at the mouth of a river when the current collides with the incoming tide at new and full moon. The pororoca at the mouth of the Amazon creates a wave several meters high and several kilometers wide. The name comes from the roar that announces its arrival long before it is visible.

G1, October 21, 2022.<sup>14</sup>



Pororoca

## OPERATION WAHANARARAI

End of October 2022

### Javari and Tabatinga Valley Nature Reserve, Amazonas State, Brazil. Border with Colombia and Peru.

Wahanararai is a Kanamari song about how macaws feed their young. It has become better known since anthropologist Bruno Araujo Pereira was filmed singing it. This defender of the indigenous peoples of Amazonia and member of Funai, threatened with death, was assassinated on June 5, 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°37 p. 213).

- On the Curuçá River, the Ibama seized from a fishing boat 800 kg of fish banned during the piracema, a fishing truce, an arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 10 South American river turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II), and a tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* ou *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II).

- 9 m<sup>3</sup> of timber, 3 chainsaws, 2 rifles, and ammunition were seized by Ibama from a boat on the Itacoáí River.

- At the Tabatinga market, Ibama seized a tonne of arapaima meat, 9 carcasses of South American tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*, Appendix II), white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), and deer (family Cervidae), 2 live yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), and 2 live tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II). Nine shopkeepers were taken to the federal police station, along with the market manager who had failed to take action against illegal trafficking. The arapaima flesh was donated to Funai (Fundação Nacional do Índio), which, with the assistance of the police, distributed it to 2 Kanamaris villages.

Ibama, November 4, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

November 8, 2022

### Santa Rosa and Alecrim, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Twelve searches of hunters' homes. 80 agents from the DEIC (Directorate of Environmental Protection and Criminal Investigations) and SEMA (Directorate of Environment and Equipment) are mobilized under the authority of the Attorney General. Seizure of 360 captive birds, great-billed seed finches (*Sporophila maximiliani*), plumbeous seedeaters (*Sporophila plumbea*), black-throated grosbeaks (*Saltator fuliginosus*), copper seedeaters (*Sporophila bouvreuil*), yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II) and buffy-fronted seedeaters (*Sporophila frontalis*) and of evidence of poaching of pampas deer (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*, Appendix I), collared peccarys (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), white-lipped peccarys (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), coatis (*Nasua nasua*, *Nasua nasua solitaria*, Appendix III in Uruguay) and agoutis (genus *Dasyprocta*).

The birds were introduced onto the legal market thanks to the complicity of breeders and expired identification rings and the meat introduced onto the butcher's market thanks to complicity with "businessmen" and falsified documents. Investigation underway to discover the motives and actors of the scheme.

GZH, November 8, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

Friday, November 25, 2022

### Lages, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

Four raids under a warrant issued by the Criciúma prosecutor. Dismantling of a gang in the town of over 160,000 inhabitants in the highlands of the State. Seizure of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), tarantulas and birds. A veterinarian was linked to the trafficking. The investigation had been ongoing since the beginning of the year. The animals were offered for sale on the Internet and shipped by parcel to several Brazilian States.

SCC10, November 25, 2022; G1 SC, November 26, 2022.<sup>17</sup>



## Mid-December 2022

### Tinguá Biological Reserve, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



A sort of watchtower-bunker for hunters was discovered in the forest where hunting is prohibited. Rifles, poisoned bait to attract pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), South American tapirs (*Tapirus terrestris*, Appendix II) and jaguars (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), a network of 20 camera traps to track target animals step by step, camouflage clothing and a VHF radio were seized. The premises were empty when the federal police entered with a search warrant. Organised trafficking is suspected, involving skins, meat and other parts of poached animals.

Extra, December 19, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

## November 10, 2022

### Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

At his home in the Jardim Felicidade district, the 32-year-old man was in the process of unpacking the postal parcel. It contained juvenile iguanas. The man had just been denounced by a precise and confidential information. The police seized 7 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 5 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and a Geoffroy's side-necked turtle (*Phrynops geoffroanus*), all alive and 3 dead iguanas. Hoje em Dia, November 10, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

## COLOMBIA

## Beginning of December 2022

### La Vega, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia

Seizure in Payara Park of 60 animals, including a black-and-chestnut eagle (*Oroaetus isidori*, Appendix II), an Orinoco goose (*Neochen jubata*), parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II), spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix I or II) and turtles, all mistreated, badly housed and badly fed. They have been transferred to the CAV (Centro de Atención y Valoración) in Tocaima and park activities have been suspended.

Infobae, December 3, 2022.<sup>20</sup>



*Oroaetus isidori*

## Beginning of December 2022

### Buenavista, Department of Córdoba, Colombia



A gang was dismantled. On a farm, the CAV (Centro de Atención y Valoración) seized 114 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), 4 marmosets (Callitrichidae, Appendix I or II), a jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) and squirrels (family Sciuridae). A chef is in charge of purchasing and around ten people are responsible for roadside sales. To outclass the parrots and sell them at a higher price, they didn't hesitate to dye them. El Heraldito (Colombia), December 7, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

## MEXICO

## Mid-October 2022

### San Juan del Río, State of Querétaro, Mexico

Seizure of a Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II), 2 red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and one olive-throated conure (*Eupsittula nana*, Appendix II) in a private residence.

AM de Querétaro, October 18, 2022.<sup>22</sup>

## December 2, 2022

### Metepec, State of Mexico, Mexico

The seller of a Mexican redleg tarantula (*Brachypelma emilia*, Appendix II), 3 imbricate alligator lizards (*Barisia imbricata*), a longtail alpine garter snake (*Thamnophis scalaris*) and serrated casquehead iguanas (*Laemantus serratus*) had no certificate of origin to show Profepa officers. They confiscated the creatures.

Profepa, December 2, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

## December 5, 2022

### Morelia, State of Michoacán, Mexico

- Seizure during the night in a private home in the Jardines del Rincón district of a spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II), a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, synonymous with *Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), a dead smooth helmeted iguana (*Corytophanes cristatus*) and a snake. They were victims of mistreatment. They were temporarily handed over to Morelia Zoo for urgent treatment. A clandestine trade in wild animals is suspected.

- Two green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), a Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), a gecko (family Gekkonidae) and a Central bearded dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*) were seized at the El Auditorio market. 17 dogs of various breeds were also seized.

Infobae, December 6, 2022.<sup>24</sup>

## PERU

**October 4, 2022**

**District of Iquitos, Province of Maynas, Department of Loreto, Peru**



Around one hundred wild animal parts were seized at the Belén, Modelo and Nanay markets and in craft shops, including 3 feline skulls and 11 feline skin knife sheaths, 8 saurian heads, 6 snake skins, 2 anaconda (genus *Eunectes*) heads and other parts, 11 stuffed turtles (order Testudines) and 7 live white-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II). On the markets, the police intervention was eventful. "When we enter the markets, everyone starts shouting and hiding anything illegal, and our work becomes difficult", laments the prosecutor from Fema (Fiscalía Especializada en Materia Ambiental). Infografía, October 6, 2022.<sup>25</sup>



**October 5, 2022**

**District of Castilla, Province of Piura, Department of Piura, Peru**

Are put under sequestration at a wild animal collector's home an ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), 3 American crocodiles (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I), a caiman (*Caiman* spp., *Melanosuchus* spp. or *Paleosuchus* spp., Appendix I or II), 5 yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 10 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 2 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), a hyacinth macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I), a blue-headed parrot (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II), a white-eyed conure (*Aratinga leucophthalma*, Appendix II), a hawk (*Buteo* spp. or *Geranoaetus* spp., Appendix II) and 2 birds of prey (Falconidae, Appendix I or II except *Caracara lutosa*). A procedure to open a category B zoo has reportedly been launched in the past, but approval has not yet been granted due to a lack of clear information on the origin of the animals. Serfor, October 5, 2022.<sup>26</sup>



**October 10, 2022**

**Juliaca, Province of San Román, Department of Puno, Peru**

Surprise operation by Serfor and the national police after a Chilean flamingo (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*, Appendix II) was found dead in front of a store specialising in the sale of "natural remedies". Seizure inside of 5 other Chilean flamingos, a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), 3 Andean flickers (*Colaptes rupicola*) and 25 wings, legs, skins, limbs and bones of Chilean flamingos and Molina's hog-nosed skunks (*Conepatus chinga rex*).

Serfor, October 10, 2022.<sup>27</sup>

## EASTERN ASIA

### CHINA

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**

Customs officers inspected an export consignment said to contain "ornamental fish". They found that some of the fish had a unique and singular appearance, including 9 aquatic animals with 4 limbs, 15-cm-long bodies and unique colour variations. The other 10 "ornamental fish" had long triangular heads, whiskers in front of their mouths and raised bony plates on their backs. Experts confirmed that the so-called ornamental fish were in fact axolotls (*Ambystoma mexicanum*, Appendix II) and sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II). Chinese Customs, November 11, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

**November 2022**

**Tianjin Binhai International Airport, Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China**

Passengers from abroad have the following confiscated from their luggage: 5 crocodile skin belts and 5 crocodile skin bags (Crocodylia, Appendix I or II), 14 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and 2 hippopotamus teeth (Hippopotamidae, Appendix II). Chinese Customs, November 23, 2022.<sup>29</sup>

**December 15, 2022**

**Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China**

On the Tung Chung quay, officials seized a piece of cargo containing both technology and wildlife indigenous to Hong Kong waters. Seized were 36 packages containing "bird's" nests, dried sea cucumbers, dried deer tails, telephones and tablets, altogether worth 1.54 million US\$. The 4 smugglers fled by speedboat towards Mainland China, leaving the packed van on the quayside.

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, December 16, 2022.<sup>30</sup>



## TAIWAN

**December 8, 2022**

**Wutai Township, Pingtung County, Taiwan**



Inside cold storage, officials intercepted a Taiwan serow (*Capricornis swinhoei*), a whole Formosan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus formosanus*, Appendix I), and the head and 14 legs of a Formosan sambar (*Rusa unicolor swinhoii*). Central News Agency, December 9, 2022.<sup>31</sup>

## SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

### CAMBODIA

**November 23, 2022**

**Preah Sihanouk Province, Cambodia**



The WRRT seized 6.5 kg of pangolin scales, 2 Northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II), 4 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), one Asian box turtle shell (*Cuora* spp., Appendix I or II) and 16 dead seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) from a private home. The ones still alive were transferred to the Phnom Tamao rehabilitation centre. Wildlife Crime Hotline, November 23, 2022.<sup>32</sup>



### INDONESIA

**November 6, 2022**

**Karangjamuang Island, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia**

Attempt of smuggling at sea between Papua and Surabaya. Two crew members, ages 23 and 25, aboard the cargo *Spil Hasya*, Indonesian flag, which was sailing between Merauke and Surabaya, had hidden 104 animals inside plastic bags, PVC pipes, bottles and shopping bags, 8 lesser birds of paradise (*Paradisaea minor*, Appendix II), 8 king birds of paradise (*Cicinnurus regius*, Appendix II) - 3 of which died, 7 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), 6 eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), 2 Australian green tree pythons (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II), 5 carpet pythons (*Morelia spilota*, Appendix II), a Macklot's python (*Liasis mackloti*, Appendix II), a white-lipped python (*Leiopython albertisii*, Appendix II),

3 salt-water crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II), 4 spotted tree monitors (*Varanus similis*, Appendix II), 2 crocodile monitors (*Varanus salvadorii*, Appendix II), 31 red-bellied short-necked turtles (*Emydura subglobosa*), 2 waigeou cuscus (*Spilocuscus papuensis*, Appendix II), 10 dusky pademelons (*Thylogale brunii*), one of which died, 3 long-beaked echidnas (*Zaglossus bruijini*, Appendix II) and a Eastern common cuscus (*Phalanger intercastellanus*, Appendix II).



*Spil Hasya*, April 30, 2019, on the Barito, South Kalimantan, Indonesia



Dusky pademelon (*Thylogale brunii*)

The Eastern common cuscus is a small marsupial from Papua New Guinea who is hunted for his meat and fur. He has been introduced to the Aru Islands (Indonesia) and northern Australia.

The long-beaked echidna is a small mammal, 90 cm long and around 15 kg, with a spiky back. He feeds on earthworms and is found only in Papua New Guinea. He is sought after for his meat and unfortunately critically endangered.

Garda Animalia, November 11, 2022.<sup>33</sup>



Long-beaked echidna (*Zaglossus bruijini*)

**November 8, 2022**

**Port of Soekarno-Hatta, Makassar, South Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia**

Aboard the *Gunung Dempo* from Sorong in Papua, officials seize 6 common spotted coussous (*Spilocus maculatus*, Appendix II), including one dead, and 21 birds including 3 black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), 7 brown lorries (*Chalcopsitta duivenbodei*, Appendix II), 2 Pesquet's parrots (*Psittichas fulgidus*, Appendix II), 2 sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II), 2 hooded butcherbirds (*Cracticus cassicus*), a hooded pitohui (*Pitohui dichrous*) and a variable pitohui (*Pitohui kirhocephalus*).

The *Gunung Dempo* has already been used twice to smuggle wild fauna, on April 20, 2016 and February 28, 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°13 p. 30 and n°35 p. 180).

Koran Makassar, November 8, 2022; Directorate General of Nature Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, November 10, 2022.<sup>34</sup>

**December 20, 2022**

**Pontianak Naval Base, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia**

Under Admiral Suharto's command, the Vietnamese cargo ship *Royal 06* was boarded at the mouth of the Kapuas, the longest river on the island of Borneo. The 11 crew members were holding 16 long-nosed monkeys (*Nasalis larvatus*, Appendix I), 19 white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II) and one palm cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix II) in the mess room, evidently for resale, and purchased from a local network.

KalbarOnline.com, December 20, 2022.<sup>35</sup>



*Royal 06*, April 3, 2013 in Singapore

**SINGAPORE**

**December 7, 2022**

**Singapore**

Lau Chai Hock was fined 5,100 US\$ for possessing a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), a green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and 5 sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*). Lau did everything he could to exonerate himself. He said he "inherited" the loris when a man in a café offered him to look after him, saying it had been picked up, frightened, on the side of a road. And Hock claimed he "found" the common iguana one morning at the entrance to his workplace.

Today, December 8, 2022.<sup>36</sup>



**THAILAND**

**December 21, 2022**

**Chana Railway Station, Ban Na Sub-District, Songkhla Province, Thailand**



Upon arriving at the Surat Thani-Sungai Kolok Express station, a woman named Ekke unloaded 6 polystyrene boxes from her freight car and loaded them into a pick-up truck before being hailed by police. Inside the boxes were the smoked, ready-to-eat corpses of 7 Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), a pangolin, 2 langurs (*Trachypithecus* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 squirrels (family Sciuridae), 2 mouse deer (family Tragulidae) and 2 civets (family Viverridae). Ekke claimed she ordered them in the Sukhirin district and had buyers in the Chana district. The 2 districts are 225 km apart.

Bangkok Post, December 21, 2022.<sup>37</sup>



**VIET NAM**

**October 11, 2022**

**Ha Giang Province, Viet Nam**

The Provincial People's Committee fined a trafficker 77.5 million dongs (3,263 US\$) for storing in his home and selling carved ivories, bear paws (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and monkey bone glue (Primates, Appendix I or II). Báo Quân đội nhân dân, November 11, 2022.<sup>38</sup>



**October 28, 2022**

**Bau Lang, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam**

Dung, 27, was stopped by a roadblock set up by forestry officers on departmental road 550. Inside the vehicle were dead animals, including a pangolin and a wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), and live animals including a pangolin and a masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India).

Lao Dong, November 4, 2022.<sup>39</sup>





**October 28, 2022**

**Huong An and Bhalêê, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam**

At 9.20 p.m., Hung delivered a box to Thao, a Binh resident. Thao, dressed in his motorcycle taxi uniform, was about to leave on his motorcycle when police stopped him. For a long time, he pretended that he was on a professional errand and did not know the contents of the package. It was a pangolin. After several hours, however, he finally admitted to working in the wildlife business with Hung. At Hung's home in Bhalêê, in the Tây Giang district, police recovered an Indochinese box turtle (*Cuora galbinifrons*, Appendix I) and 11 impressed tortoises (*Manouria impressa*, Appendix II). Hung said he had just bought the pangolin from Madame Thi Xuan, who lives in Za Hung. The investigation had been underway for over a month.

Thuong hieu & Cong luan, October 28, 2022; Báo Công An Đà Nẵng, October 29, 2022.<sup>40</sup>



**October 30, 2022**

**Hai Ninh, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam**

Police arrested Nhan on his motorcycle for transporting a mother pangolin and her just-born young, a king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) and an Oriental rat snake (*Ptyas mucosa*, Appendix II) that were just purchased for 5 million dong (210 US\$) in the neighbouring province of Binh Thuan.

Ho Chi Minh City Law Journal, November 3, 2022.<sup>41</sup>



**Beginning of November 2022  
Long Son Province, Viet Nam**

A woman is fined 85 million dong (3,340 US\$) for selling 80 vials of bear bile (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and fake rhinoceros horns made from buffalo horns.

ENV, November 4, 2022.<sup>42</sup>



**November 25, 2022**

**Quang Xuan, Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam**

Officials seize 4 bear paws (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), 2.5 kg of tiger meat (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and a dead tiger cub (2.2 kg) inside the baggage compartment of a bus from the north.

Lao Dong, November 26, 2022; ENV, November 28, 2022.<sup>43</sup>



© Lao Dong / Directorate of Market Surveillance

**November 28, 2022**

**Nuoc Hang, Hoa Binh Province, Viet Nam**

A dead king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II), a dead masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India) and a live Oriental rat snake (*Ptyas mucosa*, Appendix II) are confiscated from an individual.

Lao Dong, November 29, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

**December 5, 2022**

**Bao Loc, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam**

An individual was sentenced to 5.5 years in prison for selling bear bile and tiger teeth (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) online, and for possessing 3 gaur heads (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I), an Asian black bear head (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), 2 Southern serows (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I), a large-antlered muntjac head (*Muntiacus vuquangensis*, Appendix I) and a stuffed buff-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I).

ENV, December 7, 2022.<sup>45</sup>



© ENV

## INDIA

October 15, 2022

**Champhai District, State of Mizoram, India. Border with Myanmar.**

In a 3-vehicle convoy traveling from Myanmar, drivers and district residents Lalremruata, Tinkhuma and E. Lalmuanpuia attempted to introduce into India 2 golden-headed lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus chrysomelas*, Appendix I) from Brazil, 4 marmosets (*Callitrichidae*, Appendix I or II) from South America, 4 servals (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) from Africa, 22 pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II), 18 two-banded monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), 55 crocodile hatchlings (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II), 30 turtles, 4 flame bowerbirds (*Sericulus ardens*) from New Guinea, and an albino wallaby from Australia.

Mizoram Police, October 15, 2022.<sup>51</sup>



*Sericulus ardens*

**OPERATION WILEP**

October 27, 2022

**Bardhaman, Purba Bardhaman District, and Bamangachi, North 24 Parganas District, West Bengal State, India**

"We can still save them before it is too late. They are waiting for us to work towards protecting them". With this tweet in mind, Railway Protection Force officers try to intercept the flow of wild animals (accompanied or unaccompanied) that wildlife traffickers bring aboard trains to and from Kolkata. Today, 8 parakeets (*Psittaciformes*, Appendix I or II except for 4 species) in Bardhaman and 180 turtles in Bamangachi were confiscated. No arrests have been made.

Railway Protection Force Eastern Railway, October 27, 2022; Railway Protection Force, October 27, 2022.<sup>52</sup>

December 6, 2022

**Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam**

Two Northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonine*, Appendix II), a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II), 2 red-billed blue magpies (*Urocissa erythroryncha*) and an iguana (family Iguanidae) adorned a café. They were reported by ENV and confiscated by the Authority. ENV, December 8, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

Mid-December 2022

**Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam**

Le Van Nam, 40, was fined 1.2 billion dong (47,650 US\$) for buying, housing and transporting wild animals. He was arrested on his motorcycle on May 21, 2022 with 4 common emerald doves (*Chalcophaps indica*) and a silver pheasant (*Lophura nycthemera*). He was on his way to deliver them to customers. At his home, officials seized a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), 2 sunbeam snakes (*Xenopeltis unicolor*), 2 Chinese ferret-badgers (*Melogale moschata*), 2 Pallas's squirrels (*Callosciurus erythraeus*) and a silver pheasant.

Báo Phụ Nữ, December 18, 2022; Zing News, December 20, 2022.<sup>47</sup>



Mid-December 2022

**Huy Kiem, Binh Thuan Province, Viet Nam**

Le Van Hieu, 40, had 49.5 kg of animals and animal parts seized from his home, one live reticulated python (*Malayopython reticulatus*, synonymous with *Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), 2 dead small Indian civets (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III in India), 8 dead black giant squirrels (*Ratufa bicolor*, Appendix II), 12 dead Vietnam mouse-deer (*Tragulus versicolor*), a Chinese serow (*Capricornis milneedwardsii*, Appendix I) and 35 parts (heads, bodies, tails and legs) of primates (Appendix I or II). Lao Dong, December 23, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

December 16, 2022

**Chau Nga, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam**

The following animals - some dead, some alive - were seized at Van Thang's home, 2 pangolins, a monkey (Primates, Appendix I or II), 3 mustelids (family Mustelidae) and 7 bamboo rats (genus *Rhizomys* or *Cannomys badius*).

Tâm Nhìn, December 16, 2022.<sup>49</sup>



December 13, 2022

**Bao Loc, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam**

Mrs. Le was riding her motorcycle on the A20 freeway with a frozen Sunda pangolin. At her home, police found another Sunda pangolin, a reticulated python (*Malayopython reticulatus*, synonymous with *Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) and 3 frozen leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II).

Tiền Phong, December 31, 2022.<sup>50</sup>





**November 1, 2022**

**Jammu, Jammu District, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India**

Officials seized cut deer antlers and dried hemipenes from Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I). Tantric priests say they bring good luck and sell them to believers as “roots”.  
Rising Kashmir, November 2, 2022.<sup>53</sup>

**November 3, 2022**

**Challekere Taluk, Chitradurga District, State of Karnataka, India**

Police arrested 5 individuals who worked for an organised gang led by Ankita, a 21-year-old woman. They had 2 country-made muzzle load guns and sold ivory as “cigarettes”, skins as “gaddige chaape” (ashram mats) and tiger nails (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) as “nail varnish”. Ankita was in cahoots with traffickers and poachers in Andhra Pradesh. She bought their trophies and supplied them with gunpowder and ammunition. In the Chitradurga forest, Ankita’s gang poached pangolins, soaking them in boiling water before scaling them. Officials were able to seize 3 kg of scales (from 5-10 pangolins), 4 blackbuck skins (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal) and a live cervicapre antelope (which had a narrow escape).  
The Hindu, November 4, 2022.<sup>54</sup>



**November 3, 2022**

**Sausar Tehsil, Chhindwara District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Brijlal Kayda, Bhura Ban, Sukhram Darsama, Anil Bete and Wasudeo Ban were seen at midnight one night, approaching an 11,000 volt line with 50 wooden stakes, axes and knives. All of them electro-poaching experts, they are notorious for trapping jungle cats (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II), Bengal foxes (*Vulpes bengalensis*, Appendix III in India), nilgaus (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), spotted deer (*Axis axis*), sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*). Kayda was arrested while the other 4 are on the run. They all live in Sardoni and traffic bushmeat in the Sausar tehsil, which has a population of 180,000 (last census 2011).  
The Times of India, November 4, 2022.<sup>55</sup>



**November 3, 2022**

**Karnali, Vadodara District, State of Gujarat, India**



Seizure in a store near the Kuber Bhandari temple of 15 hemipenes of Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 31 “siyar singhi”, these fabled golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) “horns” made of mud and tufts of hair, 2 live Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), 68 black corals (order Antipatharia) and 71 shells and conch shells, all supposed to bring happiness, prosperity and the protection of divinities.

WCCB, November 5, 2022; The Times of India, November 9, 2022; Wildlife SOS, November 15, 2022.<sup>56</sup>

**November 6, 2022**

**Tatanagar Junction Station, East Singhbhum District, State of Jharkhand, India**

A woman on an express train to Delhi carried parcels worth over 60,000 US\$, and reportedly received 97 US\$ for her courier services. Inside were 19 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), 4 blood pythons (*Python brongersmai*, Appendix II), 2 sand boas (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II), one albino python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), one reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), one Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), 12 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 9 European rhinoceros beetles (*Oryctes nasicornis*), and spiders of many species. The RPF (Railway Protection Force) called in snake experts to move the juvenile reptiles out of the boxes to safety. She said not to be aware of the dangerous nature of her shipment, and yet traveled with it 1,745 km from Dimapur to Tatanagar. She would have covered 3,000 km if she hadn’t been stopped. One python and 8 chameleons already died by the time she was arrested.

New Delhi Television, November 7, 2022; Telangana Today, November 7, 2022; The Times of India, November 8, 2022.<sup>57</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENCE**  
**Mid-November 2022**  
**Venjaramoodu, Thiruvananthapuram District,**  
**State of Kerala, India**



Attingal and Venjaramoodu police arrested Dileep, alias Chanthu (43), and Prabhulla (32). The couple lived in a camp with ganja, hash oil, banknotes, python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) fat, homemade explosives and a firearm, and were protected by 10 dogs. Kerala Kaumudi, November 16, 2022; Mathrubhumi, November 16, 2022.<sup>58</sup>

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Najibabad, Bijnor District, State of**  
**Uttar Pradesh, India**

Mahesh Chandra, Pururaj and Ankit had a whole mess of fauna, used in tantric rituals and sexual charlatanry, seized from their store: pangolin scales; bear teeth, hair and claws (presumably from sloth bears, *Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I), Indian crested porcupine quills (*Hystrix indica*), stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II), musk, genuine or plastic "hatha jodi" (hemipenis from the Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and bodies of 3 lizards species. Web News India, December 7, 2022.<sup>59</sup>



**December 14, 2022**  
**Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil**  
**Nadu, India**

More exotics are imported via Bangkok: 3 marmosets (*Callitrichidae*, Appendix I or II), 8 sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*) and 3 black-and-white tegus (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II). Chennai Customs, December 14, 2022; The Times of India, December 15, 2022.<sup>60</sup>

**December 16, 2022**  
**Guwahati, Kamrup Metropolitan**  
**District, State of Assam, India**

Either 2 or 4 criminals (unclear) were found in possession of 3 pieces of elephant tusk, weighing around 8 kg, and 2 tiger canines. They were caught by WCCB bloodhounds and accompanying Forestry Department officers in a "dhaba", a roadside restaurant. WCCB, December 17, 2022.<sup>61</sup>



**December 18, 2022**  
**Deesa, Banaskantha District, State of**  
**Gujarat, India**



Arjun Modi, an herbalist and natural medicine "specialist", has 34 alleged animal by-products confiscated. These items include lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I) and tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) teeth and claws, Indian crested porcupine (*Hystrix indica*) quills, Bengal fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*, Appendix III in India) intestines and skins, and deer skins (family *Cervidae*). Modi says that all these anatomical pieces are fakes and date back to when his father and grandfather ran the store. Analyses are currently underway in a laboratory.

DT Next, December 19, 2022; The Times of India, December 19, 2022.<sup>62</sup>

**December 18, 2022**  
**Hebbal, Bengaluru Urban District, and Davan-**  
**agere, Davanagere District, State of Karnataka,**  
**India**

Shamanur Shivashankarappa Mallikarjun, a former minister and current MP, has the following seized from his home: 10 blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal), 3 mongooses (*Herpestes* spp., Appendix III in India and Pakistan), 2 golden jackals (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India), 7 wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) and 7 spotted deer (*Axis axis*). The politician, the manager, the caretaker and the handyman are subject to the Wildlife Act and have been provisionally arrested. India Today, December 22, 2022; PiPa News, December 22, 2022; The Hindu, December 23, 2022; Mangalorean, December 31, 2022.<sup>63</sup>



**December 20, 2022**  
**Mumbai, Mumbai City District, State of**  
**Maharashtra, India**

Two individuals are arrested after WCCB feds and the Maharashtra Forest Department recover 7 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), 9 Indian black turtles (*Melanochelys trijuga*, Appendix II) and 5 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II). WCCB, December 21, 2022.<sup>64</sup>



## SAUDI ARABIA

November 2022

## Riyadh Province, Saudi Arabia

Colonel Abdul Rahman Al-Otaibi, spokesman for the Special Forces for Environmental Security, announced that 8 lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II) and grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) have been seized from a private home and transferred to a State shelter. The offender faces 10 years in prison and/or a fine of 30 million riyals (8 million US\$).

Ajel, November 14, 2022; Al-Ain, November 16, 2022.<sup>69</sup>



## CYPRUS

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

## Near Vrysoules, Famagusta District, Cyprus

In cooperation with the local police, a mist net was dismantled too late for an Egyptian rousette (*Rousettus aegyptiacus*) and 5 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine).

The average adult Egyptian rousette measures between 12 and 19 cm, with a wingspan of 60 cm and an average weight of 80 to 170 grams. These night workers are useful.

They help to pollinate fruit trees and disperse their seeds, but are considered a nuisance by arboriculturists.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 2, 2022.<sup>70</sup>



## ISRAEL

December 2, 2022

## alShaykh Ahmad, West Bank Territory, Israel

National Parks and Tsahal forces jointly intercept 4 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and several deer from a villager's garden. The 3 deer species present in Israel and its annexed territories are the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and Mesopotamian fallow deer (*Dama mesopotamica*, Appendix I). They are protected by the 1955 Wildlife Law but threatened by poaching and natural habitat loss to agricultural and urban areas.

Israel Nature and Parks Authority, December 2, 2022.<sup>71</sup>

December 21, 2022

## Nallasopara, Palghar District, State of Maharashtra, India

The WCCB and Forest Department arrest an individual with an Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), Kenyan sand boa (*Gongylophis colubrinus*, Appendix II, endemic to North and East Africa), corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*, endemic to the USA), iguanas (family Iguanidae), bearded dragon (genus *Pogona*, endemic to Australia), tarantula (family Theraphosidae) and scorpions (order Scorpiones).

WCCB, December 22, 2022.<sup>65</sup>

December 27, 2022

## Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Just 5 days after airport staff held a crisis meeting regarding the wave of foreign animal imports into India and contiguous countries, 2 passengers from Thailand were arrested with 40 pythons (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II), 13 cobras (*Naja* spp., or *Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) and 13 baby monkeys (Primates, Appendix I or II) in their luggage. The snakes are native to Africa and North America, and all the animals are planned to be returned to Thailand immediately.

DT Next, December 28, 2022.<sup>66</sup>

December 27, 2022

## Saiphai, Kolasib District, State of Mizoram, India

For several months, Mizoram police have faced a stream of exotic animals smuggled in from Myanmar. Inside a vehicle, they seized 2 African colobuses (*Colobus* spp., Appendix II) and a crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II). The driver is from Assam.

Northeast Now, December 27, 2022.<sup>67</sup>

## PAKISTAN

November 24, 2022

## Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

At a store in district 6, officials seize hats, jackets and chokers made from tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), rabbit, mink (family Mustelidae) and fox (genus *Vulpes*) skins.

UrduPoint, November 24, 2022.<sup>68</sup>



## TURKIYE

November 17, 2022

**Küçükçekmece District, Istanbul Province, Türkiye**

After receiving an anonymous tip, agents at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry made an incredible discovery that led to the seizure of the following:

- 18 stuffed animals: flamingos (*Phoenicopteridae*, Appendix II), griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II), peafowls (*Pavo* spp., Appendix II or Appendix III in Pakistan), chukar partridge (*Alectoris chukar*), vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), wild goat (genus *Capra*), marten (genus *Martes*) and crocodile (*Crocodylia*, Appendix I or II).

- 343 skins or skin fragments belonging to lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II), leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), lynx (*Lynx* spp., Appendix I or II), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I or II), wolf (genus *Canis*), fox (family *Canidae*), gazelle (genera *Gazella* or *Procapra*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), zebra (genus *Equus*), raccoon (genus *Procyon*), wild sheep (genus *Ovis*) and crocodile (*Crocodylia*, Appendix I or II).

- 28 python skin bags (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) and 20 wild pig teeth (genus *Sus*).

- 90 other protected animal parts such as loggerhead turtle shells (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I).

Anadolu Agency, November 18, 2022; Gazete Duvar, November 21, 2022; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye, November 21, 2022.<sup>72</sup>



December 2022

**Kadıköy District, Istanbul Province, Türkiye**



In a warehouse, officials seized 271 antlers, 55 antler fragments and 7 skulls belonging to red deer (*Cervus elaphus*); 30 fallow deer antlers (*Dama dama*), 485 antlers and 13 skulls of European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), 20 wild goat skulls (genus *Capra*), 29 antelope horns (family *Bovidae*), 141 reindeer antlers (*Rangifer tarandus*), 13 Eurasian elk antlers (*Alces alces*), 50 white-tailed deer antlers (*Odocoileus virginianus*), 5 chamois skulls (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), 5 bison horns (genus *Bison*), 20 pronghorn horns (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I for the population of Mexico), stuffed snakes, foxes, raptors and turtles, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman amphorae, 35 antique coins. One arrest.

And Tavuk Piyasası, December 19, 2022; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye, December 20, 2022.<sup>73</sup>

### NORTHERN EUROPE

#### LITHUANIA

November 9 and 30, 2022

**Raubonys, Panevezys County, and Telsiai County, Lithuania**

Two brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), 4 lynxes (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II), a Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), a European pine marten (*Martes martes*) and a rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II)

have been removed from the Raubonys theme park. They each arrived more than 4,000 km from their country of origin due to unknown circumstances. The macaque and lynxes were transferred to Kaunas zoo; the eagle owl and pine marten to a refuge in Kaunas, and the 2 bears to Telšiai zoo before being admitted to an "alternative" wolf and bear reserve in Germany's Black Forest.

Environmental Protection Department, November 10, 2022; Delfi, December 5, 2022.<sup>74</sup>





## NORWAY

### OPERATION THUNDER 2022

October 2022

**Oslo Gardermoen International Airport, Ørje and Lørenskog, Eastern Norway Region, and Kristiansand, Southern Norway Region, Norway**



Police and the Norwegian Environment Agency intercepted 9 pieces of luggage containing by-products of CITES-protected species, which were imported without permits. These items include ivory, snakeskin, alligator (*Alligator* spp., Appendix I or II) or crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), live reptiles and parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except 4 species) and sturgeon (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II).

Customs also seized a large number of substances based on protected plant species, such as African almond (*Prunus africana*, Appendix II) bark meant to treat prostate problems.

Norwegian Environment Agency, December 7, 2022; KK, January 5, 2023.<sup>75</sup>

December 11, 2022

**Kristiansand Port, Southern Norway Region, Norway**



The *Superspeed 1* in Kristiansand port on December 10, 2021

A Norwegian-registered car gets off *Superspeed 1* from Hirtshals port, Denmark. On board are 4 people on their way to the west of the country. The customs officers begin an "ordinary inspection", which leads to an unordinary result. In their luggage, hidden under their clothes, was one red-eyed treefrog (*Agalychnis callidryas*, Appendix II), 2 green and black poison frogs (*Dendrobates auratus*, Appendix II), one Amazon tree frog (*Trachycephalus resinifictrix*), 2 geckos (*Phelsuma* spp., Appendix II), one Guichenot's giant gecko (*Correlophus ciliatus*, synonymous with *Rhacodactylus ciliatus*), 2 green grass lizards (*Takydromus smaragdinus*), one fire skink (*Mochlus fernandi*), 3 corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*), a few insects and more worrying, highly venomous snakes : 2 western diamond-backed rattlesnakes (*Crotalus atrox*), 4 white-lipped pit vipers (*Trimeresurus albolabris*) and 2 white-lipped island pitvipers (*Trimeresurus insularis*). The animals, which come from all over the world except Europe, were handed over to the city zoo. The smugglers are being questioned by the police. NRK, August 7, 2023.<sup>76</sup>

## WESTERN EUROPE

### GERMANY

November 9, 2022

**Berlin, Berlin State, Germany**

A 23-year-old has just been charged for selling "art and precious objects" in a store in 2019, back when he was a teenager (between 18 and 21 under German law). When police raided the shop, they seized 51 worked elephant ivories (Appendix I or II), one worked sperm whale ivory (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), 6 ocelot skins (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), a jaguar skin (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), a green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I), a hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) and a loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I). The suspect's trial will take place in juvenile court. The (possibly familial) origin of all these wildlife by-products from endangered marine and terrestrial species remains a mystery.

General Public Prosecutor's Office in Berlin, November 10, 2022.<sup>77</sup>



### AUSTRIA

October 2022

**Salzburg, Salzburg State, Austria. Border with Germany.**

Seizure of black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II), kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), marsh harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II), Eurasian hoopoes (*Upupa epops*), a European bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*), a cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), a little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), and 2 presumed Asiatic lion cubs (*Panthera leo persica*, Appendix I in India) from a taxidermist who sold his work via the Internet. The birds were sold for 130 € to 600 € (130 to 602 US\$). Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 24, 2022.<sup>78</sup>



### BELGIUM

### OPERATION THUNDER 2022

October 2022

**Belgium**

Authorities seized more than 20 specimens or parts of protected species from an antique dealer: bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and monkey (Primates, Appendix I or II) skulls, an elephant tusk, stuffed parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except 4 species), giant clams (Tridacnidae, Appendix II), turtle shells and skeletons and corals, all valued at over €7,000 (6,790 US\$). Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, December 6, 2022.<sup>79</sup>



## BORDEAUX, EXOTIC BROTHEL

### EXQUISITE CORPSES

**Bordeaux, Department of Gironde, France**

#### Exquisite corpses

- We'd grown accustomed by composing issues of "On the Trail" since April 2013 to trophies for the worst female hunters being awarded to American women triumphing next to bullet-riddled giraffes and leopards in southern Africa or next to the remains of a husky mistaken for a wolf. But in this issue 38, we've fallen to the bottom of the barrel with a Frenchwoman who intends to revolutionize the taxidermy industry with installations that confuse zoophilia with pornography. On her website, Stéphanie Barthes claims to "bring a different vision of taxidermy, making it more contemporary with the help of her feminine sensibility". The poetess of taxidermy doesn't hesitate to mate with a wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) in an allegorical performance entitled "The table of Diana" and to stuff monkeys (Primates, Appendix I or II) aping "The Scream" of Munch. One tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) bought "off the back of a truck" from a circus owner completes her menagerie.



More than 1,600 stuffed or frozen ex-wild animals were discovered and seized by the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) at the end of October 2021 in the workshop and showroom on a street in Caudéran, a residential suburb of Bordeaux, rented to her by her mentor in taxidermy, André Rouillon, a figure in this industry who would have retired in 2019. The majority of the 1,600 trophies would belong to Rouillon. "We'd never seen so many rare species," one of the OFB inspectors told the Bordeaux magistrates' court, monkeys, birds including a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and American flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, Appendix II), and lion cubs (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II). There were also feline and a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) skins. "An internationally recognized professional played the role of pygmalion to Stéphanie Barthes, so we could expect everything to be done by the book." "But when you go on site, you're stunned, there are hundreds of protected species in a mess, with no traceability and complete amateurism," said prosecutor Marie-Noëlle Courtiau-Duterrier, adding that order books with price lists had been

found. She requested a 6-month suspended prison sentence for Rouillon and Barthes, a 75,000 € fine of which 50,000 € suspended and confiscation of the collection.

- He and she received a 6-month suspended prison sentence and a 15,000 € (15,550 US\$) fine for the illegal possession, use and sale of protected species. Barthes was banned from working as a taxidermist for 2 years, and the collection of stuffed animals was confiscated. The 2 convicts have appealed.

France Bleu Gironde, October 20 and December 16, 2022; Sud Ouest, October 21, 2022.<sup>80</sup>

### JUNGLE QUEEN

**November 30, 2022**

**Bordeaux, Department of Gironde, Toulouse, Department of Haute-Garonne and Department of Pyrénées-Orientales, France, and Alicante, Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain**

#### The queen of the jungle

A 22-year-old woman was arrested. A riding instructor having a driving licence and veterinary basics, who's proficient in Spanish and social networks, she may have been inspired by celebrities holding or walking tigers, lion cubs and other wild cats on white marble in dream apartments or sitting on Lamborghini passenger seats like on thrones. She decided she would become the "queen of the jungle" and wildlife selfies, and before long gained an understanding of this discreet market. She would obtain the following from brokers and breeders in Poland, Belgium and, above all, Spain, and resell them to French or living in France customers at high prices: leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), servals (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), lynx (*Lynx* spp., Appendix I or II), pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), marmosets (Callitrichidae, Appendix I or II), red-handed tamarins (*Saguinus midas*, Appendix II), grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), macaws (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II except 3 species), blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II), barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*), sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), "silver" foxes (red melanistic fox *Vulpes vulpes*) and turtles. A complaint following a serval's death several hours after delivery triggered a national and international investigation in mid-2021. Three members of the woman's family and inner circle were arrested by the OCLAES (Office central de lutte contre les atteintes à l'environnement et à la santé publique) and the OFB (Office Français de la Biodiversité), then released pending a possible indictment. Their homes in Haute-Garonne and Pyrénées-Orientales served as transit points for the queen of the jungle's "merchandise". A farmer from Alicante, Spain was also arrested with the help of Eurojust (the European Union's judicial cooperation unit).

La Dépêche du Midi, December 1, 2022; France Bleu Gironde, December 2, 2022; Le Parisien, December 2 and 6, 2022; Sud Ouest, December 2, 2022; French Biodiversity Agency, December 7, 2022; National Gendarmerie, December 8, 2022.<sup>81</sup>





**December 10, 2022**

**Besançon, Department of Doubs, France**

At a Christmas flea market, officials seized 97 by-products of species protected by international conventions, European regulations and French law, including ivory statuettes, an elephant molar, 4 carved tusks, a revolver with an ivory grip, 3 stuffed green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I), a Iberian lynx skin (*Lynx pardinus*, Appendix I) and a wild cat skin (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II). The OFB estimated the total market value to be €20,000, or 19,900 US\$.

L'Est Républicain, December 23 and 25, 2022.<sup>82</sup>



## THE NETHERLANDS

**OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

**October 2022**

**The Netherlands**

Police and customs recovered a tusk and carved ivory, a parrot feather fan (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except 4 species), raptor talons (Falconiformes, Appendix I or II except 5 species), various crocodile leather goods (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) and a stuffed head and juvenile specimen; a stuffed sea turtle (Cheloniidae or Dermochelyidae, Appendix I), a sawfish rostrum (Pristidae, Appendix I), 5 kg of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II), seahorse-based pharmaceutical products (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and a seahorse skeleton; coral, 4 kg of peccary meat (family Tayassuidae), and 30 live animals, including parrots, songbirds, snakes, turtles and a tarantula (family Theraphosidae). It would have to be Operation Thunder all the time.

Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, December 7, 2022.<sup>83</sup>



**Beginning of November 2022**

**Hesmond, Province of North Brabant, The Netherlands**

A criminal investigation culminates in officials seizing an ivory necklace and bracelet, 2 coral necklaces and a tortoise shell bracelet from a woman offering them for sale online. Eindhovens Dagblad, November 4, 2022; Fauna Police - East Brabant, November 4, 2022.<sup>84</sup>



## EASTERN EUROPE

### RUSSIA

**November 25, 2022**

**Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia**

On July 14, August 16 and August 18, 2022, Alexey S. published ads on his website, "VKontakte", looking to buy tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). Alexey S. and managers of "VKontakte" failed to appear in court despite being "duly notified." Per the environmental prosecutor's request, open access to the webpage has been blocked.

Chelyabinsk Oblast Prosecutor's Office, November 25, 2022; Ordzhonikidzevsky District Court in the city of Magnitogorsk, December 13, 2022.<sup>85</sup>



**December 21, 2022**

**Moscow Federal City, Russia**

A cotton-headed tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*, Appendix I), white-eared marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II), red-handed tamarin (*Saguinus midas*, Appendix II), Alexandrine parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) and tortoise were all sold without a permit or certificate of origin at a pet shop on Marksistskaya Street. Authorities took the animals and are considering entrusting them to the Moscow Zoo.

Moscow City Prosecutor's Office, December 21, 2022.<sup>86</sup>

## CZECHIA

### REPEATED OFFENCE

**Beginning November 2022**

**Ostrava-City District, Moravian-Silesian Region, Czechia**

Seizure of 247 animals, including 131 of protected species poached in the forests of Eastern Europe, from a repeat offender in clandestine taxidermy: common otters (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I), lynx (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II), brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), deer (family Cervidae), red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), hedgehogs (genus *Erinaceus*), Eurasian eagle-owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), long-eared owls (*Asio otus*, Appendix II), barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), Eurasian sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), honey buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II), grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) and crows (genus *Corvus*). A few specimens, pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and one hornbill (family Bucerotidae) had been bought from circuses after their death or after bankruptcies. This large stock of stuffed animals testifies to the intense poaching and trafficking activity in Czechia. The taxidermist had already been convicted in 2019, and his stock had already been seized. He had started all over again. The Customs Administration of the Czech Republic, December 7, 2022; TV Nova, December 7, 2022.<sup>87</sup>



**December 14, 2022 and end June 2023**  
**Měchenice, Central Bohemian Region, Czechia**

A wrestler, boxer and smasher who is more famous in the Czech Republic than the 11 soccer national team players adds a new page of advertising to his press-book. Karlos Vémola was found guilty with 3 accomplices of commercial trafficking in white and striped Bengal tiger pups (*Panthera tigris tigris*, Appendix I) and illegal possession of other animals. In Vémoland, you could see lionesses (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II) on leashes, sharks in an aquarium, crocodiles (Crocodylia, Appendix I or II) in a screened pond and squirrels (family Sciuridae) in cages. Instead of a 3-year prison sentence, he was fined 9,000 US\$. Rumors that Vémola had sold tigers to Prague's Asian community have not been corroborated, but they continue to have echoes in a Czech Republic stuck in tiger gelatin trafficking.



© extra.cz

Tiger trafficking in the Czech Republic by Ludvík Berousek, Miloš Hrozínek and Xuan Vu Le, a Vietnamese businessman, see "On the Trail" n°22 p. 69, n°25 p. 63, n°32 p. 76, and n°36 p. 58 and n°37 p.48.

PrahaN.cz, December 15, 2022; eXtra.cz, December 16 and 17, 2022 and April 19 and 24 and June 27, 2023; Refresher, April 19, 2023; iDNES.cz, July 3, 2023.<sup>88</sup>

## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

**November 2, 2022**

**Brisbane, State of Queensland, Australia**

A slum for sick animals

Seizure at the home of a man with a wild animal rehabilitation permit of 120 animals cloistered in unbreathable air, most of them blind from living in dust and darkness : pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), one eastern water dragon (*Intellagama lesueurii*, Appendix II), turtles, one barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), coconut lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*, Appendix II), Australian magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), one butcher bird (family Artamidae), kookaburras (genus *Dacelo*), one crow (genus *Corvus*), one currawong (genus *Strepera*), one Australian brush-turkey (*Alectura lathami*), one bush stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*), pigeons (family Columbidae), Pacific black ducks (*Anas superciliosa*), one tawny frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*), one noisy miner (*Manorina melanocephala*), common ringtail possums (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*), brushtail possums (genus *Trichosurus*) and one phascogale (genus *Phascogale*). 25 were found in the freezer. Around thirty were put out of their misery. The survivors were transferred to the RSPCA shelter in Wacol. Some are still dying there.

9News, November 10, 2022; ABC News, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022; State of Queensland (Department of Environment and Science), November 10, 2022.<sup>89</sup>



© AN

Common ringtail possums  
(*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*).



# VARIOUS MARINE SPECIES



*Hippocampus comes*. Photo Tony Strazzari

## AMERICA

### BRAZIL

**December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**São Paulo-Guarulhos International Airport, State of São Paulo, Brazil**

A hectic night at the airport. After a Brazilian trying to leave for India with 2 kg of cocaine and a Nigerian trying to leave for Ethiopia with 3 kg of the same substance, it was the turn of a Chinese national to be arrested with 119 dried sea cucumbers and almost 3 kg of swim bladders in her luggage.

Aeroin, December 3, 2023.<sup>1</sup>



© Hong Kong Customs



© Hong Kong Customs



© Hong Kong Customs

## ASIA

### CHINA

**October 26 and 28, 2022**

**Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China**

Customs seized 50 tonnes of sea cucumbers, shark fins, swim bladders, dried tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II), molluscs and ginseng, 10,000 bottles of wine and spirits, 30 tonnes of electronic waste and products, cosmetics and doses of hyaluronic acid from 10 shipping containers bound for Tianjin and declared to contain "acrylic boards". The total value is estimated at 300 million Hong Kong dollars or 8.2 million US\$.

Two arrests: a man and a woman who run a logistics company and operate a warehouse in the Yuen Long area.

Hong Kong Customs, November 7, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## OPERATION CONVOY

December 11-12, 2022

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Until now, the smuggling of various goods, including animals and wildlife, between Hong Kong and mainland China has been attributed to speedboats, those horse-powered sea-racing cars built mostly in clandestine shipyards. This winter, 2022, customs confirmed another smuggling route to Mainland China. Container ships can leave Hong Kong for Shanghai and also Tianjin, with treasure troves in their bellies.

Eight containers were targeted by customs profilers because they were said to be importing plastic pellets into China, despite the fact that China is the world's leading producer. Four other containers were targeted because they were said to be importing household appliances into China, a country that fills the world's markets with household appliances. 75,000 LPs of classical music were seized. While the Chinese bourgeoisie is proved to be fan of Beethoven, Mozart and Dvorak, it also reveals a penchant for exotic spirits. 15,000 bottles of champagne, red wine, whisky and sake have also been seized alongside 22 tonnes of sea cucumbers, fish swim bladders, shark fins, manta ray gills (*Mobula* spp., Appendix II) and dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II). If we add cases of cosmetics and tonnes of electronic products and waste, the total value of the seizures amounts to 200 million Hong Kong dollars or 25.6 million US\$. The tax evasion, if the goods had reached their recipients, would have amount to 130 million Hong Kong dollars or 16.64 million US\$. A single crime syndicate was allegedly responsible for the fraudulent filling of the containers, which were due to leave Hong Kong on 2 container ships whose names have not been released. Five arrests.

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, December 21, 2022; South China Morning Post, December 21, 2022.<sup>3</sup>



Tsing Yi container terminal in Hong Kong

December 12, 2022

Huangdao District, Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

A shipment said to contain algae contained 961 seahorses, *Hippocampus comes* (Appendix II), *Hippocampus spinosissimus* (Appendix II) and *Hippocampus histrix* (Appendix II), 75 giant clam pieces (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) and 29 coral fragments (*Distichopora irregularis*, Appendix II).

Chinese Customs, December 18, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

December 2022

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Officials seize 2 bracelets and 2 necklaces (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) made of giant clam, in addition to 2 red coral necklaces (genus *Corallium*), from an overseas passenger's backpack.

Chinese Customs, December 28, 2022<sup>5</sup>

## INDIA

End of December 2022

Devipattinam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 3 bags of seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and 150 kg of sea cucumbers in a van. Two arrests. Suspected of being bound for Sri Lanka.

Daily Thanthi, December 25, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

## TÜRKİYE

Beginning of October 2022

Türkiye

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry prohibits all forms of hunting, collecting and selling of 7 marine species, great white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II), giant tun (*Tonna galea*), Mediterranean pillow coral (*Cladocora caespitosa*, Appendix II), gorgonians *Spinimuricea klavereni*, yellow gorgonians (*Eunicella cavolini*), white gorgonians (*Eunicella singularis*) and purple gorgonians (*Paramuricea clavata*). The Gulf of Edremit in the Aegean Sea is a major breeding ground for great white sharks in the Mediterranean. Tufted Mediterranean pillow coral are endemic hard corals of the Aegean Sea, much sought-after by aquarists.

Türk Deniz Araştırmaları Vakfı (TUDAV), September 2022; Hürriyet Daily News, October 4, 2022.<sup>7</sup>



Mediterranean pillow corals (*Cladocora caespitosa*)



## EUROPE

### FRANCE

#### OPERATION GALUCHAT (SHAGREEN) March-November 2022 Region Occitanie, France



Over the course of investigations carried out by the Environmental Inspectors from the CITES network, 1,700 specimens or parts were seized valued at 17,000 € or 16,915 US\$ in decoration and jewellery stores. The majority of the seizures were shark teeth and jaws, particularly from shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II), silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II), and hammerhead sharks (Sphyrnidae, Appendix II), as well as corals. The other animals seized were nautilus-es (Nautilidae, Appendix II), giant clams (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) including Tevoro clams (*Tridacna mbalavuana*, Appendix II) and spider conches (genus *Lambis*).

French Biodiversity Agency, November 10, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## ITALY

### Beginning of December 2022

#### Leonardo da Vinci–Fiumicino International Airport, Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, Region of Lazio, Italy

Seizures of tropical fish including a palette surgeonfish (*Paracanthurus hepatus*), Indian Ocean corals and small crustaceans in 2 parcels. The palette surgeonfish is native to the Indian and Pacific oceans. A specimen sells for around 60 US\$. It is best known for the character Dory in "Finding Nemo".

Fanpage.it, December 3, 2022; Quotidiano di Sicilia, December 3, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

### November 24, 2022

#### State of Western Australia, Australia

In a "foreign" fishing boat, authorities seize sea cucumbers and shark fins, and then let the 4 fishermen go away aboard the boat.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), December 7, 2022.<sup>10</sup>



Palette surgeonfish (*Paracanthurus hepatus*)

## AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**December 27, 2022**

**Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America**

Ricky Spires has been sentenced to 2 years' probation. He admitted taking part in the trafficking of 3,000 pieces of coral between the Philippines and the United as part of a smuggling ring between July 2017 and August 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.203). Spires is one of the many defendants in this case.

Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, January 2023.<sup>1</sup>



## ASIA

### CHINA

**October 2022**

**Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, Hubei Province, China**

Customs intercept 1,063 grams of staghorn coral (*Acroporidae*, Appendix II) from a passenger's luggage from abroad.

Chinese Customs, November 2, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**October 2022**

**Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China**

Red coral jewellery (genus *Corallium*) is retrieved inside a parcel from Japan. Total weight: 81.6 grams. Life News, November 5, 2022, Chinese Customs, November 9, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**December 3, 2022**

**Nanjing Lukou International Airport, Jiangsu Province, China**

Two pieces of stony coral (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II), 1.9 kg in total, are taken from the luggage of an overseas passenger.

Chinese Customs, December 7, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

## EUROPE

### BELGIUM

**OPERATION THUNDER 2022**

**October 2022**

**Brussels International Airport, Zaventem, Province of Flemish Brabant, Flemish Region, Belgium**

Customs take 4 corals from a passenger's luggage. Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, December 6, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

### DENMARK

**December 20, 2022**

**Billund International Airport, Southern Denmark Region, Denmark**

A 21-year-old woman returning from Malaysia has 5 stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) taken from her.

JydskeVestkysten, December 21, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

### ITALY

**November 18, 2022**

**Venice Marco Polo International Airport, Metropolitan City of Venice, Region of Veneto, Italy**

Seizure of one kilo of stony coral (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) in the luggage of a passenger travelling from Zanzibar.

Customs and Monopolies Agency, November 18, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

### POLAND

**November 23, 2022**

**Rzeszów-Jasionka International Airport, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland**

A female passenger from Egypt has 18 stony coral fragments (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) taken from her luggage.

Tax Administration Chamber in Rzeszów, November 23, 2022.<sup>8</sup>



# CRUSTACEANS

## ASIA

### KAZAKHSTAN

**October 20, 2022**

**Minkeser, North Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan**

Arrest of 2 poachers in flagrante delicto extracting brine shrimps (*Artemia salina*) on the shores of the salt lake. Two full bags were seized from the boot of their black Toyota Camry, along with a bag that was being filled. Poaching of this small crustacean and its eggs is becoming increasingly common.

Brine shrimp, see "On the Trail" n°32 p. 259, n°37 p. 199. Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, October 21, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

## EUROPE

### RUSSIA

**October-November 2022**

**Lake Medvezhye, Kurgan Oblast, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.**

A brine shrimp (genus *Artemia*) gang was dismantled on the banks of the lake and more than 3 tonnes seized. The ecological damage is estimated by the authorities at more than 2.5 million rubles, or 40,700 US\$.

With a surface area of 63 km<sup>2</sup> and a maximum depth of 1.5 m, Lake Medvezhye has been classified as a natural monument of regional importance since 2001. Its highly saline waters are devoid of fish. They are inhabited by green algae, blue-green algae, diatoms and artemia. Lake Medvezhye takes its name from the bear (медведь or medved' in Russian).

Legend has it that a bear with an injured paw came to dip it in the lake water and healed very quickly. The waters and mud are still renowned for their therapeutic properties and a sanatorium was opened on the shores in 1925.

Nizhneobskoye Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fishery, December 19, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



© Нижнеобское территориальное управление Федерального агентства по рыболовству

# CLAMS, CONCHES, GOOSENECK BARNACLES, DATE MUSSELS ...

## ASIA

### CHINA

**October 2022**

**Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China**

Customs intercept 3 bracelets and 2 necklaces made of giant clam shell (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) from 2 passengers returning from abroad. Total weight: 295 grams.

Chinese Customs, October 24, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**October 2022**

**Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, Hubei Province, China**

Customs officers find 3 queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) weighing 3.12 kg overall inside an overseas passenger's luggage.

Chinese Customs, October 27, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

**October 2022**

**Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, Hubei Province, China**

A giant clam shell (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) weighing 2,894 grams is taken from an overseas passenger's luggage.

Chinese Customs, November 1, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**October 2022**

**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**

A giant clam shell (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) necklace and bracelet are seized from a passenger.

Chinese Customs, November 6, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**November 8, 2022**

**Qingdao-Jiaodong International Airport, Shandong Province, China**

A 1.8 kg, 30-cm-long horned helmet (*Cassis cornuta*) is taken from the luggage of a passenger leaving abroad.

Chinese Customs, November 14, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**November 2022**  
**Jiangning District, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China**

Customs seize 5.23 kg of giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) "go" game pieces in a parcel from abroad.

Chinese Customs, November 30, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**December 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**

Carefully concealed in a box of mooncakes, customs officers still found and confiscated 2 giant clamshell bracelets and a necklace (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) in the luggage of a passenger from abroad.

Chinese Customs, December 28, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**December 2022**  
**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**

X-rays detect 2 giant clamshell bracelets (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) stashed inside an abroad passenger's luggage, leading to their confiscation. Total weight: 410 grams. Chinese Customs, December 29, 2022.<sup>8</sup>



**PHILIPPINES**

**October 12, 2022**  
**Borbon, Province of Cebu, Philippines**

The farmer was a trafficker in giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II with reservation from Palau). Anecito Pogado exported clams known locally as taklobo for 15,000 Philippine pesos a kilo (256 US\$/kg). From his 'farm', the authorities seized 226 specimens weighing a total of 1,618 kg, representing a market value of more than 400,000 US\$. Cebu Daily News, October 16, 2022.<sup>9</sup>



**December 15, 2022**  
**Tabogon, Province of Cebu, Philippines**



Cooperation between the provincial police, the local police, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the naval and air forces and the coastguard put a stop to the trafficking of 76-year-old Natividad Nueva Ruiz. She was arrested at 9 a.m. as she was about to deliver a 10kg giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) worth 100,000 Philippine pesos (1,770 US\$). Her stock is colossal. A preliminary estimate puts its weight at 30 tonnes and its value at 360 million pesos, or 6.36 million US\$. The naval forces recall the vital role of clams for coral ecosystems.

Naval Forces Central of the Philippines Navy, December 16, 2022; SunStar, December 17, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**EUROPE**

**SPAIN**

**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**December 13, 2022**  
**Vigo, Province of Pontevedra, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain**

The poacher thought he could fool the police by hiding his booty among the rocks. He was caught red-handed with his bag containing 2.7 kilos of gooseneck barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*). The man has already been sentenced by Vigo's Criminal Court No. 1 to a ban on fishing and shellfish farming until 2025. The seizure was donated to charity. Faro de Vigo, December 13, 2022.<sup>11</sup>



## FRANCE

### REPEATED OFFENCE

**December 12, 2022**

**Vannes, Department of Morbihan, France**



Five Spanish men from Santander, Gijon, and Aviles were sentenced to pay fines for poaching gooseneck barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*). The main accused will pay 6,000 € or 6,220 US\$, and his accomplices 3,000 € or 3,110 US\$. They will also have to jointly pay damages of 5,000 € or 5,180 US\$ to the association Bretagne Vivante. The perpetrators were caught red handed in January 2020 with 6 bags containing 105 kg of barnacles and their vehicles were confiscated (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.13). Two of the accused are repeat offenders. The 5 men failed to show at their trial. Le Télégramme, December 12, 2022; Ouest-France, December 12, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## ITALY

**October 28, 2022**

**Molfetta, Metropolitan City of Bari, Region of Apulia, Italy**

3 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II) seized from a poacher. He will be tried, but no court decision can replace the seabed that he destroyed with a chisel to extract the mussels. To prevent the seizure from finding its way onto the black market, the mussels were crushed and thrown back into the sea.

La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno, October 28, 2022; MolfettaViva, October 28, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

**December 9, 2022**

**Taranto, Province of Taranto, Region of Apulia, Italy**

46 people were charged with involvement in trafficking in date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). At the head of the gang was Cataldo Resta. He gave his looting orders directly to Giuseppe Bellacicco, Gustavo Mancini, Giorgio Venneri and Giuseppina Zonile. All 5 are charged with criminal conspiracy to commit an environmental crime, extraction and commercialisation of a protected species which, according to the examining magistrate, caused "serious and irreversible damage to the marine ecosystem". Six other accomplices are charged with ecological disaster. A further 35 people - luxury restaurant owners, fishmongers and private individuals - are accused of handling stolen goods. Their defence strategies vary. Three executors, Fabio Delli Noci, Emanuele Delli Noci and Vincenzo Galeone, have opted for abbreviated proceedings and the prosecutor has requested a sentence of 3 years and 8 months in prison. The investigation began in 2017 and revealed destructive poaching throughout the Bay of Taranto. On the black market, a kilo of date mussels sells for around 70 €/kg.

La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno, May 6 and December 10, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**December 23, 2022**

**Venice Marco Polo International Airport, Metropolitan City of Venice, Region of Veneto, Italy**

A passenger returning from Cuba hid 27 queen conch shells (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) weighing nearly 8 kg and 125 cigars inside their luggage but customs officers are not fooled.

Customs and Monopolies Agency, December 23, 2022.<sup>15</sup>



Roe's abalone (*Haliotis roei*). Photo Andrea Ruggeri

*Haliotis* spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

**October 2, 2022**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Five rubber boats left the Swartkops River mouth at 2 a.m. on Sunday morning, heading out to sea. They were spotted by SANParks (South African National Parks) marine section officers, who decided to catch them on their return. An abalone poaching trip was highly likely. Four hours later, one of the rubber boats returned. The SANParks boat manoeuvres to board it. Instead of complying or fleeing, the zodiac sped towards it at full speed. The SANParks officers opened fire, aiming at the engine. The inflatable was hit and deflated before running aground on a sandbank. The 3 poachers were injured in this marine rodeo. They were arrested with the help of the police and an investigation was launched for attempted murder, contravention of the Marine Living Resources Act, poaching and defeating the ends of justice. As they ran towards the forces of law and order, they had time to throw some bags, probably filled with abalone, overboard.

The Herald (South Africa), October 3, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**October 2, 2022**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Two Chinese citizens were arrested in the early hours of the morning on their way to work. They are in abalone and other seafood business. A third suspect managed to escape. 525 dried abalones, 40 kg of Cape rock lobster (*Jasus lalandii*), 212 kg of squid (class Cephalopoda) and cash were seized. The value of the abalone is estimated at 66,640 rand (3,700 US\$, or 7 US\$ per abalone), while the value of the other products is estimated at 95,000 rand (5,280 US\$).

SAPS, October 2, 2022.<sup>2</sup>





**October 3, 2022**

**Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Shahabaz Mohamed was arrested in 2017 on Mozart Street, where he was storing fresh and dried abalone worth 4 million rand (295,950 US\$). He failed to appear in court and left the country. He eventually surrendered. He was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for contravention of the Marine Resources Act, 2 years' imprisonment for possession of abalone without permit, and 6 months for failure to comply with conditions of bail.

SAPS, October 4, 2022.<sup>3</sup>



**October 12, 2022**

**Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

The police wanted to check that the information they had just received about a pair of diver-poachers leaving the coast by car was correct. The vehicle's refusal to comply quickly provided them with the beginnings of an answer. After a chase through the streets of Cape Town, the vehicle was immobilised and 510 fresh abalones, unshucked, worth 255,000 rand or 14,180 US\$ (28 US\$ per abalone) were seized.

Cape Town Etc, October 13, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**October 15, 2022**

**Aliwal North, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Arrest of 2 traffickers followed by several police services as they moved from district to district. Aliwal North is a 2-hour drive from Queenstown. In their pick-up, 755 abalones worth 190,000 rand (10,570 US\$ or 14 US\$ per abalone) were seized.

SAPS, October 16, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**October 19, 2022**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

"When the driver noticed the police vehicle he immediately acted suspicious by parking the vehicle, locking it and standing next to the vehicle," said Captain Sandra Janse van Rensburg. Inside, the police seized 1,418 abalones worth an estimated 168,000 rand, or 9,350 US\$ and 6.6 US\$ per abalone. The man was arrested.

News24, October 20, 2022.<sup>6</sup>



**October 26, 2022**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

The Gqeberha Flying Squad and a private anti-poaching unit chased a Polo from the coastal district of Noordhoek. The 3 occupants were arrested. 198 shucked abalones and 9 unshelled abalones were recovered.

SAPS, October 26, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**October 31, 2022**

**Kuils River, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Another good tip. Three men were arrested in possession of more than 638 kg of abalones with a retail value of 1.17 million rand (65,000 US\$ or 102 US\$/kg). The operation was conducted jointly by teams from Hawks' Serious Organised Crime Investigation, Crime Intelligence and Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment.

SAPS, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**November 9, 2022**

**Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

When you speed up at the sight of the police, you're suspicious. This is what happened to 2 vehicles travelling along the R300 freeway in the early hours of the morning. The first was intercepted by the K9 unit and an unspecified quantity of abalone in 14 black garbage bags placed on the back seats was seized. Their value is estimated at 1.2 million rand (66,140 US\$). The second vehicle, which had managed to escape, was caught by the South African Police flying squad. Two traffickers were arrested.

Community Against Abalone Poaching (CAAP), November 9, 2022; SAPS, November 9, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**November 10, 2022**

**Simondium, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Seizure inside false compartments of a truck of 30,520 dried abalones worth around 9 million rand (496,000 US\$ or 16 US\$ per abalone). Once again, the information received by the police was correct. The 26-year-old driver was arrested.

SAPS, November 11, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**November 17, 2022**  
**Seafeld, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**



Udze, the police's Belgian shepherd, did a good job. He unearthed bags filled with 687,375 rand (37,900 US\$) worth of abalone in the bushes. Diving equipment was stashed nearby.  
SAPS, November 20, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

#### **OPERATION PAKISA**

**November 18 and 19, 2022**

**Jeffreys Bay, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

The Pakisa operation took place over 2 days on the 10 km of beaches in Jeffreys Bay. 633 abalones were seized (value: 71,500 rand or 3,940 US\$ or 6 US\$/abalone) and 11 highly probable poachers were arrested. The operation brought together officers from Humansdorp and Gqeberha K9, Ngqurha Border Policing, Kouga Municipality, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and private companies, supported by drones, surveillance cameras and boats.

SAPS, November 20, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**November 23, 2022**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

At 4.15 a.m., 6 men emerged and loaded bags into a Nissan pick-up which was then followed. It stopped in front of a house in rue Poséidon. On the lookout, the poachers spotted the police car and fled. The Nissan contained 2,163 abalones worth 280,000 rand (15,440 US\$ or 7 US\$ per abalone). The house was searched under a search warrant. Diving equipment worth 16,540 US\$ was seized. The house had no occupants. The Nissan and the clues collected in the house may help to catch the criminals.

SAPS, November 23, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**November 30, 2022**

**Betty's Bay, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Two men come up from the beach at Silver Sand, one carrying a large bag, the other carrying diving equipment. They were clearly abalone poachers. A local resident who had witnessed the scene, exasperated by this endless pillaging, asked his wife to call the police and, without waiting, he left his house and ordered the poachers to put their bags down. They refused, a scuffle ensued and they had to leave, abandoning their bag. The local resident picks it up and puts it in his garden. Revenge was not long in coming. Three men drove up and pelted him with stones. The chairman of Betty's Bay Neighbourhood Watch says this type of incident is rare: "We encourage residents not to get involved". As evidence of the violence of the abalone gangs, the Daily Maverick recalls the murder of Cameron Marc Padayachee in December 2021, a trafficker who refused to pay 'extortion fees', a kind of informal tax entitling him to poach in peace.

Daily Maverick, December 14, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

The house on Health road, behind the hospitals, housed an abalone drying and storage facility. 3 traffickers were arrested and 1,114 units of wet, 2,800 units of semi cooked abalones weighing a total of 410 kg and 3,205 dried abalones weighing a total of 421 kg were seized. Together with various items of equipment, they are valued at 2.8 million rand (164,900 US\$).

SAPS, December 2, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**December 2, 2022**

**Grabouw, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

The municipality of Overstrand covers an area of 1,708 km<sup>2</sup>. It comprises 14 wards or villages to the south of Cape Town. Its K9 unit has struck again with the arrest of 4 traffickers, including one woman, and the seizure of 1,563 abalones worth 350,000 rand or 20,610 US\$ (13 US\$ per abalone), 2 cars and 7 telephones.

Overstrand's K9 unit consists of 6 officers and 6 dogs. Its mission is to assist the police and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment in the fight against all types of crime. It is funded by the Western Cape government, which is trying to compensate for the reduction in resources allocated by the national government to the police's K9 brigades. The name K9, a pun on canine, was popularised in the 1970s by the science fiction series "Doctor Who". K9 was the name of the Doctor's companion robot dog.

News24, December 6, 2022.<sup>16</sup>





K9, Doctor Who's dog

**December 6, 2022**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Flat tyre, chase over. Ryno Swanepoel was arrested in July 2021 with 120 kg of abalone in his boot (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.252). He was sentenced to 24 months in prison, 21 of which are suspended. His Citroën flat-tyre car, worth 4,700 US\$, was confiscated for the benefit of the State.

SAPS, December 9, 2022.<sup>17</sup>



**December 7, 2022**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Seizure on Maitland beach of 8 bags filled with 1,119 abalones with an estimated value of 650,000 rand or 38,300 US\$ or 34 US\$ per abalone. Six suspects managed to flee in all directions. SAPS, December 8, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**December 7, 2022**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

The rubber dinghy was seen heading towards Bluewater Bay and then speeding off in the opposite direction. On the beach, 5 bags filled with 1,007 abalones worth 24,900 US\$ were found. SAPS, December 8, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

**December 14, 2022**

**Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Seizure in a suspect vehicle at 9.25 p.m. of 80,000 tablets of mandrax (a sedative used as a recreational drug and also known as methaqualone or quaalude) and an unspecified quantity of abalone. SAPS, December 15, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

## ASIA

### PHILIPPINES

**December 15-21, 2022**

**Subic, Province of Zambales, Philippines**

Seizures by the coastguard in 48 containers of a fuel pump, frozen pork, beef, fish and squid, red and white onions, carrots, chicken feet and tinned beef and abalone.

Inquirer.net, December 28, 2022.<sup>21</sup>

## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

**December 23, 2022**

**Cape Burney, State of Western Australia, Australia**



At 6:30 a.m., a 53-year-old man who was fishing at low tide in closed waters was apprehended with 127 Roe's abalones (*Haliotis roei*) and a handmade chisel for removing them from the reef.

Government of Western Australia, January 3, 2023; ABC News, January 4, 2023.<sup>22</sup>

**December 27, 2022**

**Point Wilson, State of Victoria, Australia**

Arrest of a man and a woman. They had caught 116 abalones, more than 10 times the authorized daily limit. 71 abalones had already been shucked. 45 were whole and returned to the water alive. Their diving gear, the shucked abalones, and their boat, totaling to around 50,000 Australian dollars or 33,625 US\$, were seized.

Victorian Fisheries Authority, January 3, 2023.<sup>23</sup>

**December 31, 2022**

**Brighton, State of Victoria, Australia**

Arrest of 4 men. They had caught 311 abalones, including 276 that were undersize. The maximum authorised quota is 5 abalones per person per day. The abalones were returned to the water.

Victorian Fisheries Authority, January 5, 2023.<sup>24</sup>

# SEA URCHINS AND SEA CUCUMBERS

Sea cucumbers: *Holothuria fuscogilva*, *Holothuria nobilis* and *Holothuria whitmaei* (teatfish): Appendix II. *Isostichopus fuscus*: Appendix III in Ecuador.

## AMERICA

### FRANCE (GUADELOUPE)

**End of November 2022**

**Saint-François, Department of Guadeloupe, France**

A recreational fisherman and an "art" craftsman are suspected of trafficking sea urchins intended to be made into handicrafts. 120 live white sea urchins (*Tripneustes ventricosus*) were returned to the sea. Guadeloupe la 1<sup>ère</sup>, November 25, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### HONDURAS

**Mid-October, 2022**

**Honduras**



Seizure of 3 tonnes of sea cucumbers by the naval forces in collaboration with DIGIPESCA (Dirección General de Pesca y Agricultura) on board 6 Nicaraguan fishing boats, the *Rey de los Camarones 2*, *Rey de los Camarones 5*, *Capitán Jerry*, *Capitán Salmerón*, *Capitán Keiner* and *Cristhian 3*, operating in waters under Honduran jurisdiction. VTV, October 22, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## ASIA

### INDIA

**Night of October 6 and 7, 2022**

**Mandapam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

1,106 kg of sea cucumbers (687 kg fresh, 399 kg being processed and 20 kg ready to sell), a stove, 3 gas cylinders and vessels were seized by forest department officials from the residence of Ghulam Mohamed. The trafficker is on the run. A manhunt is on.

WCCB, October 6, 2022; The Hindu, October 7, 2022; DT Next, October 8, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

**October 27, 2022**

**Mandapam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Seizure by the coast guards of 410 kg of sea cucumber worth 16,400,000 rupees or 199,940 US\$ and 485 US\$/kg. The poachers are on the run.

The Print, October 27, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

**December 3, 2022**

**Periyapatnam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Zakir Hussain, who trafficked sea cucumbers and seafood picked in the Gulf of Mannar Marine Park, is now under the authority of the Goondas Act (see page 147 of this issue), which has been in force for 20 years. For the first time since the creation of this act, Tamil Nadu is cracking down on sea smugglers. Hindustan Times, December 4, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

### MALAYSIA

**November 25, 2022**

**Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia**

Boarding of a boat 31 miles off the coast and arrest of 5 Vietnamese and one Indonesian, aged between 20 and 40, caught red-handed fishing for sea cucumbers by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency.

The Star (with Bernama), November 26, 2022.<sup>6</sup>



## SRI LANKA

October 13, 2022

Off Vettalaikeni, Northern Province, Sri Lanka



Arrest of 5 men, aged 22 to 35. They were poaching at night. Two dinghies, diving cylinders and about 10,000 sea cucumbers were seized. Sri Lanka Navy, October 14, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

## THAILAND

October 14, 2022

Off Songkhla Province, Thailand



Arrest of 5 fishermen onboard a Vietnamese trawler. They were dredging the ocean bed for sea cucumbers. Both the vessel and the crew were escorted to Songkhla Naval Base. Bangkok Post, October 15, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## EUROPE

### CROATIA

October 18, 2022

Privlaka, Zadar County, Croatia

At 11:10 a.m., the maritime police released the sea cucumbers that a fisherman had brought on board with fishing gear, which was seized. The 78-year-old was charged with destruction of marine habitat. Zadar Police Department, October 19, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

## GREECE

December 21, 2022

Port of Kyllini, Region of West Greece, Greece

Following a tipoff, 21,768 sea cucumbers are intercepted from a truck disembarking a ferry from Poros. Documents provided by the driver, a 64-year-old man, indicated that the consignment weighed 141 kg. However, the contents of the 40 crates actually weighed 761.84 kg. All specimens weighed less than 180 grams, the legal minimum. The driver has been indicted. Authorities believe that the sea cucumbers were destined for overseas markets. Their value is estimated at over 1 million US\$, or 1,400 US\$/kg.

Proto Thema, December 22, 2022; Greek Reporter, December 23, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

## ITALY

Beginning of November 2022

Free Municipal Consortium of Syracuse, Region of Sicily, Italy



A non-professional scuba diver has been fined 2,000 € (1,990 US\$) for catching 250 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*). The coastguards who caught him point out that recreational fishermen and divers are not allowed to catch more than 50 specimens per day. Siracusa News, November 10, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

### OPERATION SENZA TRACCIA (WITHOUT TRACE)

December 21, 2022

Porto Cesareo, Province of Lecce, Region of Apulia, Italy

Under the direction of commander Pasquale Vitiello, a sport fisherman and clandestine profiteer of protected and useful marine resources was spotted and restrained. He already had 42 kg of sea cucumbers in his bags, which would have earned him around 120,000 € over the holiday season, i.e. 2,855 €/kg (2,960 US\$/kg). A few hours earlier, the coastguard had seized 200 kg of 'senza traccia' (untraceable) fish from the boat of a recreational fisherman.

LeccePrima, December 21, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## RUSSIA

Beginning of October 2022

Dalnevostochny Morskoy Nature Reserve, Primorsky Krai, Russia

The pirates attempted to escape. Of 4 men onboard the boat, 3 were divers. The seabed in the area was explored. Plastic barrels containing more than 4,216 sea cucumbers of the species *Apostichopus japonicus* were found. They were returned to the sea. The boat and equipment were seized in a joint intervention by the marine park wardens and border guards.

Fishnews, October 5, 2022.<sup>13</sup>

October 26, 2022

**Dalnevostochny Morskoj Nature Reserve, Primorsky Krai, Russia**

Some guards observed the movements of a suspicious boat. Full bags were regularly thrown overboard, attached to a rope and a buoy. In the bags were 1,766 Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) with an estimated value of 2.4 million rubles, or 42,000 US\$ and 24 US\$ per sea cucumber. The boat was seized and the men were questioned. Investigations are underway to clear the organisation of the trade. The operation was carried out by park rangers and FSB border guards. Joint Directorate of Kedrovaya Pad' State Biosphere Nature Reserve and Land of the Leopard National Park, October 26, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

October 27, 2022

**Slavyanka, Primorsky Krai, Russia**

A suspended sentence of 4 years' imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 rubles at first instance (5,225 US\$) were handed down to a man who, at the end of May 2022, had been arrested for smuggling boiled and frozen Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.212). Primorsky Krai Prosecutor's Office, Oct. 27, 2022.<sup>15</sup>



December 2, 2022

**Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, Russia**

A man had stored 4,500 boiled and frozen Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*), presumably with the goal of smuggling them to China. Their value, estimated by the prosecutor of the 304<sup>th</sup> military garrison, is around 6 million rubles, or 98,250 US\$. Chief Military Prosecutor's Office, Dec. 2, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

November 25 and 26, 2022

**State of Western Australia, Australia**

- Aboard a "foreign" fishing boat, authorities seize sea cucumbers and let the 4 fishermen return to their boat.
- Aboard a "foreign" fishing boat, authorities seize sea cucumbers and allow the 6 fishermen to return to their boats.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), December 7, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

**SOLOMON ISLANDS**

September – October 2022

**Luanua and Pelau Islands, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands**

In most provinces, the sea cucumber fishing ban in force since September 1, 2022 has been implemented. But some fishermen, particularly on the islands of Luanua and Pelau, refuse to comply with this seasonal ban and continue to dive every day in search of white teat fish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*, Appendix II). The Malaita MP is said to be encouraging outlaws. The police have stated that they will not take any action until a formal complaint has been filed.

Solomon Star, October 1 and 26, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

## SEAHORSES

*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II  
See also pages 204, 205, 215 and 218



On the Trail n°38. Robin des Bois

October 24, 2022

**Nanchang Changbei International Airport, Jiangxi Province, China**

Customs officers seized 2 dried seahorses from a package sent from abroad, said to contain "health products". Total weight: 25 grams. Dajiang Network, October 29, 2022.<sup>1</sup>





## NORTHERN AFRICA

### EGYPT

**December 2022**

**Cairo International Airport, Governorate of Cairo, Egypt**

Attempted smuggling of 5 parcels of European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) to the United Arab Emirates. The quantity and origin were not specified in the airport customs communiqué. Cairo 24, January 1, 2023.<sup>1</sup>

### TUNISIA

**December 22, 2022**

**Teboulba, Governorate of Monastir, Tunisia**

The 5-metre-long great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II) was so heavy (around one tonne) that a forklift was needed to fit it into the truck. Caught off the coast of Monastir, it ended up butchered at the fish market and sold as swordfish at a price of 15 to 20 dinars/kg, i.e. 4 to 6 US\$/kg, to avoid controversy and the police. This is one of 3 sharks to have suffered the same fate in 2 weeks. The Tunisian association for studies and research on cetaceans is also interested in the fate of sharks and is outraged. In Arabic, it is expressing its anger with the slogan "in sea not in my plate".

HOUTIYAT: Tunisian association for studies and research on cetaceans, December 21 and 29, 2022; Il Messaggero, December 23, 2022; Al-Ain, December 31, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## EASTERN AFRICA

### KENYA

**Mid-December 2022**

**Nairobi Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Seizure of a shark tooth shipped from New York, USA, and intended for a resident of Nairobi. It was hidden in a shipment declared to contain "lithium-ion batteries".

The Star (Kenya), December 20, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## MOZAMBIQUE

**Beginning of December 2022**

**Maputo International Airport, Maputo Province, Mozambique**

Seizure of 200 kg of shark fins of several species. The Director General of ANAC (Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação) published the information 15 days after the seizure, without saying more, so as not to impede the investigation. Stay tuned! Sharks in Mozambique, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.96 and n°22 p.19.

O País, December 15, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

## NORTHERN AMERICA

### CANADA

**December 23, 2022**

**Brampton, Province of Ontario, Canada**

Under the terms of an out-of-court settlement between Scarborough, Ontario-based Ocean Seafood Company and the Ministry of the Environment, the seafood-importing company will not have to endure a trial and further damage to its image. The company has donated 30,000 Canadian dollars (22,200 US\$) to the Environmental Damages Fund and has undertaken to implement a training program for all its employees on the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act. By 2019, Ocean Seafood Company had imported 1,450 cans of eel meat declared as originating from American eels (*Anguilla rostrata*). DNA analyses carried out at the request of the Ministry of the Environment had proved that European eel meat (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) was mixed with American eel meat. European eels have been listed in Appendix II of the CITES Convention since March 13, 2009, and European regulations prohibit the export of eels and eel fry. The 1450 boxes have been withdrawn from the market.

Eel trafficking in North America, see "On the Trail" n°15 p.8, n°17 p.10, n°19 p.12, n°20 p.15, n°21 p.9 and p.119, n°32 p.278 and p.280, n°36 p.214 and p.215 and n°37 p.64 and p.210.

Minister of Environment and Climate Change, January 4, 2023.<sup>5</sup>



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 1, 2021- September 30, 2022**

### **South Padre Island, State of Texas, United States of America**

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is rife on South Padre Island, around ten kilometres off the Texas coast. In fiscal the year of 2022, the US Coast Guard intercepted 73 Mexican boats fishing for red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*), which is an increase of 11.5% compared to the fiscal year of 2021. The Coast Guard works in collaboration with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, US Customs and Border Protection and NOAA Fisheries (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and increasingly in partnership with the Mexican Navy. U.S. Coast Guard in Review, March 2023.<sup>6</sup>

**October 12, 2022**

### **Bowling Green, State of Kentucky, United States of America**

Indictment of Charles Hopkins, 51. In spring of 2016, 2017, and 2018, Hopkins conspired to transport out of Kentucky shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus latorynchus*, Appendix II) flesh and caviar for sale. U.S. Attorney's Office - Western District of Kentucky, October 12, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

**October 22, 2022**

### **Everglades City, State of Florida, United States of America**

Giraldo Gorriñ Amador (56) and Pablo Hute Conde (56) were arrested for using an illegal gillnet and for poaching a smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*, Appendix I). They had also caught 6 snooks (genus *Centropomus*) and several silver mullets (*Mugil curema*). They have been released on bail. Miami Herald, October 26, 2022; SEVENSEAS Media, November 30, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**October 22, 2022**

### **State of New York, United States of America**

Authorities rescue 6 yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) aboard a boat. The owner did not have a Highly Migratory Species Permit. Department of Environmental Conservation, November 9, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**October 30, 2022**

### **Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, State of California, United States of America**

A 2.4-meter long juvenile female great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II) wearing a transmitter from California State University Long Beach washed up. It had died of fishing injuries. It died as a result of injuries caused by fishing gear. Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve & State Beach, October 31, 2022; For The Win, November 1, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

**October 2022**

### **Lake DuBay, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**

An officer spots a suspicious group on night patrol and brings to light they have caught a lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*, Appendix II). Upon his intervention, the fish is returned to the water. Outdoor News, December 15, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

**October 2022**

### **Fortescue, State of New Jersey, United States of America**

A man is arrested on the beach in possession of 7 recently caught sandbar sharks (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*, Appendix II). New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, October 20, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**End of November 2022**

### **Gloucester, State of Massachusetts, United States of America**

He was selling poached Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) to fishmongers in Gloucester. The investigation began in October 2021. He signed a plea deal and paid 13,000 US\$ in fines.

Massachusetts Environmental Police, December 7, 2022.<sup>13</sup>



**December 20, 2022 and April 14, 2023**

### **Indian Harbour Beach, State of Florida, United States of America**

Arrest of Brian Waddill, 33. Accused of killing a lemon shark (*Negaprion brevirostris*, Appendix II) with a hammer, he pleads not guilty. However, 2 witnesses saw him capture the shark, beat it, and then throw it back into the waves and the scene was filmed by the webcam on the beach. The shark was not found. Waddill was released on a 500 US\$ bail.

FOX 35 Orlando December, 20 and 21, 2022, January 26 and April 14 2023; City of Indian Harbour Beach Police Department December, 21 2022; Fox News Channel, February 28 2023; WKMG-TV News 6, May 11, 2023.<sup>14</sup>



**December 23, 2022**  
**United States of America**

Entry into force of the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act. It is now illegal to possess, acquire, receive, transport, offer for sale, sell, or purchase a shark fin or a product containing shark fin. A person or legal entity may, however, possess a shark fin if it has been legally caught, if the fin has been separated from the shark after the first point of landing in accordance with the licence or permit. After these prerequisites, possession of a fin is subject to 3 additional conditions.

A. It must be destroyed or disposed of immediately upon separation from the carcass.

B. It must be used for noncommercial subsistence purposes in accordance with Federal, State of territorial laws and rules.

C. It must be used solely for display or research purposes by a museum, college or university pursuant to a Federal, State of territorial permit.

Like the END (Eliminate, Neutralize and Disrupt) Wildlife Trafficking Act, the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act stems from the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which, among other objectives, "seeks to support global anti-poaching efforts, strengthen the capacity of partner countries to counter wildlife trafficking, designate major wildlife trafficking countries". Wildlife trafficking is a major challenge for the protection of biodiversity, but it is also a risk for the security of every State and for global stability. International mafias are increasing their profits exponentially and investing them in other underground activities. Thanks to the NDAA and the 2 resulting laws, international traffickers have been charged, extradited and convicted in the United States. "On the Trail" bears witness to this in several of its recent issues.

Humane Society Legislative Fund, December 15 and 23, 2022; Public Law 117-263, December 23, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

**LATIN AMERICA**

**ARGENTINA**

**Beginning of December 2022**  
**Mar Chiquita, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina**

The truck had everything to please the traffic police, who were organising a traffic filter at a roundabout at the entrance to Mar de Cobo. It had no number plate on the back, no proof of roadworthiness and, above all, it contained 300 kg of tope shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*), an endangered species in Argentine waters. The 2 men, aged 47 and 63, will have to answer to the courts. Their truck was towing a semi-rigid inflatable dinghy, and the shark meat, which had no traceability, was being transported in unsanitary conditions. It was seized and destroyed. Elonce.com, December 10, 2022.<sup>16</sup>



**BRAZIL**

**November 22, 2022**  
**Melgaço, State of Pará, Brazil**

Seizure of 10 tonnes of dried arapaima fillets (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) in the holds of a boat on the Amazon, without proof of traceability. The SEGUP (Secretaria de Estado de Segurança Pública e Defesa Social) estimated the value of the seizure at 400,000 reais or 75,215 US\$ and 7.5 US\$/kg. G1 Pará, 23 November 2022.<sup>17</sup>

## COLOMBIA

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022**

**Archipelagic Department of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, Colombia. Atlantic Ocean.**



Seizure by the frigate *Antioquia* of 5,990 kg of parrotfish (family Scaridae) on board the *Hope On*, a Jamaican fishing boat with a crew of 41. Parrotfish fishing has been banned in waters under Colombian jurisdiction since 2019. The species is in danger of extinction and lives in symbiosis with the coral reefs. The *Hope On* also had 16 kg of shark meat, 48 kg of lobsters and 303 kg of other fish species in its holds and coolers. The seizure will be distributed to members of the Raizal people, an Afro-Caribbean ethnic group living in the archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina.

The *Hope On* was escorted to the San Andrés coastguard wharf, and the captain was brought before the archipelago's public prosecutor. The 40 crew members were presented to the local branch of Migración, Colombia.

On Friday, October 21, Lieutenant-Commander David Naranjo Tabares, under the protection of a 2017 law, requested that 30% of the seizure be donated to the crews of the French Navy. The archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina is 700 km from mainland Colombia.

El Espectador, October 22, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

**November 27, 2022**

**Department of Chocó, Colombia**

Boarding and inspection by the Navy in the Gulf of Cupica, Pacific Ocean, on the ship *Los Pescadores*, which has 9 crew members and a Colombian flag. They were escorted to a fishing port in the department of Chocó, and the vessel was searched. 89 shark fins and 114 juvenile sharks weighing a total of 904 kg were seized. The *Los Pescadores* had left from Buenaventura in the department of Valle del Cauca, around 300 km to the south.

La Vanguardia, November 28, 2022.<sup>19</sup>

## PERU

**Mid-December 2022**

**Mocupe Checkpoint, Province of Chicalyo, Department of Lambayeque, Peru**

Seizure of 360 bags containing 7,391 fins of blue shark (*Prionace glauca*, Appendix II) and giant devil ray (*Mobula mobular*, Appendix II) on a truck travelling to Lima (730 km away). SUNAT (Superintendencia Nacional de Aduanas y de Administración Tributaria, or National Directorate of Customs and Tax Administration) is responsible for the operation. La República, December 14, 2022.<sup>20</sup>

### NORTHERN AMERICA AND EASTERN ASIA

**CANADA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN**

**OPERATION NORTH PACIFIC GUARD**

**October 2022**

**Canada, United States of America, South Korea and Japan**

During October 2022, in partnership with the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission and 3 regional fisheries management organisations, the Marines of Canada, Japan, the United States of America and South Korea inspected 15 fishing vessels in their EEZs (Exclusive Economic Zones) and found 32 offences, in particular undeclared shark tails and 450 undeclared fins.

Government of Canada, November 2, 2022; U.S. Coast Guard in Review, March 2023.<sup>21</sup>

### EASTERN ASIA

**CHINA**

**October 2022**

**Wanding Border Post, Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.**

An anomaly was detected in a truck from Myanmar carrying a cargo of sisal fibres. Seizure of 9 kg of mobula ray gills (*Mobula* spp., Appendix II). In 2016, they were sold in China for between 290 US\$ and 557 US\$/kg. Some Chinese consider them to be fortifying. See "On the Trail" n°14 p. 10.

Chinese Customs, November 8, 2022.<sup>22</sup>



## TAIWAN

**Mid-November 2022**

### **Kaohsiung International Airport, Taiwan**

Seizure of 60,000 glass eels in the luggage of 2 Taiwanese passengers attempting to fly to an unnamed foreign country by the Fisheries Agency. The export of glass eels and eels is prohibited. Taiwan has the greatest diversity of eel species in the world ocean, but stocks are dwindling and the resource is reserved for the Taiwanese community during the fishing season from November 1 to March 1.

Chris R. Shepherd, November 19, 2022; Fishery Radio Station, December 18-26, 2022.<sup>23</sup>

## SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

### INDONESIA

**November 5, 2022**

### **Bone Baru, Banggai Island, Banggai Islands Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia**



Boarding of a fishing boat. Arrest of 2 fishermen. 20 kg of homemade bombs seized on board. Charged with fishing with explosives.

Indonesia Maritime Information Centre, November 2022.<sup>24</sup>

**November 9, 2022**

### **Port of Situbondo, Situbondo Regency, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia**



Arrest of a fisherman from Raas Island, 80 km off Situbondo. He was carrying homemade bombs for fishing with explosives.

Indonesia Maritime Information Centre, November 2022.<sup>25</sup>

**November 13, 2022**

### **Monduli Island, Boalemo Regency, Gorontalo Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia**



The provincial coastguards and air police spotted a pirogue with 4 men on board who were suspected of fishing with explosives. Just before the boat was boarded, the suspects threw batteries, homemade bombs and other equipment into the sea, which would have constituted evidence.

Indonesia Maritime Information Centre, November 2022.<sup>26</sup>

**November 15, 2022**

### **Kolaka Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia**



The air police and the district navy arrested J., aged 39, B., aged 26, R., aged 27, and H., aged 34. The 4 fishermen were carrying 11 kg of explosives in 4 drums.

Indonesia Maritime Information Centre, November 2022.<sup>27</sup>

**December 1, 2022**

### **Ujung Kulon National Park, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province, Java Island, Indonesia**



Five fishermen, one of whom was wearing a counterfeit Chanel T-shirt, were fishing with explosives in the national park. They were carrying 12 bottles with fuses ready to explode, 7 bottles without fuses full of potassium chlorate, 63 coconut fibre fuses, 15 rubber bottle stoppers and 3 packets of matches. 250 grams of these homemade explosives destroy at least 50 m<sup>2</sup> of coral reef. According to Zul Ahmadi, coordinator of the nautical police and the air police, who jointly carried out the operation with a team from the national park, there were enough explosives on board the fishing boat to destroy thousands of m<sup>2</sup> of coral reef, which would have taken centuries to recover.

The 5 fishermen ranged in age from 22 to 68, proof that fishing with explosives is an intergenerational activity.

Kompas.com, December 2, 2022; ManggaraiNews.Com, December 2, 2022.<sup>28</sup>

**December 12, 2022**

### **Sanggar Bay, Dompu Regency, Sumbawa Island, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia**



The small Sunda Islands lie to the east of the island of Java. The island of Sumbawa is bordered by several seas and an ocean; the Bali Sea to the west, the Flores Sea to the north, the Savu Sea to the east and the Indian Ocean to the south. Sanggar Bay lies in the Flores Sea.

M.C., a 36-year-old fisherman from Lasi, is in police custody in Kilo. On board his boat were bottles of ammonium nitrate, cotton wicks and matches in watertight containers.

VOI, December 13, 2022.<sup>29</sup>

## MALAYSIA

**October 12 and 22, 2022**

**- Off Kudat, State of Sabah, Malaysia. South China Sea.**

The 2 fishermen fled. They were fishing with explosives. The boat and 300 improvised explosive devices were seized. Estimated value: 3,620 US\$.

**- Off Tabawan Island, State of Sabah, Malaysia. Celebes Sea.**

The 2 fishermen were questioned by the police. They were fishing with explosives.

Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2022.<sup>30</sup>



**December 15, 2022**

**Gaya Island, State of Sabah, Malaysia**

As the patrol approached, the orange wooden boat sped up, came closer to the shore and in shallow water the 2 fishermen fled. Once back at the quayside, the boat revealed its secrets. Several homemade bombs and 2 pieces of diving equipment were seized.

Sabah Media, December 16, 2022.<sup>31</sup>



## PHILIPPINES

**October 5, 2022**

**Off Manila Bay, Philippines**

Blast fishing is also practised in Manila Bay. Two fishermen jumped into the water as the patrol approached. Only one man, Navales, was arrested and questioned. On board the boat was snapper (genus *Lutjanus*), sea bream (family Sparidae) and longfin trevally (*Carangoides armatus*) all dead on impact, worth 30,000 pesos (510 US\$). Fish caught with a blast don't have time to watch themselves die.

GMA Network, October 5, 2022; Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2022.<sup>32</sup>



**November 10, 2022**

**Off Ternate, Province of Cavite, Philippines**

The boat moved forward with elbow grease and oars and fished with explosives. It was soon joined by the police RIB and jet ski. Six 750 ml bottles of "dynamite" were seized, along with all the bric-a-brac belonging to the marine explosives' expert. Six people arrested.

Coast Guard Station Cavite, November 10, 2022.<sup>33</sup>



## VIET NAM

**October 16, 2022**

**Long Hai, Binh Thuan Province, Viet Nam**

Border guards on the island of Phú Quý seized 17 plastic bottles, 8.3 kg or 490 grams of explosive powder per bottle, and 72 detonators. The 2 men claim to have found the homemade bombs and detonators while underwater fishing. The Phú Quý border guards are a branch of the Binh Thuan border guards. Their duties include ensuring the safety of the waters and rescuing fishermen in distress.

Báo Bình Thuận, October 19, 2022.<sup>34</sup>



**November 24, 2022**

**Cam Pha, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam. Border with China.**

Successive arrests on expressway 18, which runs from Hanoi to Mong Cai on the border with China, and in a private home of Vu Van Binh and Nguyen Van Hien. They were in possession of 25kg of homemade explosives and detonators, which they intended to sell to fishermen in Bai Tu Long Bay.

Thanh Niên, November 30, 2022.<sup>35</sup>



**November 25, 2022**

**Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam. Border with China.**

30 kg of dried shark fins seized from the vehicle of Ta Van Thang, a resident of Mong Cai, without an invoice or anything, allegedly purchased via the Internet.

Báo Bảo vệ pháp luật, November 26, 2022.<sup>36</sup>

**December 27, 2022**

**Dai Binh, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam**

National Road 18, the road link between Viet Nam and China, is seeing a lot of traffic. One after the other, at 2 o'clock in the morning, 2 trucks were inspected. One was carrying 67,500 chickens in 450 plastic crates and the other 8,000 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II). Phan and Binh, the 2 drivers, were unable to explain the origin of the 2 shipments. They were taken to the station for investigation.

Bao Giao Thong, December 27, 2022.<sup>37</sup>





## BANGLADESH

October 25, 2022

**Sylhet, Sylhet District, Sylhet Division, Bangladesh**

In terms of weight and size alone, the goonch or giant devil catfish (*Bagarius yarrelli*) from the Ganges basin is in some ways the counterpart of the arapaima from the Amazon basin. A 150 kg goonch caught in the morning in the Kushiya will be sold tomorrow at 2,000 takas/kg, or 20 US\$/kg, in the Lalbazar fish market. Before the fish is butchered, the market committee advertises and exposes the curiosity to the town's inhabitants for a few hours. Abdul Karim Kim, a fisheries warden, is pessimistic. "It creates hope that such huge-size Baghair fish is still available. If such act continues, the fish will go be completely extinct in near future." Goonchs or baghairs are banned from sale but nobody wants to know about it, not fishermen, fish wholesalers or consumers.

The goonch is a catfish that can measure up to 2 metres in length. Its colour varies between grey, brown and yellow with black stripes. Some of its fins have spines. It prefers to live in the deep waters of large rivers. It is rumoured that a goonch that acquired a taste for human flesh from burial remains killed several people in the River Kali between 1998 and 2007.

The Daily Star, October 25, 2022.<sup>38</sup>

## INDIA

October 13, 2022

**Jamugurihat, Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India**

Anwar Hussain and Zakir Hussain were arrested for the smuggling of 2 barca snakeheads (*Channa barca*), known locally as "Pilpli Cheng", one dead and one alive.

Barca snakehead, see "On the Trail" n°22 p.12 and n°36 p.219.

The Sentinel, October 14, 2022.<sup>39</sup>

Beginning of November 2022

**Indiranagar, Cachar District, State of Assam, India**

Arrest of Jakir Hussain Laskar, Murad Hussain Laskar, Sajahan Laskar, Maruk Laskar, Sebul Hussain Laskar, Iqbal Hussain Laskar and Jalal Uddin. They burst into the newly opened ecotourism camp with batteries and poison, snatching dozens of fish far from the recreational fishing, swimming and boating that should attract tourists interested in leisure and ecology and boost the local economy. Indiranagar lies on the banks of the River Barak. Barak Bulletin, November 13, 2022.<sup>40</sup>



October 5, 7 and 20, 2022

**Karaitivu Island, Northern Province, Sri Lanka**

Seizures on the island between 5 and 20 October of 1,106 water gel sticks imported by sea from Tamil Nadu. India is the main producer of these ammonium nitrate-based pocket explosives, which are used in the mining industry and diverted from their original purpose. The smuggled explosives are buried in the sand awaiting their use by fishermen in the Northern, Western and Eastern provinces. Clearly, an organised network involving multiple collusions is at work between the 2 countries separated by an arm of the sea.

For more information on fishing with explosives, see "On the Trail" n°34 p.251.

Sri Lanka Navy, October 20, 2022; Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2022.<sup>41</sup>

October 26, 2022

**Pulmoddai, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka**

Three fishermen in a dinghy were fishing with explosives in the Bay of Bengal.

Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2022.<sup>42</sup>

October 26, 2022

**Wellamankara Fishery Harbor, Nainamadama, North Western Province, Sri Lanka**

Arrest by the coast guards of 6 fishermen, who were in possession of 159 shark fins (1.3 kg) and 76 kg dried shark meat. Their vessel was seized.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, October 26, 2022.<sup>43</sup>



**November 26, 2022**

**Port of Galle, Southern Province, Sri Lanka**

Seizure of 38 dried shark fins and a fishing boat. Arrest of 6 fishermen.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, November 27, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

**December 5, 2022**

**Port of Dondra, Southern Province, Sri Lanka**

The trawler was returning from a few days fishing. The coastguards carried out a check on board and discovered 2.5 kg of dried shark fins in a cache. The 6 fishermen were in breach of the 2015 law prohibiting the possession, transshipment and landing of any parts of any species of shark.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, December 6, 2022.<sup>45</sup>

**December 6, 2022**

**Port of Suduwella, Koattagoda, Southern Province, Sri Lanka**

A kilo of dried shark fins was seized from the trawler returning with its 5 sailors from a fishing trip lasting a few days. In Sri Lanka, a kilo of shark fins is traded with the Chinese community for around 40 US\$ (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.287). A kilo of fins brings in more than 100 kg of fish.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, December 7, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

**December 8, 2022**

**Port of Beruwela, Western Province, Sri Lanka**

58 kg of dried shark fins in sacks of rice. The trawler was returning from the open sea. A nice nest egg for the 7 crew members escaped. That'll be for next time if the fisheries inspector and the police haven't used deterrent procedures.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, December 9, 2022.<sup>47</sup>



**December 19, 2022**

**Port of Codbay, Trincomalee, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka**

To port and to starboard, Sri Lanka is trafficking in sharks and the coastguards persist and seize. This time they found 15 dried fins weighing 900 grams and 48 kg of dried meat in the engine compartment of the inbound trawler. The 6 fishermen were brought before the deputy director of fisheries.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, December 20, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

**December 20, 2022**

**Port of Beruwela, Western Province, Sri Lanka**

Bis repetita in Beruwela. 12.8 kg of finless thresher shark meat (*Alopias vulpinus*, Appendix II) and 16.3 kg of whitetip shark meat (*Carcharhinus longimanus*, Appendix II) were seized from the guts of an inbound trawler. Three questions remain unanswered about these repeated seizures:

- Are there transshipments at sea and are the seizures in ports just the tip of the iceberg?

- What happens to the seizures?

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, December 21, 2022.<sup>49</sup>

**December 22, 2022**

**Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka**

Seizure on the beach of 22 water gel sticks and 7 detonators. They were hidden under a net.

Sri Lanka Navy, December 22, 2022.<sup>50</sup>



**NORTHERN EUROPE**

**IRELAND**

**October 3, 2022**

**Ireland**

The Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine declare that the basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*, Appendix II) now has protected animal status "in accordance with the Wildlife Act 1976". It is therefore forbidden to kill or harass the species or harm its breeding and resting areas.

Basking sharks are spectacular and harmless to humans, seals and fish. They can measure up to 12 metres long and feed on zooplankton.

A code of conduct for the observation of basking sharks and marine mammals is currently being drawn up by the national park services. Tourist operators and the general public will be called upon to adopt behaviour and practices that guarantee the safety, freedom of movement and independence of these iconic animals.

In Ireland, the basking shark is the first marine animal to be strictly protected. Irish territorial waters are like a place of pilgrimage for basking sharks. They are one of the world's most important gathering and breeding grounds for the species. The basking shark's range covers the temperate waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and the main threats to the species are finning, bycatch and ship strikes.

Government of Ireland, October 2, 2022; Irish Daily Mirror, October 3, 2022.<sup>51</sup>



## WESTERN EUROPE

### FRANCE

#### REPEATED OFFENCE

**October 7, 2022**

**Nantes, Department of Loire-Atlantique, France**



Roger Azais, Gary Dubois and Nelson Schartier sentenced to 3-month suspended prison terms and fines of 3,000€ (2,900 US\$), 2,000€ (1,940 US\$) and 1,500€ (1,455 US\$), Kendji Limbergere to 100 days' fine of 30€ (3,000€, 2,900 US\$) and Sonny Grimaud to 60 days' fine of 20€ (1,200€, 1,165 US\$) for poaching European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) on Tuesday night February 15, 2022 in the Saint-Félix canal in Nantes and the Martinière canal in Le Pellerin in the upstream estuary of the Loire, the largest river in France and a tributary of the Atlantic Ocean. They had been caught in flagrante delicto by OFB officers. They are aged between 20 and 40, and their criminal records include 25 convictions, 5 of which were for identical offences.

Extracts from the judgement:

"In addition to the very significant environmental damage, as the intense poaching activity threatens the very survival of the species, there is also an infringement of public economic order, as professional fishermen, who acquire their professional licence at a high cost, are subject to unfair competition from poachers".

"The facts are part of a traffic in glass eels organised around people with well-defined roles, fishermen, lookouts, middlemen grouping together the products of fishing, carriers in the frame of regrouping stocks and transporting them in European countries, particularly Spain, the final recipients being scattered all over the world. Although the defendants appear to have been small hands in this trafficking operation, they all hoped to make a definite profit from it, as eel trafficking was lucrative from the earliest levels of the organisation."

France Bleu Loire Océan, October 7, 2022; Nantes Court, October 7, 2022.<sup>52</sup>

**October 8, 2022**

**Off Nice, Department of Alpes-Maritimes, France**

Seizure of 8 juvenile Atlantic bluefin tunas (*Thunnus thynnus*) weighing 3 kg in total, a 6-meter boat and fishing gear. The 2 "recreational" fishermen swore that they had mistaken the juveniles for Atlantic bonito (*Sarda sarda*). The fish were destroyed.

Nice-Matin, October 9, 2022; BFMTV, October 10, 2022.<sup>53</sup>

**December 23, 2022**

**Marans, Department of Charente-Maritime, France**

Nearly 60,000 European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) (20 kg) were seized at 5 a.m. on Christmas Eve from 3 men who had just caught them in the river Sèvre Niortaise. France is a launching pad for glass eels in global smuggling operations. The gendarmerie, the OFB and the nautical brigades are stepping up their contacts within the "Sargasse" group, as well as their seizures. Gendarmerie of Charente-Maritime, December 23, 2022; Sud Ouest, December 23, 2022.<sup>54</sup>

## SOUTHERN EUROPE

### SPAIN

**December 7, 2022**

**Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas International Airport, Community of Madrid, Spain**

Globalisation of the European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). The female trafficker is Malayan. The 8 small coolers are made in China. The 100,000 glass eels (30 kg) come from unknown estuaries. The seizure took place in Madrid. The flight came from Casablanca and the trafficker was flying to Nouakchott.

Directo al Paladar, December 7, 2022.<sup>55</sup>

**December 8, 2022**

**Antigua, Fuerteventura Island, Province of Las Palmas, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain**

The angel shark (*Squatina squatina*) has been through hell. Two idiots aged 29 and 66 - further proof that stupidity and cruelty are equally shared - hooked it, ill-treated it, dragged it up the beach and showed it off like a trophy. There is no information on whether the victim's teeth, skin or other parts were trafficked.

La Provincia (with EFE), January 3, 2023.<sup>56</sup>

### ITALY

**October 8, 2022**

**Salerno, Province of Salerno, Region of Campania, Italy**

Six tiny, tiny Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) from the Mediterranean - 35 cm, around 200 grams - were seized by the Coast Guard from a pleasure boat. They were donated to a charity organisation. But there is no news of the penalties imposed on the looters.

SalernoToday, October 8, 2022.<sup>57</sup>

**October 13, 2022**

**Pescara, Province of Pescara, Region of Abruzzo, Italy**



This time it's bigger, and it's happening in the Adriatic. Seizure of 9 Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) weighing an average of 40 kg. They were covered with a black tarpaulin on the deck of the pleasure boat and on the quay, but they did not escape the eye of the Coast Guard. The offender has been fined, the amount of which has not been published. In any case, it was a heavy loss for him. The resale of the tuna to restaurants or fishmongers would have brought him a lot of money. The tuna were donated to charity. IIPescara, October 14, 2022.<sup>58</sup>

**October 17, 2022**

**Portici, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy**



Stopover in Naples for the Giro of the Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*). The Coast Guard intervened just as 3 bluefin tuna weighing an average of 40 kg were being landed on the beach. An administrative fine of 2,000€ (1,940US\$) was imposed on the lucrative recreational fisherman. After veterinary examination, the tuna were deemed unfit for human consumption. They were donated to the Dohrn Foundation for alleged scientific research. The Antonio and Rinaldo Dohrn Foundation was set up in 1955 to promote and support scientific research into marine biology at the Dohrn Zoological Station. Coast Guard, October 17, 2022.<sup>59</sup>

**Mid-October 2022**

**Milazzo, Metropolitan City of Messina, Region of Sicily, Italy**



The Italian tuna tour includes a stopover in Sicily. Fines, the amount of which is not known, for 2 divers who, armed with underwater guns, were tracking Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) or albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) in the Capo Milazzo marine area, which is forbidden to all kinds of fishing. Gazzetta del Sud, October 23, 2022.<sup>60</sup>

**End of October 2022**

**Bagheria, Metropolitan City of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy**



Fines for 4 restaurants popular with night owls in the city's party district. They were serving swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) with no guarantee of origin, the fishing of which is strictly regulated by the ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) and subject to administrative traceability. The municipal police are warning that they will continue to carry out checks "until after midnight" at weekends and public holidays. The swordfish have been seized. After inspection by vets, they were deemed unfit for consumption and were not donated to charity. Palermo Post, October 29, 2022; City of Bagheria, October 29, 2022.<sup>61</sup>

**Beginning of November 2022**

**Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy**



Around 180 juvenile swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), fishing for which is strictly prohibited, and a kilometre of drifting longlines, also prohibited, were seized by the Coast Guard from a fishing boat. 97 swordfish still alive were quickly returned to the sea. After veterinary examination, the dead were donated to a diocesan charity. Gazzetta del Sud, November 4, 2022; Coast Guard, November 10, 2022.<sup>62</sup>

**November 8, 2022**

**Vibo Valentia, Province of Vibo Valentia, Region of Calabria, Italy**



Two Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*). 50 kg each. Administrative fine of 1,500€ (1,490 US\$). Examined by Public Health vets, they were considered fit for human consumption and donated to charity. The Coast Guard is urging the community to take the utmost care when purchasing seafood products, giving preference to those that comply with food safety and guarantee procedures in terms of labelling and traceability, and reporting any irregularities to the local maritime authority. Corriere della Calabria, November 10, 2022; Coast Guard, November 10, 2022.<sup>63</sup>

**November 9, 2022**

**Syracuse, Free Municipal Consortium of Syracuse, Region of Sicily, Italy**



The sport (and profit) fisherman had returned from his fishing expedition with 42 kg of Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) and a small swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) below the legal size. He received an administrative fine of 1,300€ (1,290 US\$). Longline fishing gear was seized and the fish deemed edible following veterinary inspection were donated to charity. Siracusa News, November 10, 2022.<sup>64</sup>



## REPEATED OFFENCE

December 2022

Po Delta, Provinces of Ravenna and Ferrara, Region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy



Explosive fishing is still marginal at present in the European Union, but electrofishing is gaining ground under the influence of Central European electrofishing experts. In several operations, the CITES carabinieri seized 1,600 kg of carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*), crussian carp (*Carassius carassius*), and pikeperch (*Sander lucioperca*) in dinghies, nets, landing nets, batteries and transport vans. The poachers are foreigners and already known to the law for offences in this area. The electrocuted catches are sold on national and, above all, foreign markets without any health checks or declarations. They cross the virtual borders of the European Union without difficulty.

The Po Delta is also under heavy pressure from bird poachers. They use lead bullets that are banned in wetlands, contributing to the depletion of migratory birds and the pollution of ecosystems. RavennaToday, December 29, 2022.<sup>65</sup>

## OPERATION TUNA MARKET

December 14, 2022

Pescara, Province of Pescara, Region of Abruzzo, Italy



Back to Pescara, and this time it's big stuff, really big stuff. A dozen Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) weighing an average of 100 kg were seized from a vehicle bound for Rome. Bluefin tuna sells well in Rome during the festive season. The Guardia di Finanza had been on the case for several days. The code name for the operation was "Tuna Cargo". The insulated van had been observed loading at night on an empty quay. An administrative fine was imposed on the driver and an investigation is underway to clarify the role of his employer, a Roman company specialising in the sale of seafood products. The cargo was deemed unfit for human consumption and given to a factory specialising in recycling animal by-products. The Guardia di Finanza fights against the trade in illegal and dangerous products that damage the market and deprive of opportunities and jobs businesses that comply with the rules.

Rete8, December 15, 2022; Zonalocale, December 15, 2022; Quotidianpost.it, December 19, 2022.<sup>66</sup>

## EASTERN EUROPE

### MOLDOVA

November 28, 2022

Cahul District, Moldova. Border with Romania.



Two men aged 20 and 35 were electrically fishing on the River Prut, which marks the border between Moldova and Romania. When the border guards tried to arrest them, they tried to get rid of the batteries and the 25 kg of electrocuted fish.

Border Police of the Republic of Moldova, November 29, 2022.<sup>67</sup>

December 7, 2022

Palanca, Stefan Voda District, Moldova. Border with Ukraine.

A Ukrainian man attempted to smuggle 4.9 kg of black sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and red salmon caviar in 35 tins hidden in his personal belongings inside his vehicle. The 61-year-old man wanted to resell the delicacies of unknown origin and quality at a good price.

Komsomolskaya Pravda Moldova, December 7, 2022; Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova, December 7, 2022.<sup>68</sup>

### ROMANIA

November 6, 2022

Gogosu, Mehedinti County, Romania. Border with Serbia.

At 3:30 a.m., the border police intercepted a suspicious vehicle that did not respond to the first warning. The 28-year-old driver was attempting to smuggle into Serbia around 20 juvenile sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) weighing an average of one kilo. Adult sterlet sturgeons weigh an average of 6.5 kg, with the largest reaching up to 16 kg.

Romanian Border Police, November 6, 2022.<sup>69</sup>

Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan. Seizures of caviar (697.86 kg, minimal value 232,740 US\$).  
Poaching and seizures of sturgeons (936 specimens + 497 kg of flesh) between October 1 and December 31, 2022



Sturgeon, unidentified species (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II)  
Beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II)  
Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II)  
Starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II)  
Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II)  
Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II)  
Sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II)  
Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II)  
The litres of caviar have been converted into kilos on the basis of 1.08 kilos for 1 litre.

Sources: see page 256





© ГУ МВД России по Волгоградской области

October 31, 2022  
Svetloyarsky District, Volgograd Oblast, Russia



© Тумба

November 5, 2022  
Kyzylzen, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan



© Одесский рыбоохранительный патруль

November 2, 2022  
Vylkove, Odesa Oblast, Ukraine



© пресс-группа Пограничного управления ФСБ России по Приморскому краю

October 10, 2022  
Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, Russia



© пресс-служба УМВД по Томской области

December 22, 2022  
Kolomino, Tomsk Oblast, Russia



© Lada

November 15, 2022  
Aktau, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan



© Верхнеобское территориальное управление Федерального агентства по рыболовству

December 6, 2022  
Ivankino, Tomsk Oblast, Russia



© Департамент сельского хозяйства

December 13, 2022  
Sheksna Reservoir, Vologda Oblast, Russia

On the Trail n°38. Robin des Bois

**October 11, 2022**

**Ikryanoye, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia**

The 2 men were sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment in a general regime corrective colony for poaching 6 Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) in the Bakhtemir, an arm of the Volga. They appealed, but the sentence was upheld. Business News Agency, October 11, 2022; Punkt-A, October 11, 2022.<sup>70</sup>



**October 12, 2022**

**Astrakhan, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia**

The man had sold 4 tins of caviar weighing 250 grams each and 2 sturgeon carcasses weighing a total of 5 kg to an undercover agent. Arrested on 28 May 2022 in his car with 24 kg of Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II), starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) and beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II), he has just been indicted. The people from whom he bought the sturgeon and caviar are being prosecuted separately.

Astrakhan Oblast Prosecutor's Office, October 12, 2022.<sup>71</sup>

**October 12, 2022**

**Astrakhan, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia**

Indictment of the last member of a gang of 7 people accused of poaching more than 2.5 tonnes of sturgeon, including 668 Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II), 2 starry sturgeons (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) and 30 belugas (*Huso huso*, Appendix II). His accomplices were arrested in November 2016 and 5 of them were sentenced in August 2018 to 4 to 6 years in prison and ordered to pay damages of 11.7 million rubles (188,000 US\$). He managed to escape and until now has been on the federal wanted list.

Astrakhan Oblast Prosecutor's Office, August 20, 2018, May 31, 2021 and October 12, 2022.<sup>72</sup>

**October 13, 2022**

**Ordynskoye, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia**

Sentencing of 2 men from Spirino and Novosibirsk to 6 and a half-year and 6-year suspended prison sentences and 3 years probation and 2.7 million rubles (47. 000 US\$) in damages for poaching 84 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II), 6 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II), one bream (*Abramis brama*), one burbot (*Lota lota*), one roach (genus *Rutilus*) and one European perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) in the Novosibirsk reservoir, an artificial lake built between 1957 and 1959 from a dam on the Ob for the Novosibirsk hydroelectric power station. It covers an area of 1,070 km<sup>2</sup>.

Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, October 13, 2022; Fishnews, October 14, 2022.<sup>73</sup>



**October 17, 2022**

**Cherlak, Omsk Oblast, Russia**

On May 27, 2022 at 11:50 p.m., G. and S. were caught boating on the Irtysh with 12 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) in their net. They were sentenced to 2 years in prison.

Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, October 17, 2022.<sup>74</sup>



**October 20, 2022**

**Ordynskoye, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia**

Suspended sentence of 6 months community service, with deduction of 10% of salary for the benefit of the State, and 321,000 rubles (5,590 US\$) in damages for having caught one Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) with a prohibited net 50 metres long, 1.2 metres high and with a mesh size of 4 cm. The man named A. S. Ryabtsev was caught red-handed on board his boat in the Novosibirsk reservoir. Ordynsky District Court, October 20, 2022.<sup>75</sup>



**October 25, 2022**

**Ikryanoye, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia. Caspian Sea.**

Illegal fishing of 200 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenser* spp., Appendix I or II) in the Podstepok, an arm of the Bakhtemir along Volga. The damage is estimated at 1.2 million rubles (21,000 US\$). Four sentences of 5 years and 6 months' imprisonment with 5 years' probation. Astrakhan.Ru, October 25, 2022.<sup>76</sup>



**October 26, 2022**

**Pervomayskoye, Tomsk Oblast, Russia**

In August 2022, the man poached 2 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) from the Chulym, a tributary of the Ob. The damage caused to the Russian Federation's aquatic biological resources is estimated at 962,000 rubles (15,820 US\$).

Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, October 26, 2022.<sup>77</sup>



**October 28, 2022**

**Kharabali, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia**

In May 2022, the road police officer on holiday was driving on the Volgograd-Astrakhan motorway. He was stopped by road police officers at work. He had in his car 5 dead starry sturgeons (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) and sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and 2.4 kg of starry sturgeon caviar. He was sentenced to 8 months' community service with 10% of his salary deducted by the State. The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Astrakhan Oblast, October 28, 2022.<sup>78</sup>



**November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**Kamyziak, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia**

Following the seizure of Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) on board a small boat, 3 people were arrested. They are now under investigation.

The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Astrakhan Oblast, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022..<sup>79</sup>

**November 2, 2022**

**Kalach-on-the-Don, Volgograd Oblast, Russia**

One indictment for attempting to sell 800 kg of recently poached and frozen sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II). The value of the fish is estimated at 1.6 million rubles (15,540 US\$).

Volgograd Oblast Prosecutor's Office, November 2, 2022.<sup>80</sup>

**November 6, 2022**

**Znamenskoye, Omsk Oblast, Russia**

2 men aged 35 and 59 have been charged. In June 2022, they were poaching sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) on the Irtysh River, fishing for which is prohibited at all times of the year, using 2 prohibited bottom-set nets that injured the fish and prevented them from being released. 97 specimens were seized. The ecological damage is estimated at 443,000 rubles (7,370 US\$). BezFormata, November 6, 2022.<sup>81</sup>



**November 9, 2022**

**Surgut, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia**

In March 2022, 2 men were poaching sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the Tromyogan river (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.270). One of them was given a suspended sentence of 5 years and 2 months in prison, with 3 years probation. Ecological damage is estimated at 560,000 rubles (915 US\$). His accomplice has already been given a suspended sentence of 5 years and 3 months in prison, with 3 years probation (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.209). Bulletin of the Surgut Region, November 9, 2022; Muksun.fm, November 9, 2022.<sup>82</sup>



**November 22, 2022**

**Derbent, Republic of Dagestan, Russia**

An individual who was arrested in May at a roadside checkpoint with 25 sturgeon carcasses (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) receives a suspended 6-month community service sentence.

North Caucasus Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fishery, November 22, 2022.<sup>83</sup>



**November 22, 2022**

**Omsk, Omsk Oblast, Russia**

A man is sentenced to 340 hours of community service for poaching 4 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 2 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II).

Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, November 22, 2022.<sup>84</sup>



**November 23, 2022**

**Mogochinsky District, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia**

Two residents in Kokuy village were caught red-handed electrofishing on the Chilka River, a tributary of the Amur. They caught around 30 fish including 14 lenoks (*Brachymystax lenok*), a Red Book species that's illegal to fish throughout the country. Damage is estimated at 25,000 rubles (405 US\$).

Chita.ru, November 23, 2022; Moskovski Komsomolets Chita, November 23, 2022; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia on transport in Zabaykalsky Krai, November 25, 2022.<sup>85</sup>



**November 30, 2022**

**Liman, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia**

A sentence of 240 hours unpaid community service for transporting 4 sections of Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) supposedly found on the banks of the Bakhtemir. The specimen of Russian sturgeon was reconstructed from the 4 sections.

Arbuztoday, November 30, 2022.<sup>86</sup>



### **Beginning of December 2022**

#### **Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

The possession of 75kg of caviar from Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) earned the 2 members of the organised gang a 5-year suspended prison sentence and probation for 3 years. The 148 boxes were concealed in a hidden compartment of their vehicle.

AmurMedia, December 8, 2022; DV Novosti, December 8, 2022.<sup>87</sup>



### **December 5, 2022**

#### **Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

Following the seizure from a boat of 130 kg of meat and offal and 260 kg of caviar from the Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II), the 3 members of an organised gang were charged with illegal trafficking in aquatic biological resources protected by article 258.1 of the Criminal Code.

Khabarovsk Krai Prosecutor's Office, December 5, 2022.<sup>88</sup>

### **December 5, 2022**

#### **Strezhevoy, Tomk Oblast, Russia**

After 2 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) were seized from his home, a resident of Strezhevoy was charged with illegal possession of a species listed in the Russian Federation's Red Book.

West Siberian Transport Prosecutor's Office, December 5, 2022.<sup>89</sup>

### **December 6, 2022**

#### **Tobolsk, Tyumen Oblast, Russia**

Two 5-year suspended prison sentences for poaching 2 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the Irtysh, a tributary of the Ob river (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.226).

Ural Transport Prosecutor's Office, December 6, 2022.<sup>90</sup>



### **December 8, 2022**

#### **Tevriz, Omsk Oblast, Russia**

A man was fined 300,000 rubles (4,910 US\$) for catching 7 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II). He must also pay 32,000 rubles (525 US\$) in damages, and his fishing gear will be destroyed.

Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, December 8, 2022.<sup>91</sup>



### **December 9, 2022**

#### **Uvat, Tyumen Oblast, Russia**

A 61-year-old man has been fined 10,000 rubles (165 US\$) for poaching a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the Irtysh. He avoided a prison sentence by paying back the ecological damage estimated at 481,000 rubles (7,875 US\$) and expressing remorse. However, his motorboat and fishing net have been permanently confiscated.

Tyumen Oblast Prosecutor's Office, December 9, 2022; Tyumen Line, December 9, 2022.<sup>92</sup>



### **December 20, 2022**

#### **Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

Sentence of 2 years' imprisonment in a general regime corrective colony for the member of the organised gang who fled after the seizure of 209 Huso sturgeons (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) in February 2020 in a car park in Komsomolsk-on-Amur. He was arrested 2 years later in Altai (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.220).

Eastern Interregional Transport Investigation Department of the investigative committee of the Russian Federation, December 20, 2022.<sup>93</sup>



### **REPEATED OFFENCE**

#### **December 22, 2022**

#### **Novosibirsk, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia**

A suspended sentence of 18 months' imprisonment on probation for 2 years and a fine of 100,000 rubles (1,640 US\$) for receiving 10 kg of Amur sturgeon caviar (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) in 20 plastic tins from another unidentified trafficker on a motorway service area on August 7, 2022, with the intention of reselling them (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.224). He had already been given a suspended prison sentence for 2 similar offences committed in 2020.

Novosibirsk Oblast Prosecutor's Office, December 22, 2022.<sup>94</sup>



### **December 29, 2022**

#### **Verkhnevilyuyysk, Republic of Sakha, Russia**

The man who poached 4 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in August 2021 has meanwhile paid 640,000 rubles (10,480 US\$) in damages to the Russian Federation. The criminal proceedings are pending.

Sakha Republic Prosecutor's Office, December 29, 2022.<sup>95</sup>



## AUSTRALIA

November 13, 2022

**State of Western Australia, Australia**

On 2 occasions, 7 illegal alien fishermen were arrested with shark carcasses on board their boats. Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), November 30, 2022.<sup>96</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENCE**

November 17 and 28, 2022

**Off Kimberley, State of Western Australia, and Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia**

The 4 Indonesian fishermen had already been checked by the Royal Australian Navy earlier this month. Six days later, they were back in Australian waters with 4 shark fins, 10 kg of dried fish, 5 kg of salt, fishing gear, a compass and a mobile phone with 2 navigation applications on board their boat. Two fishermen were each fined 6,000 Australian dollars (3,850 US\$), another was fined 4,500 Australian dollars (2,890 US\$) and the youngest, aged 19, was fined 3,000 Australian dollars (1,925 US\$).

Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), November 23, 2022; ABC News, November 28, 2022.<sup>97</sup>

## SOLOMON ISLANDS

October 14, 2022

**Vonavona Island, Western Province, Solomon Islands**

Fishermen in the lagoon are complaining about the intrusion of predators from elsewhere who are capturing sharks and sea turtles. A joint team from the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Wildlife Conservation Society visited the site and witnessed the unthinkable: live sharks with hooks in their snouts were trapped in the shallow waters by a steel line attached to mangrove trees waiting to be killed, and on clotheslines fins were being dried in the sun. The camp was empty at the time of our visit. Several finless shark corpses were scattered on the beach.

The island of Vonavona covers an area of 72 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to 5,500 inhabitants (2009 census). They live mainly from fishing. Tourism is beginning to develop.

Among the species found in the Solomon Sea are blacktip reef sharks (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*, Appendix II).

WCS Solomon Islands, October 14, 2022.<sup>98</sup>



© New Zealand High Commission- Honiara, Solomon Islands

Vonavona Island

# MARINE TURTLES

Marine turtles (families Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae) are listed under CITES Appendix I, including Ridley sea turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Kemp's Ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys kempii*), loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*), leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and flatback turtles (*Natator depressus*).

## AFRICA

### FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

#### OPERATION NYAMBA

**Beginning of November to December 2022**

**Saziley, Charifou and Papani Beaches, Department of Mayotte, France**

Activists from the ASVM (Association de Sécurité Villageoise de M'tsamoudou - M'tsamoudou Village Security Association) scared off 3 poachers as they were about to cut up with a machete a live turtle, turned over on its back. It was returned to the ocean. A similar incident had occurred a few days earlier on a nearby beach, and the previous month they had already foiled 2 poaching attempts on Papani beach.

Sea Shepherd France, December 15, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**December 25 and 28, 2022**

**Papani and Badamiers Beaches, Department of Mayotte, France**

Three poachers were caught red-handed by police. They were about to cut up a hawksbill turtle. Two of them were arrested. The first was sentenced to 10 months in prison and fined 100 € (103 US\$). He must also pay 3,000 € (3,108 US\$) in damages to the associations Oulanga na Nyamba, Les Naturalistes de Mayotte and Sea Shepherd France. The second, a minor, is awaiting trial.

Oulanga Na Nyamba, December 29, 2022; Le Journal de Mayotte, December 30, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



### SEYCHELLES

**Saturday, November 5, Tuesday, November 29, and Tuesday, December 20, 2022**

**Alphonse Island, The Seychelles**

- 117 kg of sea turtle meat seized on board the *Pélican* on November 5. The fishing boat was boarded and searched by the coastguard and maritime police. The *Pélican* and her crew were escorted to Mahé. The captain, aged 46, and 2 sailors aged 19 and 24 were provisionally released after each paying a fine equal to 600 US\$ and presenting guarantees equal to 7,700 US\$. Their passports have been confiscated. Until the trial, they are not allowed to leave the main island of Mahé and must report 3 times a week to the town's police station.

- On November 29, the charges against the youngest suspect (aged 19) were dropped.



- On December 20, the 117 kg of flesh recorded as evidence were burnt in the Mahé hospital incinerator in the presence of the Minister of Agriculture, Climate Change and the Environment. The spokesman for the Ministry justified the destruction by saying that the meat was beginning to rot for lack of space and a suitable place to store it. The courts had previously given their consent, given that the exhibits had been registered and documented. The trial is due to take place in 2023. Seychelles News Agency, November 16 et December 20, 2022; Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), November 2022; Seychelles Nation, December 21, 2022.<sup>3</sup>

## AMERICA

### COLOMBIA

**Mid-October 2022**

**Maicao, Department of La Guajira, Colombia**

Franklin González Epiayu was transporting 5 adult hawksbill turtles in a cart pulled by a horse or donkey. The team was intercepted in the Los Laureles district by the departmental police. The 5 sea turtles were handed over to Corpoguajira (Corporación Autónoma Regional de La Guajira), who returned them to the sea.

El Heraldo (Colombia), October 19, 2022.<sup>4</sup>

### COSTA RICA

**November 8, 2022**

**El Jobo, Guanacaste Province, Costa Rica**

Massacre of a green turtle on the beach. It has been disembowelled to steal its eggs. No clues have been found as to the whereabouts of the vandals. Faced with such acts of cruelty, the NGO ETC (Equipo Tora Carey) is both powerless and appalled. "Sea turtles, particularly green turtles, are loyal to their birth beaches, where they return to reproduce once they have reached sexual maturity, at the age of 35-50 years." "Today, the beaches of La Cruz are home to female turtles that were born when the coasts were still virgin." "They return every 2 or 3 years to lay up to 320 eggs."

.../...



"It is estimated that only one baby turtle in 1000 survives to reproduction." The resources deployed to eradicate trafficking and stifle this feeding custom are derisory.

This green turtle, which had just reached sexual maturity, could have laid 12,000 eggs during its adult life; among 12,000 potential baby turtles, only a handful would have returned to lay eggs on the beaches of El Jobo by the end of the century. The loss of an adult sea turtle is a considerable ecological loss. A sea turtle egg sells for the equivalent of 1 US\$ on the local black market. The few dozen eggs stolen from its belly have earned poachers around a hundred dollars.

Marine turtles in Costa Rica, see "On the Trail" n°1 p.7, n°2 p.14-15, n°3 p.7, n°5 p.15, n°6 p.9, n°8 p.10, n°10 p.10 and 11, n°11 p.11, n°13 p.13, n°14 p.14, n°18 p.15, n°23 p.22 and 149, n°25 p.22 and 23, n°26 p.20, n°29 p.152 and 177, n°33 p.277 and n°37 p.226. Guanacaste Conservation Area, November 9, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

## EL SALVADOR

**Saturday, October 22, and Sunday, October 23, 2022**

**La Libertad, Department of La Libertad, El Salvador**

213 eggs seized on beaches over the weekend. Patrols by the National Civil Police and MARN (Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) agents are attempting to prevent the sale of eggs to tourists on the sly. Beliefs about the healing and invigorating properties of sea turtle eggs were reinforced during the Covid-19 period. [elsalvador.com](http://elsalvador.com), October 23, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**October 26, 2022**

**San Miguel, San Miguel Department, El Salvador**

Seizure at the municipal market of 388 Ridley sea turtle eggs, 12 hawksbill turtle eggs and 204 molluscs of the species *Anadara tuberculosa* or *Anadara grandis*. The eggs were placed in artificial incubators and the molluscs in mangroves.

Última Hora SV, October 26, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Martin County, State of Florida, United States of America**

A man arrested for public drunkenness was also found in possession of a dead juvenile sea turtle. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, October 6, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

## MEXICO

**Beginning of October 2022**

**Puerto Vallarta, State of Jalisco, Mexico**



Carlos Daniel N., claiming to be 24 years old and with no address, was caught by uniformed officers in the act of transporting 68 sea turtle eggs in a black bag. On the beaches green turtles, hawksbill turtles, leatherback turtles and Ridley sea turtles come to lay their eggs.

Tribuna de la Bahía, October 5, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

**End of October 2022**

**Puerto Arista, State of Chiapas, Mexico**

The public prosecutor has granted a 6-month conditional suspension of proceedings against 2 Ridley sea turtle egg traffickers. Juan Z. had been arrested with 4,048 eggs in his car and Julio S. with 300 eggs in a bus between Tapanatepec and Arriaga. In Puerto Arista, the 2 offenders have to paint a wall with a landscape evoking environmental protection, clean the beach for 3 hours a week on Saturdays for 6 months and finance messages calling for the protection of sea turtles on a local radio station for one month.

It is in Puerto Arista that the "Tortuga Marina" camp is working to hatch eggs seized from traffickers in Chiapas. Puerto Arista is part of the municipality of Tonalá.

Diario de Chiapas, September 15, 2022; La Jornada, October 31, 2022.<sup>10</sup>



**Mid-November 2022**  
**Los Cabos, State of Baja California, Mexico**

Cirilo N. sentenced to 9 months and 18 days in prison for possession and attempted sale of 100 sea turtle eggs. BCS Noticias, November 17, 2022.<sup>11</sup>



**PANAMA**

**Mid-October 2022**  
**Pedasi District, Los Santos Province, Panama**

199 eggs seized. They were in a bag in the tipper of the pick-up. They were placed in an artificial incubator with little hope of hatching. Two arrests. Critica.com.pa, October 20, 2022.<sup>12</sup>

**Mid-December 2022**  
**Las Tablas, Los Santos Province, Panama**

The “person”, whose age and sex were not specified by El Siglo, sold 528 Kemp’s Ridley turtle eggs by the half-dozen at a red light and stored them in his car inside a portable cooler. The penalty is a 6-month ban from the province’s beaches. El Siglo, December 12, 2022.<sup>13</sup>



**ASIA**

**VIET NAM**

**Beginning of October 2022**  
**Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam**

Across 2 stores, authorities intercept 63 bracelets, 6 hairpins, 6 rings, a comb and 5 other products made of hawksbill turtle shell. ENV, October 10, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

**YEMEN**

**October 2022**  
**Khor Omaira Reserve, Lahij Governorate, Yemen**

Slaughtered 100 km west of Aden. The Prime Minister designated Khor Omaira as a nature reserve on October 10, 2022, but this has not prevented further carnage of sea turtles by fishermen or by a nearby community of East African refugees. The beaches are littered with shells and rotting meat. The killing was not for food. According to the few witnesses to the aftermath of the slaughter (poaching has been regular in the reserve for the past year) and expert observations, the poachers only remove the sexual organs, primarily the penises of green turtles, hawksbill turtles, loggerhead turtles and Ridley sea turtles. Middle Eastern laboratories specialising in the formulation of sexual stimulants are said to be behind the trade, buying penises for 10,000 riyals (18.5 US\$) each. If it weren’t for the charlatanry, poverty and war in Yemen, the coastal waters and coastline of Lahij governorate, enriched by currents from the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, would be a haven of peace and prosperity for sea turtles, sea cucumbers, fish and people.

Sea turtles in Yemen, see “On the Trail” n°15 p.15 and n°29 p.79. Cratersky.net, October 21, 2022; Al Ayyam, October 22, 2022; American Center for South Yemen Studies, January 4, 2023.<sup>15</sup>

**EUROPE**

**FRANCE**

**December 6, 2022**  
**Paris, France**

Publication of an order aimed at improving the protection of 6 species of marine turtle likely to be present in waters under French jurisdiction, namely loggerhead turtles, Ridley sea turtles, Kemp’s Ridley turtles, hawksbill turtles, green turtles and leatherback turtles. The flatback sea turtles that live off the coast of Australia are excluded from this scheme. Improvements over the 2005 decree include the extension of protection to Exclusive Economic Zones, the protection and inventory of habitats, the inclusion of light pollution as a disturbance factor, the obligation to declare accidental catches by fishing gear, the ban on biological sampling, and the ban on pursuing and harassing marine turtles. Among the shortcomings are the failure to include noise pollution in the list of intentional disturbances, contrary to the recommendation of the Conseil National de la Protection de la Nature (National Council for the Protection of Nature), the absence of distance and approach procedures for marine turtle observation activities at sea and on land, and the vagueness of article 9, which does not require holders of hawksbill and green turtle scales and manufacturers and restorers of objects made from them to update their stocks in relation to the initial declarations of 1993 for hawksbill turtles and 2001 for green turtles. Additionally, article 9 does not explicitly designate the authority responsible for verifying the accuracy and consistency of these inventories. Given the state of the regulations and their application, there is no guarantee that eyeglasses or other utilitarian or decorative accessories are not made in mainland France or the overseas territories from poached turtle scales. Stocks of turtle scales are less controlled than stocks of elephant ivory. Official Journal of the French Republic, December 6, 2022; Réunion la 1<sup>ère</sup>, December 7, 2022.<sup>16</sup>



## GREECE

**Saturday, November 5, 2022**

**Kastraki and Ágios Prokópios, Naxos Island, Region of South Aegean, Greece**

Some of the 18,000 residents or tourists on the island of Naxos are torturers of sea turtles. Just 400 metres away, on the beaches of Kastraki and Ágios Prokópios, 2 loggerhead turtles and one green turtle were found dead under the rising sun.

Naxos island wildlife protection, November 5, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

## ITALY

**November 20, 2022**

**Rome, Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, Region of Lazio, Italy**

Someone at the Sunday market in Porta Portese was selling 5 sea turtle shells on a tarpaulin spread out on the ground. He was fined 5,000 € (4,975 US\$) for unauthorised sale and an investigation has been launched to establish the origin and history of these remains.

Tartapedia.it, November 21, 2022; RomaToday, November 22, 2022.<sup>18</sup>



# MARINE AND FRESHWATER MAMMALS

## AMERICA - ASIA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA / UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**October 23, 2022**

**United States of America - Abu Dhabi, Emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**

24 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II) from San Diego, San Antonio, Orlando and Discovery Cove have been transferred to SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, the first water park dedicated to marine life in the United Arab Emirates. Manta rays, souvenirs, restaurants under and above the aquariums, live and stuffed dolphins, blue lagoons and pink flamingos, dugongs and sea cucumbers.

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, formerly Busch Entertainment Corporation, based in Orlando, Florida, manages the 3 SeaWorld parks in the United States (San Diego, San Antonio, Orlando), an oceanarium (Discovery Cove), 2 amusement and animal parks and a few other theme parks. Originally owned by the brewing company Anheuser-Busch as part of its "entertainment" division, it was sold to the investment bank Blackstone in 2009. The first SeaWorld park opened in San Diego in 1964. It initially benefited from the popularity of the Flipper series and suffered from the BlackFish documentary describing the fatal attack on a female trainer by an orca whale in February 2010.

Ceta-Base, November 28, 2022; PETA, November 30, 2022; ZAWYA (with Khaleej Times), May 25, 2023.<sup>1</sup>

## AMERICA

### COLOMBIA

**November 13, 2022**

**La Tola, Department of Nariño, Colombia**

Southern elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*, Appendix II) normally live in Antarctica and off Chile. Since 2018, a few specimens have begun to migrate up the coast of Colombia, more than 5,000 km from their normal range. The reasons

for this migration are not clearly identified, they may have got lost while looking for food.

This one showed up in the Utría National Park (Department of Chocó) on October 9. He was then spotted by villagers in La Barra and Bahía Malaga, near Buenaventura (Department of Valle del Cauca), who welcomed him enthusiastically. He then continued southwards towards his native range without being seen for several weeks. On November 13, he reached La Tola, where he did not receive the same welcome. He was hunted down. Two men were filmed dragging his bloody body. The Regional Autonomous Corporation of Nariño is now trying to identify them.

El País (Colombia), November 14, 2022; El Tiempo, November 17, 2022.<sup>2</sup>



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**October 12, 2022**

### **Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America**

Uzi Levi, 71, pleaded guilty. He was fined 4,000 US\$ and sentenced to 2 years of probation for the trafficking of 6 walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) tusks and 3 head trophies between June and September 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.268).

U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Alaska, October 12, 2022.<sup>3</sup>



## ASIA

### CHINA

**December 2022**

### **Raohe County, Shuangyashan Prefecture, Heilongjiang Province, China. Border with Russia.**



Major traffic in sperm whale ivory (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I). 325 teeth and dozens of carved ivories, including chess pieces. 86.42 kg. Valued at 10 million yuan (1.4 million US\$ or 16,200 US\$/kg). The ivory was fraudulently imported from the Russian Far East to the Chinese Far East in boats that crossed a tributary of the Ussuri at night. The traffic spread to the provinces of Liaoning, Guangdong and Zhejiang and as far as Beijing. 21 arrests.

The Beijing News, January 6, 2023.<sup>4</sup>

## SOUTH KOREA

**October 16, 2022**

### **Off Jeju Island, Jeju Province, South Korea**

Another release of an Indian Ocean bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*, Appendix II). The door of his transitional enclosure opened after 70 days of re-adaptation to real salt water. Bibong (his "stage" name) had been in captivity and on show in an aquatic zoo for 17 years. He was captured off Jeju Island in an act of piracy. His movements will be monitored for 6 months. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean bottlenose dolphin to be released since 2013 (see "On the Trail" n°18 p.4). The operation is credited to the Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries, the

NGO Hot Pink Dolphins and Jeju University. The Korean Federation for the Environment offers a counterpoint to the general satisfaction. It deplores the fact that those released have to wear an electronic bracelet and are considered as suspects or individuals to be monitored. There are still 21 cetaceans in South Korean leisure centres, including 5 belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II). Jeju Island is 85 km south of South Korea.

Jejusori.net, August 4, 2022; Kazinform, October 17, 2022.<sup>5</sup>

## INDIA

**November 3 and 7, 2022**

### **Kolhapur, Kolhapur District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Kolhapur (population 600,000) is 90 km from the Arabian Sea. Its economy is based mainly on the textile industry, sugar cane cultivation and local handicrafts.

- Seizure of 3.413 kg of presumed sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) valued at 34 million rupees (412,318 US\$, or 120,808 US\$/kg) and a white scooter. "We came to know through our sources that few people will be arriving at the service road in Sarnobatwadi adjacent to Pune-Bangalore National Highway for illegal trade of ambergris. Accordingly, our police personnel along with forest department officials laid a trap." Three arrests. Pradip Sham Bhalerao, Shakil Mohan Sheikh and Amir Haju Pathan are aged between 32 and 36.

- Seizure of 2 kg of suspected ambergris valued at just over 20 million rupees (242,540 US\$ or 121,270 US\$/kg). "We had received information from sources that few men will be coming to the Central bus stand area for selling ambergris. Accordingly, a trap was laid." Three arrests. Karan Sanjay Tipugade, Santosh Abhimanyu Dhuri and Jafarsadiq Mohammad Banedar are aged between 29 and 40.

Ambergris is a sperm whale excretion used in the composition and stabilisation of perfumes.

The Times of India, November 5 and 8, 2022.<sup>6</sup>

**November 16, 2022**

### **Puthumanai, Thoothukudi District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

The police spotted a car whose movements appeared suspicious and whose 3 passengers were carrying 11 kg of a substance presumed to be sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I).

DTNext, November 16, 2022; India Today, November 16, 2022.<sup>7</sup>

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

**November 28, 2022**

**Pune, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Five arrests, including Vijay Thanage, 56, and his son Akshay Thanage, 26. Seizure of 5.28 kg of suspected sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) valued at 52.7 million rupees, or more than 121,000 US\$/kg. Police acting on information neutralised the gang near the Fergusson College bus stop. The suspected ambergris has been sent to a laboratory for authentication.

The Indian Express, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022; The Times of India, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.<sup>8</sup>

**December 4, 2022**

**Nallasopara, Palghar District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Seizure of 788 grams of suspected sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) with an estimated value of 7 million rupees (85,715 US\$). Four arrests.

The Free Press Journal, December 5, 2022; Gallinews, January 17, 2023.<sup>9</sup>

**December 10, 2022**

**Karavalloor, Kollam District, State of Kerala, India**

Seizure of 10 kg of sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) in a car. The 4 suspects came from Tamil Nadu and wanted to sell their loot for 700,000 rupees/kg, or 8570 US\$/kg. Analyses are currently underway to verify that the ambergris is genuine. Fake ambergris is on the increase, and when it comes to real ambergris, there is a lack of information about what happens to it after it is seized. The value of one kilo is estimated by customs and tax authorities at around 120,000 US\$/kg.

News18, December 11, 2022; Kerala Kaumudi, December 12, 2022.<sup>10</sup>

## KAZAKHSTAN

**October 2022**

**Caspian Sea, Atyrau, Mangystau and West Kazakhstan Regions, Kazakhstan. Border with Russia.**

Following on from the preventive operations carried out in April in collaboration with their Russian counterparts, the Kazakh border guards freed 54 Caspian seals (*Pusa caspica*) from nets.

The overall results of the operation (spring and autumn) show that 68 boats and 400 km of nets were seized, 946 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and 5,321 other fish were released, and 153 people were arrested. The total value of the damage avoided is estimated at 1.82 billion tenge, or 3.8 million US\$.

Tumba.kz, October 12, 2022; Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, November 7, 2022; in Aktau, November 8, 2022.<sup>11</sup>

## PAKISTAN

**REPEATED OFFENCE**

**October 2022**

**Indus River Game Reserve, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**



Arrest of Fida Hussain, Sher Muhammad, and Chah Kaly Wala Haji Ghazi Sharqi. They had killed a Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) while electrofishing. The generator and nets were seized. They had been detected after photos were posted on social networks.

Hussain has been arrested for similar offences in 2015.

Dera Ismail Khan Wildlife Division, October 15, 2022; Dawn, October 17 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## SRI LANKA

**October 13, 2022**

**Beruwala Fishery Harbour, Western Province, Sri Lanka**



Arrest of one man who was transporting approximately 33 kg dolphin meat on his tuk-tuk.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, October 13, 2022



## VIET NAM

**Around November 10, 2022**  
**Near 170 km off Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam**



Fisherman Tran Quan and his crew spotted an unidentified floating object 170 km off the coast of Hue, like so many others in the ocean, and after a while realised that it was perhaps, or even certainly, sperm whale 'vomit' (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), a lump of the mythical ambergris that all fishermen dream of. Tran Quan turned around and got his hands on this ball, grey and white on the outside and rosy on the inside, which gives off a tenacious odour, and placed it, if not in a strong room, at least in a cold room. The presumed and hoped-for ambergris could have been nothing more than paraffin residue from washing the tanks of a tanker, but the uncertainty still exists and is exciting the whole crew. There are those who believe and those who don't. In 2020, a fisherman from Quang Ngai brought back such an object or something like it and sold it for 1.2 billion dong or 12,875 US\$/kg to a seafood wholesaler.

Doc Bao, November 20, 2022.<sup>14</sup>

## EUROPE

### SPAIN

**Mid-November 2022**  
**Port of Freixo, Province of A Coruña, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain**

The bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II), mascot of the port and estuary of Muros and Noia, has succeeded where the CEMMA (Coordinadora para o Estudo de Mamíferos Mariños, Coordination for the Study of Marine Mammals) had failed. According to the Voz de Galicia, he got rid of the harpoon stuck in his left flank by rubbing against the harbour breakwater. Biologists continue to have concerns about his physical health and psychological state. In summer, he is surrounded by crowds of tourists who want to take selfies or swim with him.

La Vanguardia, November 16, 2022.<sup>15</sup>

## RUSSIA

**November 2, 2022**  
**Sevastopol, Republic of Crimea**

The director of the Sevastopol dolphinarium, also known as the "Flipper" dolphinarium, and members of his team returned 4 Black Sea bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*, Appendix II) to the sea in the bay. This deliberate act does not appear to have been motivated by the repentance of a professional suddenly realising that dolphins are sentient beings and aspire to freedom. Such an act in the current circumstances of the Black Sea theatre of war could be considered cruelty to animals. Instead, it could mean imminent bankruptcy, trouble with the law and disputes with the competing establishment.

A selection of reactions from marine biologists:

- "We carried out research using a hydrophone. It can pick up sounds from a distance of 1.5 to 2 km, but we didn't detect any dolphins in the bays of Sevastopol" (Irina Logominova).

- "In the dolphinariums of Crimea, the mammals live forever. The animals' deaths are hidden and their birth certificates are given to their replacements. Where do the new dolphins come from? The survival rate in dolphinariums is low, only a few dolphins are born, and it is forbidden to capture them in the Black Sea - they are in the Red Book. But there is a way: you can order a dolphin from unscrupulous fishermen for money. Dolphins are often caught in nets. They are then secretly sold to dolphinariums. We know of one case where fishermen and dolphinarium employees were arrested in the open sea with a freshly caught dolphin, but the dolphinarium won the case." (Irina Logominova).

- "I'm in favour of closing most dolphinariums and releasing dolphins into the wild, but not in such a cruel, untrained way as this trainer did. A special preparatory programme is needed. Such a programme exists in South Korea, for example, and dolphins that have lived in captivity for a long time adapt well in the wild afterwards" (Alexander Agafonov).

Svetlana Radionova, November 3, 2022; UNIAN, November 3, 2022; MSK1.RU, November 5, 2022; Crimea News, November 10, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

## Map sources

### **India. Electrocution of elephants between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (page 32).**

Mirror Now, October 6, 2022 ; The New Indian Express, October 15 and 16, 2022 ; News Waali, October 20, 2022 ; Northeast Now, October 21, 2022 ; Praditin Time, October 21, 2022 ; The Hindu, November 2 and 22 and December 12, 2022 ; The Times of India, November 5, 9 and 15, 2022 ; Devdiscourse, November 8, 2022 ; The Pioneer, November 9, 2022 ; Lagatar News, November 9 and 13, 2022 ; DT Next, November 22, 2022 ; Amar Ujala, November 27, 2022 ; Outlook India, November 27, 2022.

### **Kazakhstan. Seizures of horns (2,528), carcasses (86), skins and meat of saiga antelope between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (page 85).**

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, October 3, 7, 19 and 28, November 2, 4, 8, 17 and 28, December 3, 20 and 29, 2022 and January 16, 2023; Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, October 28, December 6, 25 and 27, 2022; Tengrinews, November 4, 2022; Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, November 10, 2022; Caravan, November 11, 2022.

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo. Seizures, poaching and rescue of monkeys between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (page 106).**

Adams Cassinga, October 3, 2022; The Elite AntiPoaching Units And Combat Trackers, October 3, 2022; Lwiro Primates, October 5 and 9, November 4 and December 3, 10, 11 and 12, 2022; J.A.C.K. – Jeunes Animaux Confisqués au Katanga, October 16, 2022; Gorilla Doctors, November 4 and December 2 and 12, 2022.

### **Orangutans in Indonesia. October 1 - December 31, 2022 (pages 113 et 114).**

Jawa Pos, October 13, 2022 ; Betung Kerihun & Danau Sentarum National Park, October 15, 2022 ; Radar Sampit, October 15, 2022 ; Antara News, October 17 and November 18, 28 and 29, 2022 ; Centre for Orangutan Protection, October 23, 2022 ; The Orangutan Project, October 25 and November 22, 2022 and February 7, 2023 ; Merdeka.com, November 10, 2022 ; Orangutan Outreach, November 18, 2022 ; Kumparan, November 22, 2022 ; Presisi.co, November 24, 2022 ; Directorate General of Nature Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, November 29, 2022 ; Buletin iNews, December 7, 2022 ; Lintas iNews, December 7, 2022 ; Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation, December 12, 2022 and February 15, 2023 ; Orangutan Survival Foundation, December 12, 2022 ; Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, December 15, 2022 ; IDN Times Kaltim, December 25, 2022 ; Borneo Orangutan Survival UK, February 28, 2023.

### **Brazil. Seizure of 4,347 birds between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (page 131)**

G1 Goiás, August 22 and December 1, 2022 ; Conexão Tocantins, October 3, 2022 ; G1 Sorocaba e Jundiaí, October 7 and November 28, 2022 ; Paraná Portal, October 7, 2022 ; Federal Highway Police, October 8 and 10 and November 18, 2022 ; Military Police of the Federal District, October 8, 12, 14 and 25, November 1, 3, 6, and 7, December 8 and 11, 2022 ; G1 RN, October 9, 2022 ; G1 Grande Minas, October 12 and 14, 2022 ; Federal Police, October 12, 2022 ; Government of the State of Minas Gerais, October 14, 2022 ; G1, October 18, 2022 ; G1 Sul do Rio e Costa Verde, October 18 and November 1, 2022 ; Secretariat of Public Safety and Social Defense of Ceara, October 18, 2022 ; G1 PI, October 20, 2022 ; Band, October 24, 2022 ; Ibama, October 26, 2022 ; Brazilian government, October 31, 2022 ; Military Brigade of Rio Grande do Sul, November 1, 2022 ; G1 São Carlos e Araraquara, November 3, 2022 ; G1 Presidente Prudente, November 8 and 29, 2022 ; GZH, November 8, 2022 ; Hoje em Dia, November 10, 2022 ; Canal Rural, November 15, 2022 ; O Dia, November 18 and December 5, 2022 ; G1 AL, November 21, 2022 ; Agência Sertão, November 23, 2022 ; Banda B, November 23, 2022 ; Barbacena Online, November 23, 2022 ; SCC10, November 25, 2022 ; G1 SC, November 26, 2022 ; Clic Espumoso, November 28, 2022 ; Blog do Carlos Britto, November 29, 2022 ; City Hall of Rio de Janeiro, December 5, 2022 ; Rede Noticiaz, December 7, 2022 ; G1 Santos, December 10, 2022 ; SiteBarra, December 11, 2022 ; Diário da Região, December 13, 2022 ; Rádio Tapejara, December 15, 2022 ; Roma News, December 17, 2022 ; Diário do Aço, December 20, 2022 ; Portal Morada, December 29, 2022.

### **Indonesia. Seizure of 7,129 birds between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (pages 142 and 143).**

FLIGHT – Protecting Indonesia's Birds, October 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 24 and 30, November 11 and 24, 2022 , Garda Animalia, October 10, 14 and 20, November 11, 14, 23 and 28 and December 1, 2022 ; Cilegon Class II Agricultural Quarantine Center, October 11 and 13, 2022 ; BKSDA Maluku, October 13 and 24, November 15 and 28, 2022 ; iNews Sulsel, October 13, 2022 ; Kerjha, October 23, 2022 ; Koran Makassar, November 8, 2022 ; Directorate General of Nature Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, November 10, 2022 ; Surabaya Agriculture Quarantine Center, December 6, 2022 ; Tribun Jateng, December 11, 2022 ; KalbarOnline.com, December 20, 2022 ; SINDOnews, December 22, 2022 ; Indonesia Maritime Information Centre, December 2022.

### **India. Poaching and seizures of birds (1,416) between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (page 148).**

Andhra Pradesh: The Times of India, December 26, 2022.

West Bengal: Border Security Force South Bengal, October 11, November 5 and 26 and December 15, 2022; Railway Protection Force Eastern Railway, October 27, 2022 ; Railway Protection Force, October 27, 2022; NE India Broadcast, November 5 and December 15, 2022.

Gujarat: WCCB, November 5 and December 25, 2022; The Times of India, November 9, 2022; Wildlife SOS, Nov. 15, 2022.

Maharashtra: The Times of India, November 14, 2022; WCCB, December 21, 2022.

Manipur: The Times of India, November 2, 2022; E-Pao!, November 21 and 25, 2022.

Mizoram: Mizoram Police, October 15, 2022.

Odisha: The Print, December 3, 2022; Odisha TV, December 6, 2022; Argus News, December 26, 2022.

Tamil Nadu: The Times of India, October 8 and December 1 and 26, 2022; The Hindu, October 22, 2022; The Indian Express, November 30, 2022.

Uttar Pradesh: Dainik Jagran, October 5, 2022; WCCB, October 5, 2022.

**United Kingdom. Poaching of raptors between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (page 155).**

Lincolnshire Police, October 6, 2022; Durham Constabulary, November 4, 2022; Raptor Persecution UK, November 5, 2022 and April 25, May 5 and June 6 and 28, 2023; Belfast Telegraph, November 22, 2022; Kent Police, January 9, 2023.

**Italy. Poaching and seizures of birds (5,936) between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (page 162).**

Abruzzo : Arma dei Carabinieri, January 2, 2023

Basilicata : Basilicata24, October 19, 2022.

Calabria : StrettoWeb, December 22, 2022; Committee Against Bird Slaughter, January 4, 2023.

Campania : Edizione Caserta, October 13, 2022; Caserta Kest'è, October 14, 2022; CasertaNews, October 26, 2022; TeleradioNews, October 27, 2022; Il Mattino, November 7, 2022; NapoliToday, November 24, 2022; GreenMe, December 1, 2022.

Emilia-Romagna : Committee Against Bird Slaughter, November 29, 2022; La Pressa, November 29, 2022; Arma dei Carabinieri, December 1, 2022; Il Gazzettino, December 1, 2022; Telefriuli, December 1, 2022.

Friuli-Venezia Giulia : Arma dei Carabinieri, December 1, 2022; Il Gazzettino, December 1, 2022; Telefriuli, December 1, 2022; Natura Viva, January 13, 2023.

Lazio : Teleuniverso, October 25, 2022; LatinaToday, November 10, 2022 ; LIPU - Rome Wild Animal Rescue Centre, November 22, 2022; OIPA Italia, November 29, 2022.

Liguria : Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, December 7 and 17, 2022; ImperiaPost.it, December 7, 2022; Riviera24, December 9, 2022 ; Kodami, December 19, 2022.

Lombardy : WWF Italia, October 4, 2022; Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 13, 15, 20, 23, 27 and 30, November 3, 6, 13, 16 and 29, December 18, 2022 and January 2023; Lega Abolizione Caccia, October 16 and November 24, 2022; QuiBrescia, October 17 and 27 and November 26, 2022; Il Giorno, October 18, 2022; Bresciaoggi, October 23 and 24 and November 25, 2022 and January 13, 2023; Giornale di Brescia, October 30, 2022; Corriere della Sera, November 5, 2022; La Provincia di Como, November 6, 2022; Corriere Brescia, November 8 and 9, 2022; La Provincia di Cremona, November 8, 2022; Il Cittadino, November 16, 2022 ; Stella del Nord Wild Animal Rescue Centre, November 17, 2022; La Provincia di Como, November 17, 2022; QuiComo, November 17, 2022; LegnanoNews, January 13, 2023; MilanoToday, January 13, 2023.

Marche : Arma dei Carabinieri, December 1, 2022; Il Gazzettino, December 1, 2022; Telefriuli, December 1, 2022.

Umbria : Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli - Umbria, October 18, 2022; TuttOggi, October 29, 2022; PerugiaToday, November 3, 2022.

Piedmont : La Prealpina, December 27, 2022.

Sicily : Telesud, October 30, 2022.

Tuscany : Lucca in Diretta, October 14 and November 15 and 18, 2022; La Nazione, October 20, 2022; Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, November 5, 2022; goneWS.it, November 7, 2022; Toscana in Diretta, November 24, 2022; Province of Lucca, November 29, 2022.

Trentino-Alto Adige : Il Dolomiti, October 4 and 7, 2022; L'Adige, October 28, 2022.

Veneto : La Voce di Rovigo, October 14 and November 10, 2022; Tusciaweb, October 22, 2022; VeronaSera, December 1, 2022; Daily Verona, December 13, 2022; Natura Viva, January 13, 2023.

**Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan. Seizures of caviar (697.86 kg, minimal value 232,740 US\$). Poaching and seizures of sturgeons (936 specimens + 497 kg of flesh) between October 1 and December 31, 2022 (page 242).**

Kazakhstan:

Lada, October 11, November 8 and 19, 2022; Tumba.kz, October 12, November 9 and December 6, 2022; Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, October 17, November 4 and December 27, 2022; Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, November 7, 2022; inAktau, November 8 and 18, 2022; Inbusiness, November 8, 2022; My City, November 9, 2022; zakon.kz ,November 16, 2022.

Russia:

Astrakhan Oblast: Astrakhan News Feed, October 12, 2022; Volga-Caspian Management Unit of the Federal Agency for Fishery, October 12, 2022; Business News Agency, October 18, 2022; A24, December 23, 2022.

Republic of Dagestan: Interfax Russia, November 1, 2022; Makhachkala News, November 2 and December 7, 2022; RGVK Dagestan, November 3, 2022; North Caucasus Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fishery, November 10 and 16 and December 26, 2022; RIA Dagestan, December 6, 2022.

Khabarovsk Krai: Virtual Customs, October 12, 2022; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Khabarovsk Krai and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, October 27, 2022; DV Novosti, October 27, 2022; Border Service of the FSB of Russia, October 27, 2022; Amur Basin Environmental Prosecutor's Office, November 9, 2022; AmurMedia, November 17 and 18, 2022; DV Novosti, December 6, 2022.

Omsk Oblast: Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, October 26, 2022; 12 Channel, November 24, 2022; Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance in Omsk Oblast, November 24, 2022.

Primorsky Krai: Komsomolskaïa Pravda, October 10, 2022.

Rostov Oblast: Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources, November 3, 2022; Don24, November 7, 2022; Rostof.ru, November 7, 2022.

Tyumen Oblast: Tyumen Line, January 13, 2023; URA.RU, January 14, 2023.

Tomsk Oblast: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Tomsk Oblast, October 24, 2022; Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, November 10 and December 14, 2022; GTRK Tomsk, December 22, 2022; Russian Federation Prosecutor's Office, March 17, 2023.

Volgograd Oblast: Bloknot Astrakhan, October 31, 2022; GTRK Volgograd-TRV, December 22, 2022.

Vologda Oblast: Cher-poisk.ru, December 13, 2022.

Ukraine:

Bessarabia INFORM, October 20 and November 3, 2022; State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, November 3, 2022; Odessa Fish Protection Patrol, October 20 and November 4, 2022.