

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°39. Events from the 1st January to the 28th February, 2023



Quarterly information and analysis report on endangered
animals poaching and smuggling
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ON_{the} TRAIL

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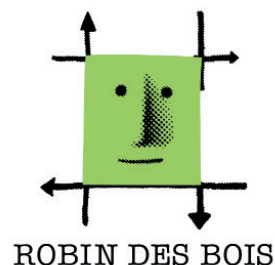
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NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

"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 + felines
- Elephants + felines
- Rhinos + 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 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

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AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 2, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Santos Baloyi is 31 years old. After entering South Africa illegally, carrying a gun with an obliterated number and ammunition of unknown origin, he broke into the Kruger and, with one or two accomplices, shot a rhinoceros.

Two rangers were alerted by the echo of the shots. Arriving on the scene, they made the customary summons, but the poachers retaliated with threats. Santos Baloyi was wounded in the exchange of gunfire, and the accomplice or accomplices disappeared into the bush at nightfall. With rangers arriving as backup, a search of the scene was carried out and a backpack with a firearm, an axe, a butcher's knife and a pair of fresh horns was found and entered into evidence. The next day, the body of one of Baloyi's accomplices was found in the weeds. Next to him was another firearm with silencer. The third man vanished. Perhaps he never existed.

Ballistics analysis proved that the rifle in Baloyi's possession and the bullets found in the rhino's body were compatible. Santos Baloyi was sentenced to 21 years in prison, 10 years' imprisonment for unlawful possession of rhino horns, five years for possession of unlawful firearm, two years for trespassing, two years for possession of ammunition without a valid licence, one year for possession of dangerous weapons (the axe), and one year for contravention of the immigration act. Baloyi is from Mozambique. Some sentences run concurrently, the effective sentence is 18 years.

News24, February 3, 2023; SAPS, February 3, 2023.¹



NAMIBIA

January 21, 2023

Okarakua farm, Khomas Region, Namibia

The country's first rhino poaching attempt in 2023 was a bloody one. Joho Somayewa from Zambia killed a rhino and soon after died in a shootout with the ranch's Anti-Poaching Unit. One of his fellow poachers, a 27-year-old male, was also wounded; taken to Windhoek Central Hospital in serious condition, he is now in stable condition. A third man hiding in the ranch's vicinity was arrested on Monday, January 23rd. In their rampage, the 3 poachers left behind a rifle, a silencer, ammunition and the 2 horns belonging to the slaughtered rhino. Namibia News Digest, January 23, 2023; Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), January 24, 2023; Namibia Daily News, January 24, 2023; New Era, January 24, 2023.²



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

February 6, 2023

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



Pascal Tulinabo Fatakanwe, 29, served as a Virunga ranger since 2017 and tragically died in the line of duty. He was killed during an attack by the Mai-Mai militias and leaves behind a widow and 2 children. Two of his colleagues who fought to save the gorillas and other sacred fauna were wounded during the ambush and taken to the hospital.

Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation, February 6, 2023; Virunga National Park, February 7, 2023; Isaac G Phephelu, February 8, 2023.³



THAILAND

January 14, 2023

Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, Uthai Thani, Kanchanaburi and Tak Provinces, Thailand

Clash between a patrol of forest rangers and poachers who had been camping in the forest for several days. The poachers did not respond to warnings and they fired. In the exchange of fire, one of the poachers was killed and another was wounded in the leg and admitted to Huai Khot hospital after an 8 km walk. The man was on a stretcher. A third man is still at large. Seizure of 3 firearms, 60 kg of smoked meat from a Phayre leaf's monkey (*Trachypithecus phayrei*, Appendix II), a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) and a black giant squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor*, Appendix II). The meat from these wild animals is said to sell in towns and villages for around 550 to 600 baht/kg (15-17 US\$/kg).

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, January 16, 2023.⁴

January 20-21, 2023

Khao Khiao-Khao Chomphu Wildlife Sanctuary, Chonburi Province, Thailand

Mr. Thanongdet, 59, was patrolling the Khao Khiao-Khao Chomphu wildlife sanctuary one night when he spotted a gang of poachers. He tried to stop them with the usual warning shots, but was shot in the head and died several hours later. Two of the poachers were arrested and found in possession of a dead hermaphrodite palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) and a dead Finlayson's squirrel (*Callosciurus finlaysonii*). Mr. Thanongdet's family received financial compensation totalling 350,000 baht (10,110 US\$), including 200,000 from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's Social Welfare Fund. Thai Public Broadcasting Service, January 21, 2023; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, January 22 and 26, 2023.⁵



PANGOLINS

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°39
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)
Asia	Indonesia	95 -470	11 (2022)
	Philippines	64	12 (2023)
	India	1,207	18 and 20 (2023)
		1,226	21 (2023)

1 skin with scales

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Namibia	3,000	8 and 9 (2023)

WESTERN AFRICA

NIGERIA

January 25 - March 25, 2023

Between Benin City and Lagos, Edo State, Nigeria

Customs seized 413 kg of white-bellied pangolin scales in 5 bags from a truck on the expressway between Benin City and Lagos, as well as 1,000 bales of second-hand clothing in sea containers from abroad.

Vanguard, April 5 and 6, 2023.¹

February 2023

Emerald Forest Reserve, Osun State, Nigeria

The NGO Pangolins International took charge of 8 juvenile pangolins. They were seized from poachers who had killed their mothers for their meat and scales. Pangolins International does not have the financial capacity to simultaneously rehabilitate so many young pangolins and has launched an appeal for donations.

<https://www.pangolins.international/donate>

Animal Survival International, March 15, 2023;

Pangolins International, March 17, 2023.²



© Pangolins International

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

Mid-January 2023
Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon



A rehabilitation centre for thirsty and staggered pangolins welcomed 4 new refugees after their rescue from sellers on the roads and markets or from traps. Only some recover after treatment and some may even have to have a paw or the tip of their tail amputated. One female gave birth while in the possession of gendarmes. The cub was transferred to Tikki Hywood and died 24 hours later. Of the 4 adults, only 2 survived.

Tikki Hywood Foundation Cameroon, January 18, 21, 25 and 28, 2023.³

February 2, 2023
Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon



A female pangolin was extracted without serious injury from a trap and was taken care of by the Tikki Hywood Foundation Cameroon after 8 hours on the road. Barely a week later, she was free again.

Tikki Hywood Foundation Cameroon, February 4 and 8, 2023.⁴

End of February 2023
Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon

The sub-adult female pangolin succumbed to her injuries. Seized by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife and, after undergoing emergency surgery at the Tikki Hywood Foundation clinic, she died a few hours later.

Tikki Hywood Foundation Cameroon, March 4, 2023.⁵



EASTERN AFRICA

ZAMBIA

Beginning of February 2023
Mumbwa, Central Province, Zambia

Lubunda was sentenced to 5 years in prison after he was caught transporting pangolin armour (skin and scales) on the road in 2022.

Kalembe, February 2, 2023.⁶



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 16, 2023
Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

A live pangolin was rescued and 5 suspects remanded in custody. The female was released into the care of Provet Veterinary Hospital in Hoedspruit.

Glen Thompson, January 16, 2023.⁷



NAMIBIA

January 13, 2023
Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Authorities arrested 2 Angolan farm workers and seized pangolin skin and scales, which the workers sought to sell for 50,000 Namibian dollars, or nearly 3,000 US\$.

Namibia News Digest, January 16, 2023.⁸

January 19, 2023
Mpungu, Kavango West Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Police officers arrested a policeman in the company of 4 accomplices. He was making the rounds of small pangolin suppliers in northern Namibia and possessed a skin with scales estimated to be worth around 3,000 US\$. The man was a police inspector in Tsumeb (population over 23,000), 220 km south of the town of Mpungu (population 15,000).

New Era, January 24, 2023.⁹

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

January 2, 2023

He Di Gang Border Post, Lincang Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China.

Authorities uncovered 130 scales packed inside an aluminum bag and cardboard box in the back of a courier truck from Cangyuan, a border town between Myanmar and China, on its way to Dali (Yunnan province, 453 km away).

Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, January 4, 2023.¹⁰



SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

February 1, 2023

Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Mario Chrisna Rahatiano was sentenced to one year and 3 months in prison and fined 10 million rupiah (670 US\$) which, if not paid, will be supplanted by an additional 3 months in prison. In September 2022, Rahatiano bought 2.5 kg of scales from a "friend" for 3.5 million rupiah (236 US\$ or 95 US\$/kg) and tried to sell a kilo for 7 million rupiah (470 US\$/kg).

Borneo News, January 26, 2023; Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, February 1, 2023.¹¹



PHILIPPINES

February 23, 2023

El Nido, Province of Palawan, Philippines

Overnight seizure of 7.5 kg of pangolin scales valued on the local market at 3,500 pesos/kg (64 US\$/kg). Two arrests. Names withheld to avoid influencing the ongoing investigation.

Palawan News, February 25, 2023.¹²

VIET NAM

January 17, 2023

Plei Can, Kon Tum Province, Viet Nam

Two young men who carried 64 kg of fireworks and 5 live pangolins in a pick-up from Laos were sentenced to 7 years and 6 months and 6 years and 8 months in prison, respectively (see "On the Trail" n°37 p. 13). ENV, February 9, 2023.¹³



January 23, 2023

Lien Nghia, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Truong Quang Bich to 18 months in prison. On September 1, 2022, he was transporting 2 Sunda pangolins in Phu Hoi. They were released 6 days later. See "On the Trail" n°37 p. 13.

Ho Chi Minh City Police Newspaper, February 3, 2023.¹⁴



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

January 7, 2023

Palasa, Srikakulam District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

Authorities arrest 4 suspects in a motel in possession of 2 live pangolins.

Asian News International, January 8, 2023.¹⁵

Night of January 11-12, 2023

Banashankari, Bengaluru Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Authorities confiscate 23 kg of scales and arrest Kiran Ramanayak, 25. Three other men disappeared in the dark. This marks the biggest seizure of scales ever made in Bangalore.

The New Indian Express, January 14, 2023.¹⁶

January 13, 2023

Nimati, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

A 53-year-old elected member of the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) was caught red-handed trying to sell a young live ant-eater. The TMC is the majority party in West Bengal (population 102 million). In the federal parliament in New Delhi, however, it is in the minority, dominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by President Narendra Modi. The BJP accuses TMC members of stealing sand, coal and jobs... now it can add theft and pangolin trading to the litany.

Indo-Asian News Service, January 14, 2023; PiPa News, January 14, 2023; The Shillong Times, January 14, 2023.¹⁷

January 23, 2023

Ranchi, Ranchi District, State of Jharkhand, India

Authorities seized 1.5 kilos of scales and arrested 3 individuals at a hotel near a railway station. One kilo of scales is worth an estimated 100,000 rupees (1,207 US\$). The suspects claimed to have had 20 pounds during their initial confessions.

The Telegraph India, January 24, 2023; WCCB, January 30, 2023.¹⁸

January 27, 2023

State of Tamil Nadu, India



The press didn't mention it, and the WCCB's tweet remains cryptic, with no precise location : according to intelligence, 3 kg of scales and 2 traffickers fell into the hands of federal agents and the Forestry Department.

WCCB, January 31, 2023.¹⁹

January 31, 2023

Sibong Khudengthabi, Tengnoupal District, State of Manipur, India. Border with Myanmar.

Officials seize 5.19 kg of scales valued at 519,000 rupees (6,264 US\$ or 1,207 US\$/kg).

Northeast Now, February 2, 2023.²⁰



February 21, 2023

Marol, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India

Authorities intercept 30 kg of scales stored inside bags, valued at 300,000 rupees (36,798 US\$ or 1,226 US\$/kg), listed on the international market. Police were waiting for suspect Ram Waghmare, 27, as he returned from the forest and got off an autorickshaw.

Hindustan Times, February 23, 2023.²¹

— PANGOLINS, ELEPHANTS, RHINOS AND FELINES —

ASIA

VIET NAM

February 21, 2023

Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

Tai in the solitude of the court was sentenced to 13 years in prison for having in July 2021 and January 2022 attempted to organise in Viet Nam the receipt of 2 maritime containers from Africa and the smuggling of 6.2 tonnes of pangolin scales, 456 kg of elephant tusks, 138 kg of rhino horns and 3.1 tonnes of lion bones (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.75 and n°35 p. 15).

VnExpress International, February 22, 2023; Báo Công An Đà Nẵng, February 23, 2023.¹



ELEPHANTS



African savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). Photo Sebastián Lescano

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°39
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	880	9 (2022)
		750	10 (2023)
		813	13 (2023)
		805	17 (2023)
	Zimbabwe	170	29 and 30 (2023)

WESTERN AFRICA

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

February 23, 2023

Abobo, Autonomous District of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire



Officials arrest 3 ivory smugglers, who may also be poachers, and seize 20 kg of tusks including 5 belonging to elephant calves. The last elephant census in Côte d'Ivoire is dating back to 2016 and while the bracket was large, few elephants were inside (between 200 and 600).

EAGLE, February 28, 2023; EAGLE Ivory Coast, February 2023.¹

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

January 9, 2023

Pango Aluquém, Cuanza Norte Province, Angola

The SIC (Serviço de Investigação Criminal de Angola) arrested 2 young men and seized 2 tusks. The suspects claim to have cut them off the corpse of a recently deceased elephant, and admit to having feasted on the meat alongside members of their community.

Epito Repórter, January 9, 2023.²

Mid-February 2023

Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport, Luanda Province, Angola

A 35-year-old Vietnamese attempted to return home via Addis Ababa and Ethiopian Airlines with 3.6 kg of carved ivory hidden in candy boxes.

Notícias ao Minuto, February 15, 2023; Jornal de Angola, February 16, 2023; Novo Jornal, February 16, 2023.³

February 19, 2023

Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport, Luanda Province, Angola

A 37-year-old Vietnamese woman attempted to return home via Addis Ababa and Ethiopian Airlines with 35 kg of carved ivory concealed in candy boxes.

Jornal de Angola, February 20, 2023.⁴

GABON

January 31, 2023

Kango, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Gendarmes and Eaux et Forêts officers arrested M.T.E., a male suspect whose nationality was not revealed. They uncovered 2 tusks cut into 4 sections, which the suspect claims were "picked up" in a forest 20 km from Kango. Conservation Justice assisted with the legal aspects of the operation.

EAGLE, January 31, 2023; Conservation Justice, January 2023; Gabon Actu, February 4, 2023.⁵

February 17, 2023

Lambaréné, Moyen-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Makita from Gabon and accomplice Bouna (alias Ben) from Ghana were arrested by police and Eaux et Forêts officers. The NGO Conservation Justice provided legal support in this case. The men were caught holding 2 elephant tusks weighing a total of 7.2 kg. They claimed to have picked them up in the forest near the lakes area, an hour's pirogue ride from Lambaréné. They were questioned by the Libreville prosecutor and remanded in custody. Makita also traffics in iboga bark (*Tabernanthe iboga*), an endemic shrub threatened by trafficking. Its bark is supposed to be soothing and euphoric. The Lambaréné court is an ivory sieve; on 3 occasions, it has seen trials for raw ivory theft or embezzlement (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.42).

EAGLE, February 19, 2023; Info241, February 28, 2023; Conservation Justice, February 2023.⁶

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 25, 2023

Sibiti, Department of Lékoumou, Republic of the Congo



Bayidikamio Darniche was arrested and 2 tusks cut into 3 were taken from his possession, thanks to the Sibiti Gendarmerie and Direction Départementale de l'Economie Forestière, with technical support from PALF (Project for the Application of Law for Fauna (PALF)).

EAGLE, January 26, 2023; PALF, January 2023; Polele-Polele, February 8, 2023.⁷

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

January-February-March Elephants targeted in Kenya



In Kenya, 45 elephants fell victim to arrows, spears, traps set in savannahs to capture small game, and rifle bullets. With short grass and nearly dry waterholes, competition between domestic herds and elephants is at its peak.



The elephants suffer, drag their legs, their wounds become infected, the blood flows, they isolate themselves under tall trees on hilltops or near swamps, or manage to stay with their families in search of water and food.

After anaesthesia and treatment, 34 were diagnosed favourably, 5 unfavourably or very unfavourably due to fractures or cracks in their leg, shoulder or hip joints, and 6 died, including one elephant carrying a 3-month-old foetus in Emurua (Kajiado). In the Olkinyei Conservancy, a matriarch known as Chelsea was crippled by 3 spears. She limped around for several weeks. Five members of her family were removed during her treatment. Her right ear was used as a blindfold to protect her eyes. She was constantly sprayed with water to avoid thermal shock. After the revival antidote, she struggled to her feet with the help of rescuers. The prognosis is certainly favourable, but any further aggression towards her would be fatal. Given her age, she would not be able to withstand further anaesthesia.

SWT/KWS SkyVet program, October 2022 to January 2023; SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, January, February and March 2023; SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2023; SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, January, February and March 2023; SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February and March 2023; SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, February and March 2023; Save the Elephants, March 1, 2023; Mara Elephant Project, March 2022.⁸

Beginning of January 2023

Loitokitok, Kajiado County, Kenya

Bilas Venance Shayo, a Tanzanian citizen, and Joseph Mutisya were sentenced to 5 years in prison for transporting and attempting to sell 21 kg of ivory worth 18,500 US\$ (880 US\$/kg) at the end of January 2022. They have 14 days to appeal. See "On the Trail" n°35 p.19, event 19, paragraph 4.

Kenya News Agency, January 5, 2023.⁹



January 9, 2023

Ntulele, Narok county, Kenya

Authorities arrested 5 men on 2 motorcycles in possession of 32.9 kg of ivory, or 31.9 kg depending on the source, valued at around 750 US\$/kg. They kept the ivory hidden in a charcoal bag and were on their way to deliver it to Nairobi, 115 km from Ntulele.

The Star (Kenya), January 30, 2023; Big Life Foundation, January 2023.¹⁰

January 18, 2023

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

Arrest by KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service) and TANAPA (Tanzania National Parks) agents of a man in possession of 2 tusks (35.84 kg) thanks to a tip-off from the Mara Elephant Project.

Mara Elephant Project, January 2023.¹¹

January 19, 2023

Kimunye, Kirinyaga County, Kenya

Thanks to a tip-off from the Big Life Foundation, Samuel, Patrick, Christopher, James, Peter and Eliud were stopped in the village store parking lot (population approx. 150) with 2 tusks in their car. One of them was employed by the county administration. They were released on a 500,000 shilling (4,075 US\$) bail or a bond of one million shillings (8,130 US\$).

Big Life Foundation, January 2023; The Star (Kenya), February 8, 2023.¹²

January 28, 2023

Meru, Meru County, Kenya

A police officer who's stationed in Nairobi was arrested. He was transporting and attempting to sell 21 kg of raw ivory, worth an estimated 2.1 million shillings or 17,080 US\$ and 813 US\$/kg, per the KWS and police. He gave the name and address of an accomplice.

The Star (Kenya), January 30, 2023; Big Life Foundation, January 2023.¹³

January 29, 2023

Kenya

Following a tip-off from the Big Life Foundation, a suspect in possession of 2 tusks (22 kg) was arrested. Big Life Foundation, January 2023.¹⁴

February 1, 2023

Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya

James Ngala Kassiwa is back ("On the Trail", n°1 p.31 published in 2013, n°3 p.58 and n°35 p. 21-22, all rehash his past). In March 2022, Kassiwa was sentenced to 2 years in prison for facilitating the entry of a Thailand-bound sea container with 4 tonnes of ivory as an employee at the Mombasa port.

Citing his status as a family man, the precarious state of his health, his repentance and his desire to reintegrate into society, he was granted early release by the High Court, subject to 9 months' probation.

Nation (Kenya), February 2, 2023.¹⁵

February 9, 2023

Kajiado County, Kenya

Arrest of 2 suspects in possession of 4 sections of raw ivory weighing 14.5 kg.

Big Life Foundation, February 2023.¹⁶

REPEATED OFFENCE

February 12, 2023

Ndunyu Njeru, Nyandarua County, Kenya

Officials arrested 3 men who claimed to be "businessmen" in Nairobi. Inside their sedan was 58 kg of raw ivory worth 5.8 million shillings, or 46,700 US\$, and 805 US\$/kg. The ivory reportedly came from 2 freshly poached elephants. One of the "businessmen", Edward Kaburu Nyaga, has prior involvement in ivory trafficking (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 88, ref. 3).

The Standard (Kenya), February 13, 2023; The Star (Kenya), February 13, 2023; Big Life Foundation, February 2023; SEEJ-AFRICA (Saving Elephants through Education and Justice), August 18, 2023.¹⁷

February 13, 2023

Webuye, Bungoma County, Kenya

A police officer and his civil society accomplice were arrested by an undercover KWS agent who posed as a prospective buyer of 9 kg of raw ivory.

The Star (Kenya), February 14, 2023.¹⁸

February 14-15, 2023

Kilibasi, Kwale County, and Mariakani, Kilifi and Kwale Counties, Kenya

- Joseph Wambua Mutua and Wambua Mutavi Nduti transported 32 kg of raw ivory by motorcycle and are suspected of an attempted sale.

- They plead not guilty. The judge ruled that they could be released pending trial, subject to a personal guarantee of 500,000 shillings (4,000 US\$). Office of The Director Of Public Prosecutions, February 15, 2023; The Star (Kenya), February 15, 2023.¹⁹

February 22, 2023

Mariakani, Kilifi and Kwale Counties, Kenya



Charles Mweni and Tabitha Mueni were sentenced to 4 and 7 years in prison, respectively, for holding, transporting and attempting to sell 73 kg of ivory to undercover KWS agents (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.93). Each of them must also pay a fine of 3 million shillings (24,150 US\$). If they fail to pay, they will have to serve 5 additional years in prison (this 2nd sentence will be combined with the first).

SEEJ-AFRICA (Saving Elephants through Education and Justice), February 22, 2023.²⁰

SOUTH SUDAN

February 28, 2023

Nimule National Park, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. Border with Uganda.

According to the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, soldiers from Uganda's army regularly raid Nimule National Park in South Sudan to poach wildlife. On Tuesday, February 28, they shot an elephant with a Kalashnikov and amputated his tusks. Negotiations are in progress with the Prefect of Moya District, Uganda, to stop the trade.

Eye Radio, March 5, 2023.²¹

TANZANIA

January 11, 2023

Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

Jayzan Kuchar alias China and Aloyce Francis, who advertise themselves as "businessmen", are accused of economic sabotage. The 3 charges include fraudulent possession of 19 elephant tusks. They were released under guarantees amounting to 30,000 US\$.

Daily News (Tanzania), January 13, 2023.²²

January 27, 2023

Mara Region, Tanzania. Border with Kenya.

In a press conference, police announced that between December 1, 2022 and January 26, 2023, they had seized 18 kg of gold, 6 tusks weighing 40 kg in total, and destroyed a hectare of cannabis. Xinhua, January 27, 2023.²³

January-February 2023

Mlimba and Sanje, Morogoro Region, Tanzania

Poachers from neighbouring villages were threatening elephants in Udzungwa Mountains National Park (1,990 km²). To counter this, park managers, with the support of the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority, elevated patrolling efforts. The arrival of ivory-detecting dogs has enabled progress in marking tusks hidden in the wild. Sure enough, 3 tusks were discovered in Mlimba and 12 tusk sections in Sanje.

The Guardian (Tanzania), February 23, 2023.²⁴

February 2023

Magombera, Morogoro Region, Tanzania

The Southern Tanzania Elephant Programme aims to restore and secure the Kilombero corridor used by elephants to migrate between Udzungwa and Nyerere National Parks. The goal is to avoid conflicts between humans and elephants. Previously forested, the corridor (186.6 hectares) has been invaded over the past 50 years by crops, housing... and poachers. Two elephants were shot this month. The Guardian (Tanzania), February 23, 2023.²⁵

February 28, 2023

Iringa, Iringa Region, Tanzania



As police conducted a roadside checkpoint, they uncovered 8 whole tusks and 6 sections worth nearly 90,000 US\$ inside an SUV. The 3 occupants also had a dagger and a knife in their hands. HabariLEO, March 3, 2023.²⁶

ZAMBIA

February 28, 2023

Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, Lusaka Province, Zambia

A Chinese citizen returning to Beijing had 3 bracelets, a necklace and 3 small ivory ingots in his luggage. As Kalemba puts it, "Qi Zihua's long but comfortable first class flight to Beijing was replaced with a stay in the unsanitary Zambian Police cells with no chimpapila" (referring to bean leaves prepared as a side dish alongside other ingredients like peanuts).

Kalemba, March 2, 2023.²⁷

ZIMBABWE

January 16 and 19, 2023

Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

- Another school teacher involved in ivory trafficking! Elias Mjobi, 52, teaches at a local elementary school. His accomplice, Godwin Mkandla, lives in the village of Mukwariva. Together, they were found in possession of 14 tusks or tusk sections when arrested by inspectors from the Criminal Investigation Department Minerals Flora and Fauna and ZimParks.

- Three days later, near the Galiva bus stop on Gokwe-Chitekete road, 2 men were caught by police transporting 4 tusks or tusk sections. Gokwe (population 33,000) is 230 km north of Harare. For the record, in July 2022, inspectors arrested Saunders Munsaka with 6 tusks in Gokwe. He was sentenced to 9 years in prison (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.24).

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE NGO

FAUNA AND FLORA ZIMBABWE, JANUARY 24, 2023

"Wildlife poaching and trafficking is a multibillion-dollar industry. The destination for ivory, rhino horns, pangolin scales etc is mostly Asia. There are syndicates involved in almost all poaching cases. Kingpins direct the poaching operations from behind the scenes. These kingpins are 'never' arrested. Enforcement authorities must take a shift and focus on the financial aspect of wildlife trafficking. The "Follow The Money" approach is arguably the best way of saving animals from poachers.

Wildlife trafficking syndicates rely on illegal financial flows to transfer cash to middlemen, poachers, villagers and sometimes law enforcement officials who are part of the syndicates. As a result, thousands of animals are killed in Africa and billions of dollars are lost every year.

Of the few cases that spill into the courts, only a handful are successfully prosecuted. Some cases crumble due to poor investigations and evidence gathering by the police. Sometimes public prosecutors poorly present cases before the courts. In some cases, the courts deliver funny judgments and let poachers go.

There is need for the police, prosecutors, magistrates and judges to be well conversant with wildlife laws if justice is to be served in poaching cases. Capacity building training workshops and programs will go a long way in ensuring that the guilty are accordingly convicted."

Fauna and Flora Zimbabwe works in cooperation with the Zimbabwe Republic Police and ZimParks.

The Zimbabwe Mail, January 20, 2023; Fauna and Flora Zimbabwe, January 24, 2023.²⁸

February 13, 2023
Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe



Edwell Jori from Kanyemba, Taurai Chinembiru, Josphine Rungwe and Portion Zhuga from Kadoma, and Last Mawurukira, a solar panel washer, attempted to sell 4 elephant tusks in a shopping mall. The 5 of them were surrounded by detectives, removed from their Toyota and taken to the police station. The 26.9 kg of raw ivory was valued at 4,573 US\$, or 170 US\$/kg.

The Herald (Zimbabwe), February 16, 2023.²⁹

February 19, 2023
Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

On Chiremba Road, a 34-year-old man was haggling over 2 tusks. Realizing he had fallen into a trap, he took off running. An agent from the Criminal Investigation Department Minerals Flora and Fauna fired his AK-47 into the air. The man was soon brought before a judge. The tusks are valued at 884 US\$, or 170 US\$/kg, suggesting they must weigh 5.2 kg.

Zim Now, February 22, 2023.³⁰

February 22, 2023
Kariba, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

An elephant was shot dead in September 2020 in Matusadona National Park, and just a few meters away, a 303 cartridge was found. Two years later, an individual named Loveridge Juru was arrested in possession of an undeclared 303-caliber rifle. The weapon was subjected to ballistic analysis, and both the bullet in the elephant's head and the cartridge matched Juru's weapon, according to the investigation file. The economic value of the elephant is estimated at 50,000 US\$.

Pindula, February 24, 2023.³¹

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

End of December 2022 to the beginning of February 2023

Jozini/Pongolapoortdam Dam, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Passengers aboard the *Jozenic*, a sightseeing boat that cruises a 160 km² artificial lake, were out of luck. Instead of the typical flora and fauna, they came across elephants carcasses drifting across the lake. Some 20 poachers who run the Pongola reserve fired automatic weapons at the *Jozenic*. The 8 tourists - 5 Germans, 2 Americans, an Australian - and 4 South Africans on board hunkered down on deck, terrified, abandoning their cameras. The Pongola police launched an investigation for attempted murder.

Daily Maverick, January 12 and February 6 2023; News24, January 12 2023.³²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 18, 2023

Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa

Jan Marthinus Blomerus, 44, and Susan Carol Blomerus, 43, enticed buyers with 2 tusks of a substantial weight at a good price (60,000 rand or 3,510 US\$). The deal fell through, however; the buyers were cops. As is customary, the 2 crooks were released on bail set at 1,500 rand (90 US\$), 40 times less than what they hoped to derive from poaching an elephant.

News24, January 19, 2023; SAPS, January 19, 2023.³³

Beginning of February 2023

Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Rescue of a baby elephant strangled in a trap. Operation carried out with the support of The Aspinall Foundation.

Provet Animal Hospital, February 8, 2023.³⁴



NAMIBIA

January 13, 2023

Mukwe, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

NamPol (Namibian Police Force) arrested Lihako Sishwama for the possession of 2 tusks at the Buffalo checkpoint. They seized the ivory and released him on a 10,000 Namibian dollars (585 US\$) bail.

The Namibian, January 14 and 16, 2023; Namibia News Digest, January 15 and 17, 2023.³⁵

REPEATED OFFENCE

Beginning of February 2023

Kongola, Zambezi Region, Namibia. Border with Angola, Zambia and Botswana.

Malosi alias "Dime U Fume" and Mashule Mate, 34, were caught carrying 12 tusks or tusk sections. They decided not to hire lawyers for their defense. The 2 are also charged with violating the Immigration Control Act, as Malosi hosted his accomplice without a residence permit. Mate entered Zimbabwe through the back door. Initially, Malosi was granted bail of 10,000 Namibian dollars (580 US\$), but this was later revoked when the courts realized he had already been convicted of ivory trafficking.

Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, February 6, 2023.³⁶

February 5 and 6, 2023

Okahandja, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Three men aged 23, 28 and 29 were arrested while trying to sell a tusk in a restaurant. The tusk and their Volkswagen were seized. The next day, a 23-year-old accomplice is arrested in town.

Namibia News Digest, February 7, 2023.³⁷

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 2023

State of Florida, United States of America

From over-elaborated carved items to engraved tusks, dishes, pen holders, necklaces and bracelets, antique dealers and other curio sellers from Fort Lauderdale to West Palm Beach are still selling undated ivory. The ivory likely came from recent poaching incidents, promoting rampant trafficking of this essential material for elephants' daily lives. Some sellers claim not to understand the regulations, while others know that most of the ivory in their stores violates federal laws. Some even hide the ivory in the back and take it out upon customers' requests, advising them to conceal their purchases when traveling. Thirteen States and Washington D.C. have enacted laws prohibiting the transportation of ivory outside their borders.

"It's critical that Florida do its utmost to reduce the demand for ivory, especially considering that the State is home to significant ports and airports from which illegal ivory can enter" says the Humane Society's press release, concluding its investigation. The Humane Society of the United States, March 20, 2023.³⁸

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

SHANGHAI AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

Beginning of January 2023

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

- Seizure of an ivory vase in a package from abroad.
- Seizure from a batch of upright pianos from Japan of keys with ivory veneers. After dismantling, the piano was sent for disposal or recycling.

Chinese Customs, January 14 and 18, 2023; The Paper, January 16, 2023.³⁹



TIANJIN AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

January 29, 2023

Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of the 2 ivory tips of a painting scroll in an incoming package, presumably from Japan.

Chinese Customs, February 1, 2023.⁴⁰



GUANGDONG PROVINCE

January to February 2023 Guangdong Province, China

In 2 months, customs seized 1,276 grams of carved ivory in packages from abroad or inside passenger suitcases, for example, bracelets hidden in an old stainless steel rice cooker whose secret was revealed by X-rays, or a Buddha statuette and necklaces declared by the sender to be "cosmetics." Chinese Customs, January 19 and February 15 and 21, 2023.⁴¹

HUBEI PROVINCE

January 19 and February 2023 Wuhan, Hubei Province, China

Seizure of 3,410.80 grams of carved ivory: a mahjong game and an ivory fan in 2 packages from abroad, and the tips of 3 painting scrolls in a package probably from Japan. Chinese Customs, February 2, 20 and 24, 2023.⁴²

HUNAN PROVINCE

February 9, 2023 Hunan Province, China

Seizure of 3 objects made of or containing ivory in a package supposed to contain "cups and cigarette holders." 1,047 grams. Chinese Customs, February 11, 2023.⁴³

JIANGXI PROVINCE

February 15, 2023 Yichun, Jiangxi Province, China

Customs seizure in Yichun, in the northwest of the province, of 60 chopsticks, 20 ivory bead necklaces (0.6 cm in diameter), and 32 large pearls. Chinese Customs, February 24, 2023.⁴⁴



YUNNAN PROVINCE

February 2023 Hekou Border Post, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Seizure by Hekou Customs of 8 ivory bracelets from a traveler's suitcase from Viet Nam via the Nanxi River. Total weight: 230.65 grams. Chinese Customs, February 24, 2023.⁴⁵

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

January 2023 Yangshan Port, Zhejiang Province, China

Yangshan Port Customs intercepted an old upright piano in an overseas container, the keys of which were covered with "a hard material with obvious yellowing," leading them to believe it was ivory, which was soon confirmed by experts in Shanghai. Dismantling and seizure of 309 grams of ivory from Asia or Africa. Chinese Customs, February 4, 2023.⁴⁶

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

MYANMAR

February 18, 2023 Ngapein Daleh, Patheingyi District, Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar

Since the civil war is ravaging the country, the various authorities in charge of wildlife protection are no more in the field. As for the poachers, they are not off work. They take full advantage of Buddhist festivities by posing as pilgrims in the forest areas around the Mawtin, Tawng Nyo and Depayon pagodas in the district. Against this disastrous backdrop, the courageous "Wild Elephant Lovers" group has warned of the presence of at least 24 poachers in the region. Today, a 2.60 m tall elephant was shot dead. In 2022, 4 elephants had already been poached in the region. Burma News International, March 4, 2023.⁴⁷

SINGAPORE

February 15, 2023 Singapore

Dao Thi Boi, a Vietnamese national, was sentenced to 10 months in prison for having contributed through lack of vigilance to an attempt of smuggling 3,500 kg of raw ivory in a container from Apapa, Nigeria, said to be loaded with "peanuts" (see "On the Trail" n°35 p. 28). Ms. Boi worked as the manager of an import-export company handling goods to and from Viet Nam. The judge concluded that she had not taken all reasonable precautions and exercised all due diligence to avoid the commission of the offence. A similar smuggling operation from Apapa to Viet Nam was previously thwarted in 2018 at the Singapore port (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 107). Channel News Asia, February 15, 2023.⁴⁸



VIET NAM

Beginning of January 2023 Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Y Khun is in his forties. For years and years, he was an ambassador for tourism in Thailand. He carried tourists from all over the world on his spine, sitting comfortably on benches and was wading in the shallow waters of polluted Lake Lak. Over the past 3 years, with the sudden collapse of Covid-19, he has no longer had to carry out these chores. Tourists have deserted him and elephant riding has fallen out of favour. His owner no longer knew what to do with him, and was in danger of abandoning Y Khun to his fate in what remained of the forest. Thanks to an initiative by the NGO AAF (Animals Asia Foundation) and the provincial government, Dang Van Long and his family handed Y Khun over to the province's domestic elephant rehabilitation centre. In compensation, they received 700 million dong (30,000 US\$), the economic value of Y Khun ("the lucky one" in Thai). In the province, there are allegedly still around forty domestic elephants who are unemployed and living in precarious conditions and around a hundred wild elephants. Their population has fallen by 90% in 40 years. VnExpress International, January 11, 2023.⁴⁹

January 22 and 28 and February 2, 2023 Haiphong Port, Viet Nam

Big ivory business is back on track.

In early January 2023, customs and coastguards were informed that large consignments of illegal ivory would arrive at the Haiphong port during the busy Tet vacation season.

- On January 22, the first day of the Year of the Cat, a container destined for HMD Technology Joint Stock Company is unloaded from the *Xin Wen Zhou*.

- On January 28, the 7th day of the Lunar New Year, a container from Nigeria is flagged during customs procedures. According to official documents, it was filled with *Bos taurus* (cattle) horns, destined for transformation into handicrafts and utility items. The container passed through the scanner and revealed anomalies.

- On February 2, Customs and the Coast Guard Region 1 Command opened the container and discovered 117 tusks or tusk sections weighing a total of 490 kg among the bags of horns.

Customs News, February 2, 3 and 6, 2023; VTV (Viet Nam), February 3, 2023.⁵⁰



ROBIN DES BOIS INVESTIGATION



Xin Wen Zhou in South China Sea,
July 21, 2022

Xin Wen Zhou. IMO 9523043. Container ship with a capacity of 4,738 teu. Length 255 m. China flag. China Classification Society. Built in 2013 in Shanghai (China) by Shanghai Jiangnan Changxing Heavy Industry Co. Owner Shanghai Xin Yuan Hai Ji under the care of COSCO Shipping Development Co Ltd (China), a financial company owned by the State-owned China Shipping Group. She operates in Asia, serving Chinese ports, Singapore, Port Klang (Malaysia), Haiphong (Viet Nam), Chennai and Kattupalli on India's east coast. The container was certainly loaded in Nigeria onto another container ship, unloaded in Singapore or Port Klang in Malaysia and reloaded onto the *Xin Wen Zhou*.

Beginning of February 2023 Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam

Officials seized over 3 kg of carved ivory and scraps from a seller using Facebook as a shop.

ENV, February 8, 2023.⁵¹

facebook



New seizure of ivory of African origin when a container was opened after being unloaded from the *Kota Lih*. The tusks are once again mixed with cattle horns. The overall weight of the tusks is estimated at 130 kg. The scale with 5 or 6 tusks already indicates a 20 kg weight.



ROBIN DES BOIS INVESTIGATION



Kota Lih, November 14, 2018 in Brisbane

Kota Lih. IMO 9628324. Container ship with a capacity of 4253 teu. Length 266 m. Singapore flag. Lloyd's Register of Shipping classification society. Built in 2013 in Dalian (China) by Dalian Shipbuilding Industry Co. Owner Pacific International Lines (Singapore) which claims 93 container ships. The *Kota Lih* is operated on the world ocean. She's a globetrotter. In 2022 she called in Asia (China, Malaysia, India, Viet Nam, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong), the Middle East (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia), America (Mexico, Guatemala) and Africa (Tema in Ghana, Lome in Togo, Lagos and Onne in Nigeria).

Customs News, February 6 and 7, 2023.⁵²

INDIA

January 2 and 21, 2023

Thrissur District, State of Kerala, India



An elephant with a trap at the tip of his trunk has been spotted on numerous occasions roaming the district. He was first seen in Anakkayam by Arid V. K. in 2018; when alerted, Forest Department officials were unable to locate him. Arid V. K. photographed him again on February 18, 2021. Two years later, here we are again: on January 2, photographer G. Shibu spotted him near the Poringalkuthu dam, 50 km from Anakkayam, and alerted the Forest Department. A search was launched, but was again unsuccessful. Three weeks later, he reappeared in the Anakkayam area, this time showing himself to V. N. Shanu, an amateur photographer. "It appears that the tip of the trunk may get severed soon," he worries. Since then, he has disappeared again. Mathrubhumi, January 4, 2023; The Times of India, January 4 and 23, 2023.⁵³

January 8, 2023

Bander Reserve Forest, Sambalpur District, State of Odisha, India



Prasanta Mirdha, Dilip Mirdha and Bideshi Mirdha had planned a feast for Puspuni, the annual festival marking the end of the rice harvest in Odisha. The main course was to be wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) poached in the forest using a trap connected to an electric cable. A male elephant was struck down instead. Arrested by the forest rangers, the 3 rascals spent Puspuni in custody, and will perhaps celebrate others within 4 walls. The New Indian Express, January 9, 2023.⁵⁴

January 11, 2023

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Shahdol District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Ajay Dubey reported the poaching by poisoning of a baby elephant and the illegal burning of his carcass to the NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) and the State Forest Department. The findings of Ajay Dubey, who lives in Bhopal, are backed up by the testimonies of villagers living near the Bandhavgarh tiger reserve and by photos of vertebrae found at the scene of the burning. The New Indian Express, January 15 and 20, 2023.⁵⁵

REPEATED OFFENCE

January 13, 2023

Doddabbaragi, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India



Farmer Gopal was already facing charges because an elephant had died electrocuted against one of his illegal fences in August 2018. But Indian justice is slow, and Gopal had in the meantime reconnected his enclosure. This time it was a 25-year-old female who was knocked down by the current. Gopal has been charged again. Will he be deterred from doing it again?

The Hindu, January 13, 2023; Telangana Today, January 14, 2023.⁵⁶

January 14, 2023

Kaduanuagaon surroundings, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India



The 30-40 year old tusker had been tracked by a team of forest rangers until around 6 a.m., according to the Forest Department. But he came out of the jungle and at around 8.30 a.m. approached a sugar cane field. A shot from an illegally electrified fence hit him in the trunk. He staggered, took a few steps into the adjacent rice field and died. Quickly informed, the forest rangers seized the tusks and arrested Fagu Sahu, the owner of the field. The villagers criticise the administration for failing to monitor the elephants effectively, leading to numerous conflicts with the farmers.

The New Indian Express, January 15, 2023.⁵⁷

January 14, 2023

Near Baithalangso, Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India

The remains of an elephant are discovered. A large-calibre bullet is found in the head. The tusks have disappeared.

Pratidin Time, January 14, 2023.⁵⁸

January 17, 2023

Near Kalaichar, West Garo Hills District, State of Meghalaya, India. Border with Bangladesh.



A baby elephant was found dying. He had been pierced by a poisoned spear and vital organs had been damaged. The crime was prima facie attributed to poachers from Bangladesh. The Shillong Times, January 18, 2023.⁵⁹

Night of January 17-18 and 22, 2023

Dhoni Reserve Forest, Palakkad District, State of Kerala, India



An elephant code-named PT-7 (Palakkad Tusker-7) has caused a lot of damage, destroying rice fields, fences and walls. In 2022, he came out of the forest for 180 days and is suspected of trampling a 60-year-old man that July. PT-7 was finally anaesthetised in the forest thanks to an 8-hour mobilization by 72 forestry agents. Upon awakening, PT-7 was guided by 3 kumkis (domestic elephants) and their mahouts to a truck trailer. The elephant was then transported 7 km where a kraal (enclosed cage) awaited him near the forestry officers' post. The kraal, made of eucalyptus wood, has sunken posts more than 2 meters deep into the ground and reinforcement to resist possible escape attempts. Traditionally, elephant kraals were built from kambakam (*Hopea parviflora*), "Iron Wood of Malabar", but the near-disappearance of kambakam has prompted a switch to eucalyptus, which can similarly resist compression and not cause splinters that inflict skin lesions. Teak and other hardwoods don't have these qualities.

PT-7 seems well-behaved after just a few weeks in captivity. "All signs are positive", he's calm, accepts armfuls of grass and other fodder, is acclimated to the mahout's presence, and is a "great tusker with immense potential to become a wonderful kumki". The main mission of kumkis is to calm wild elephants that encounter human activity and keep them away from conflict. PT-7 will now be called Dhoni. He is in his early twenties. From his former life, he has inherited some 15 bullets lodged in his flesh. PT-7's fury was somewhat justified.

The Hindu, January 18, 22, 23 and 27, 2023; Kerala Kaumudi, January 23, 2023; The Times of India, March 24, 2023.⁶⁰

Night of 18 to 19 January, March 19 and April 15 2023

Manpur and surroundings, Ganjam District, State of Odisha, India



Three months after the events, the investigation is almost complete: Banja Rout has been arrested, as was Hajari Nayak on 19 March. Banja Rout was the man who had set the trap in the forest and connected it to a power line. A tusker fell victim. Their 2 accomplices remain to be arrested.

Orissa Post, January 20, 2023; The Times of India, April 17, 2023.⁶¹



FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 19, 2023

Kharibari Area, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

On the basis of confidential information, the SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal) and the police launched a road operation. The aim was to intercept a lorry believed to be carrying a wild elephant that had been captured in the forest. The operation was crowned with success, but also with surprises. Instead of an elephant calf, the trailer contained elephant tusks worth an estimated 10 million rupees, or 120,000 US\$, which on the basis of 1,200 US\$/kg would correspond to 100 kg of ivory. Asit Oraon, Anil Oraon and Punilal Nagachia are in custody. Their "associates" are being sought.

The Shillong Times, January 20, 2023; The Telegraph India, January 21, 2023.⁶²

Sunday, January 22 and Saturday, January 28, 2023

Similipal National Park, Rugudidihi and Matiali, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

Similipal is a poacher's paradise, says the press after the discovery of an elephant who has been dead for several days. The body is infested by maggots, and has his 2 tusks amputated. Meanwhile 4 men suspected of the crime and in possession of the tusks belonging to the victim have just been arrested in Rugudidihi and Matiali. The operation mobilized 50 forestry and police officers.

Similipal, see "On the Trail" n°1 p.18, p.30 and p.31, n°3 p.42, n°8 p.49 and p.102, n°9 p.50, n°10 p.38 and p.39, n°12 p.94, n°15 p.56, n°17 p.100, n°19 p.63, n°34 p.79, n°38 p.30, p.33, p.34 and p.50.

The Times of India, January 24, 2023; Down To Earth, January 25, 2023; Kalinga TV, January 29, 2023; Odisha TV, January 29, 2023.⁶³

January 31, 2023

Gundimala, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India



Like many others, Prabhakar had electrified the fence of his field with a current of lethal voltage. When a herd of elephants came to the village at night, one of the females brushed against the cable and collapsed, fatally injured. After the necropsy, Prabhakar was charged and the elephant cow cremated.

Deccan Herald, January 31, 2023.⁶⁴

January 31, February 5 and 6, 2023

Hipinda Reserve Forest, Banapur, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India



- The bullet-riddled body of an elephant was discovered in the forest reserve on Tuesday 31 January. The tusks had been stolen.

- On Sunday 5 February, Dhaneswar Behera was arrested by Athagarh forest officials. He was suspected of involvement in the poaching and theft of the ivory.

- On Monday, he died in police custody in mysterious circumstances, and immediately afterwards riots broke out among villagers, ranging from road blockades and barricades to looting and setting fire to the premises of the Athagarh forest division. The insurgents are calling for the prosecution of 14 forest officials. They suspect them of beating Dhaneswar Behera to death. They are relying in particular on the testimony of Rajkishore Pradhan, who is also suspected of having taken part in the poaching. Pradhan said that Behera was beaten to death before his very eyes.

The forest officials have been taken into custody at Athagarh police station. An investigation has been launched and an autopsy is underway to ascertain the circumstances of the tragedy. Six forest officers have been suspended from duty.

Biswajit Mohanty, a pro-elephant activist, points out that poaching is rampant in the forests of Athagarh and that at the same time the forest services must refrain from any violent methods in order to obtain information from suspects. The NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) has taken up the case. Compensation of 479,000 rupees (5,875 US\$) has already been paid to Behera's parents and the forest services have undertaken to provide her other son with a job. To be continued.

Athagarh Forest Division, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.58, n°12 p.93, n°13 p.94, n°20 p.104 et p.105, n°27 p.60, Hors-Série Covid-19 p.17, n°28 p.111, n°34 p.42, n°36 p.37 and n°37 p.34.

Deccan Herald, February 6, 2023; Hindustan Times, February 6, 2023; Odisha TV, February 7, 2023; The Times of India, February 11, 2023.⁶⁵

February 2, 2023

State of Rajasthan, India

Twelve ivory objects including 2 statuettes, 2 figurines, a bracelet and various other trinkets are seized during a joint operation by the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and the Forestry Department. One arrest.

WCCB, February 3, 2023.⁶⁶

February 2 and 5, 2023

Ramnagar Tehsil and Kalagarh Tiger Reserve, Nainital District, State of Uttarakhand, India

- Vinod Dhyani, a seasonal worker at Corbett National Park in charge of detecting fires and monsoon floods, was caught red-handed transporting 5 kg of raw ivory on Ramnagar-Ranikhet road. He says he "found" the ivory during a patrol and decided to sell it rather than return it to his superiors. He was with 2 accomplices.

- Three days later, following Dhyani's confession, 2 new raw ivories were discovered and seized by Maidavan forest officials in the Kalagarh Tiger Reserve, part of Corbett National Park.

The Times of India, February 6, 2023; WCCB, February 13, 2023.⁶⁷

February 6, 2023

Bengaluru, Bengaluru Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

The FMS (Forest Mobile Squad) intercepted 2 erotic statuettes, an elephant figurine, 7 rings, 2 dice and a few other ivory objects from 4 Rajasthan men. This arrest is typical of FMS missions; each squad, comprised of 4-5 members, is led by an inspector and equipped to make arrests, conduct preliminary interviews and record facts. They deal with 2 categories of crime: timber smuggling or forest ownership usurpation, and WLORs (Wild Life Offence Reports). They mostly concern poaching or smuggling protected animals or animal by-products.

The Hindu, February 9, 2023; The South First, February 13, 2023.⁶⁸

February 8 and 11, 2023

Gopinathpur Forest, Mayurbhanj District; Melana, Kendujhar District, State of Odisha, India

- One less elephant in the Similipal tiger reserve. The tusks were amputated in the same way as they were on January 31 in the Hipinda forest reserve, some 180 km away. In both cases, the poachers seized the tusks by cutting off the heads of the 2 juvenile elephants with a saw.

- Two days later, an individual was arrested in possession of 2 elephant tusks weighing a total of 10.16 kg, corresponding to the weight of a pair of juvenile elephant tusks. The tusks are fresh and expert appraisals are underway to determine their origin. The suspect lives in Kendumundi in the Mayurbhanj District, 40 km from Gopinathpur. Odisha Bytes, February 9, 2023; The New Indian Express, February 10 and 12, 2023.⁶⁹

February 14, 2023

Baragi, Mysuru District, State of Karnataka, India



The good news is so rare that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change of the Union, Bhupender Yadav, tweeted their congratulations to the staff of the Bandipur tiger reserve. A 25-year-old female elephant was revived after being electrocuted by a fence erected by Puthanapura Raju around his farm. The rapid intervention of the forest guards and Dr Wasim Mirza's veterinary team made this miracle possible. It took all the same 4 hours of effort, before the elephant made her way slowly back to the forest. She is now under monitoring. Between 2009 and 2022, more than 700 elephants died from electrocution in India.

Ground Report, February 18, 2023; Mysooru News, February 18, 2023; The Indian Express, February 19, 2023.⁷⁰

February 16, 2023

Bhubaneswar, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India



"On the Trail" n°38 p.33-34 reported the suspicious death of Turam Purty after he was summoned by forest officials to be heard regarding the poaching of an elephant in Mayurbhanj District. Purty, a lookout in the park, had witnessed the scandal. The 3 Similipal Park foresters suspected of burning the elephant carcass without reporting it to their superiors are now suspected of intimidating, harassing, and threatening Turam Purty, and of driving him to suicide by poisoning. On December 22, Turam Purty's widow and mother of 3 children had lodged a complaint against the 3 foresters for physical and psychological violence against her husband.

The Times of India, February 16, 2023.⁷¹

February 19, 2023

Lucknow, Lucknow District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



Acting on a credible source, inspectors Kumar Singh, Chandraprakash Mishra, Kavindra Sahni, Munendra Singh and Rajkumar Yadav raced towards the Charbagh stadium alongside Awadh forestry officers and WCCB officials. They caught Alok Kumar Pandey about to strike a deal with a Nepalese trafficker. They confiscated 44 carved ivories, including carved tusks.

WCCB, February 20, 2023; All Rights, February 25, 2023.⁷²



February 19, 2023

Bhubaneswar, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

Girish Kumar Nayak and Deepak Sahu were arrested in a square trying to trade 3 kg of raw ivory. Kalinga TV, February 19, 2023.⁷³

February 22, 2023

Kochi, Ernakulam District, State of Kerala, India

The High Court ruled that the Kerala government's plea to withdraw charges against actor V. Mohanlal is unfounded: "It has to be held that Law must be uniform to all, irrespective of their status as peasant, poor, middle class, or higher class." Ten years ago, authorities recovered 2 undeclared tusks, said to be from domesticated elephants, at Mohanlal's home. See "On the Trail" n°12 p.94, n°15 p.100, n°17 p.102 and n°29 p.39. The Times of India, February 22, 2023.⁷⁴



SRI LANKA

Beginning of January 2023

Tirappane, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

The remains of 2 deceased elephants have been excavated under a prosecutor's warrant. The 2 elephants, aged 25 and 35, were electrocuted by a farmer's fence on December 19, 2022. The farmer had diverted a medium-voltage line from the public grid and then used a machine to bury them. He was taken into custody, and the post-mortem confirmed electrocution as the cause of death. Currently, the fate of the tusks is unknown. Daily News (Pakistan), January 2, 2023.⁷⁵



January 12, 2023

Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Mr. Ambewela, commissioner at the Court of Audit, suffered for his integrity. After denouncing in a public report the misappropriation of public and international funds in the Kandy province, he was sprayed in the face with sulfuric acid. After undergoing 2 facial surgeries, the loss of an eye and a long physical and psychological recovery, he resumed his work at the Court of Auditors. In 2014, he released an explosive new report on elephant trafficking in Sri Lanka, particularly the special privileges and administrative breaches which allow elephant calves captured in the wild to end up in camps under the status of domesticated elephants. His report called out the Deputy Director of Wildlife Protection Upali Pathmasiri and his secretary Priyanka Sanjeevani.



They have just been sentenced to 5 years in prison with hard labour and fined 70,000 rupees (190 US\$). Chandraratne Yatawara, the owner of an elephant born in the forest yet registered as a captive, was handed the same sentence. Thilina Gamage, however, a magistrate in Colombo who bought the baby elephant from Yatawara, was acquitted by the same Colombo High Court in 2021. The judges ruled that he was unaware of the deceptive means used to "clear" the wild elephant into domesticated elephant n°334, also known as Sakura. Back in 2016, Gamage was relieved of his duties and placed under strict judicial supervision. See "On the Trail" n°6 p. 91-92, n°13 p.95 and n°25 p.97. The Morning, December 16, 2021; LankaPage.com, January 12, 2023.⁷⁶

February 2023

Panadura, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Officials seized 2 tusks from a man believed to be part of a "white" crime syndicate. He wanted to sell them for 5 million rupees (13,750 US\$). An investigation is underway to determine the victim's origin and estimate the time of birth and death. News 1st, February 14, 2023.⁷⁷

February 13 and 27, 2023

Akuressa and Morawaka, Southern Province, Sri Lanka

At first the case seems straightforward: a 43-year-old man is arrested in a temple by the Valana police anti-corruption unit following a tip-off. He was in possession of 2 ivory tips which he was trying to sell for 5 million rupees (13,750 US\$). But when the press announced the seizure and published photos of the tusks, 2 opportunists entered the fray, claiming ownership. One is a former minister, Gamini Lokuge, who claims they came from his house, which was looted and burned down on May 9, 2022. The second, Nihal Perera, offers a confused explanation that he entrusted the pair to a friend in town, and that they disappeared. The 2 versions collapsed in court in Morawaka on February 27, as there were no identifying marks on the tusks to attribute them to one or the other, and neither produced any document attesting to their legal origin.

Daily News (Sri Lanka), February 14 and 28, 2023.⁷⁸

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

February 5, 2023

Schenefeld, Schleswig-Holstein State, Germany

While inspecting an antiques fair, police and experts from the Office of the Environment seized items made of or containing ivory from 6 stands. These included rosaries, bibles and undated jewellery, all of which likely came from recent poaching and illegal processing workshops in Africa, Germany or the European Union. The items have an estimated total value of 4,000 € (4,360 US\$).

Bad Segeberg Police Department, February 6, 2023.⁷⁹

February 14, 2023

Frankfurt International Airport, Hesse State, Germany

Seizure of an ivory bracelet and flute from unclaimed "lost" baggage.

Main Customs Office Frankfurt am Main, March 3, 2023.⁸⁰

SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

Beginning of February 2023

Tradate, Province of Varese, Region of Lombardy, Italy



He inherits 2 tusks. He reports them to the authorities. The carabinieri seize them. They are not accompanied by any papers, invoices, certificates, press articles or family documents proving a legal origin. The man is not prosecuted in recognition of his proactive attitude.

MilanoToday, February 7, 2023; VareseNews, February 7, 2023.⁸¹

ELEPHANTS AND FELINES

ASIA

INDIA

February 25, 2023

Talekere, Ramanagara District, State of Karnataka, India

A CID (Crime Investigation Department) mobile squad caught Naveen Kumar amidst a purported business appointment, according to intelligence. And what business! In his bag were 8 bracelets, a jewellery box, 3 ivory-headed walking sticks and 2 leopard claws. Kumar holds a PhD in English from the University of Mysore and is a lecturer at a pre-university school in Tiptur.

The Hindu, February 25, 2023.¹

VIET NAM

January 6, 2023

Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam

Police who stood guard on the eve of Lunar New Year 2023 arrested Minh. He was holding a clandestine trade in carved ivory and tiger claws mounted as amulets.

VTV (Viet Nam), February 2, 2023.²

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°39

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	Zimbabwe	48,400	2 (2023)

EASTERN AFRICA

MOZAMBIQUE

Mid-February 2023

Maputo, Maputo Province, Mozambique

Officials seize 4 horns worth 240,000 US\$ and make 2 arrests.

O País, February 16, 2023.¹

ZIMBABWE

January 16, 2023

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Wang Yang, foreman of a gold mine in Mutoko and resident of Hillside, for trafficking horns. Three accomplices were also arrested; Jabulani Muthimukulu, Weston Useyu, and Cleopas Kacheya, a policeman. At Muthimukulu's home, a pangolin scale was seized, leading him to be suspected of pangolin trafficking. The 4 men plead not guilty and are seeking bail. The poaching took place on the premises of Chipinge Safaris, Manicaland Province. Yang is believed to be the owner of 12.4 kg of horns and horn pieces, valued at 600,000 US\$ or 48,400 US\$/kg.

H-Metro, January 19, 2023; The Herald (Zimbabwe), January 19, 2023; The Zimbabwe Independent, January 19, 2023.²



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Beginning of January 2023

Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Discovery of 2 rhino carcasses. This is the first case of poaching in the province for 4 years (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.105).

Helping Rhinos, January 7, 2023.³

Beginning of January 2023

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Zululand Rhino Orphanage took in a 7-month-old rhino. He had been wandering alone for at least 2 weeks. His mother was the victim of poachers.

Helping Rhinos, February 9, 2023.⁴

REPEATED OFFENCE

January 17, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Three men from Mozambique, ages 24, 28 and 50, were sentenced to 25 and 33 years in prison for poaching 3 rhinos, one of whom was black, in Kruger Park's Crocodile Bridge section in July 2022. The men took their 3 nasal horns and 3 frontal horns. They were also found in possession of illegal firearms, ammunition, and other dangerous weaponry (3 butcher's daggers), and broke into the Kruger and entered South Africa in violation of the Immigration Act. Muyanga, age 50, is expected to be released from prison at 83, unless his sentence is commuted. In viewing the investigation file, the court considered that he was a repeat offender. See "On the Trail" n°37 p.40.

TimesLIVE (South Africa), January 17, 2023; SAPS, January 18, 2023; News24, January 19, 2023.⁵



January 26, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Conviction of Forster Lubisi. He was a Kruger subscriber.

On April 15, 2015, rangers from the Skukuza section heard gunshots, followed tracks, and arrested Lubisi and Nelson Ndlovu. They were carrying a firearm, ammunition, and an axe. A rhino carcass lay nearby. They were arrested and released on bail.

Lubisi took the opportunity on July 29, 2018 to do it again in the company of a new accomplice, Een Sihlangu (see page 28 ref. 11), with whom he broke into the park. He was again arrested with weapons, ammunition, and an axe. He was then released on bail with Sihlangu.

On April 23, 2021, he broke into the Kruger National Park again with Sihlangu in a new area, the Stolzneke section. He was arrested by rangers with a firearm, ammunition, and 3 knives. This time he was denied bail and was sentenced to 32 years in prison. He is 43 years old.⁶

February 1, 2023

Germiston, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Chingo, the driver of the Toyota Fortuner intercepted in Johannesburg back in June 2022, was sentenced to 5 years in prison. There were 2 horns under the hood (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.50).

SAPS, February 10, 2023; TimesLIVE, February 11, 2023; Independent Online, February 12, 2023.⁷

Night of February 1-2, 2023

Paterson, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

A male and a female rhino were found lying on the ground just a few yards apart, their legs in the air, horns amputated. Just one day before, they were seen grazing peacefully. "Bonnie" and "Clyde" had escaped poaching 10 years ago and never left each other's side.

Algoa FM, February 4, 2023; SAPS, February 4, 2023; News24, February 8, 2023.⁸

OPERATION BLOOD ORANGE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Beginning of February 2023

Bushbuckridge and Kabokweni, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The gang that took advantage of tactical (and paid) information from Kruger Park rangers David Chikwa Malukele and Solly Ubisi to facilitate rhino poaching now numbers 14 members: Martin Lekhuleni, Eunice Lekhuleni, Sipho Nyundu, Agina Mkhonto, Thandy Makhuvele, Ignatia Mnisi, Given Mzima, Joyce Maluleke, Nkateko Maluleke, Otters Maluleke, Miyelani Maluleke, Khensani Maluleke, Stephilina Mbhombi, and Francis Kipampa, from whose home rhino horn(s) were seized on December 2, 2022. They have been released on bail, although Kipampa's release has not been confirmed at the time of publication.

Along with the 2 rangers, who have also been released on bail, they are being prosecuted for corruption, money laundering, fraud, and trafficking rhino horns. To be continued.

See "On the Trail" n°36 p.47.

SAPS, February 6, 7 and June 3, 2023; The Bulrushes, February 7, 2023; Independent Online, February 7, 2023.⁹

REPEATED OFFENCE

February 11, 2023

Kruger National Park, Pretoriuskop Section, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

As Kruger rangers were busy repairing flood-induced damages, they remained vigilant in their anti-poaching mission. With very few tourists in the park, the presence of poachers was all the more likely. Looking closely at a pick-up belonging to one of their colleagues, they found not just their colleague dressed in full uniform at the Numbi gate, but 2 men in back under a black tarp, clearly suspected of wanting to poach rhinos. Their bags contained a large-calibre pistol with the number removed, 10 rounds of ammunition, and 2 butcher's knives. Bright Mashele, the 36-year-old ranger, and Collen Mathebula, 32, were released on 15,000 rand (865 US\$) bail, while the third man remains in prison for the time being. He has a lengthy criminal record. Krugersdorp News, February 14, 2023; Independent Online, February 15, 2023.¹⁰

February 16, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Een Sihlangu was sentenced to 21 years' imprisonment for breaking into the Kruger on 3 occasions in July 2018, April 2019 and April 2021 with accomplices, firearms, ammunition and butcher's knives considered to be dangerous weapons, clearly demonstrating in the court's view a premeditated intention to poach one or more rhinos. After his first 2 incursions in 2018 and 2019, he was released on bail. See above.

SAPS, February 17, 2023.¹¹

February 24, 2023

Maheng, North West Province, South Africa



Somewhere in a nearby reserve, a rhino or 2 had a narrow escape. Three men ages 34, 40 and 56 were arrested before they could act and subsequently brought before the Ganyesa court.

SAPS, February 26, 2023; Save the Beasts, February 26, 2023.¹²

NAMIBIA

Beginning of January 2023

Etosha National Park, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Arrest of a 28-year-old man. He is accused of attempting to poach a rhinoceros between January 4 and 6.

Namibian Sun, January 13, 2023.¹³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 30, 2023

Kenansville, State of Florida, United States of America

Thanks to the insistence of local media outlets WKMG-TV and FOX 35 Orlando, the following story finally broke on January 30, 2023. Back in September 2022, Wild Florida Zoo announced with great fanfare the arrival of a rhinoceros and a dedicated enclosure for him, cleverly dubbed "habitat". However, the rhino never made it to the podium or the "habitat". When he arrived near Orlando 2 days earlier from a zoo in northern Florida, the supposedly calm, captive-hardened 3-year-old white rhinoceros was quick to express his discontent. He smashed all the wooden fences and escaped. Acting on management's orders, nursing staff struck him with at least 15 large-caliber bullets. According to Safari Park Wild Florida's belated press release, "In September 2022, a new rhino began to pose an imminent danger to the park at large, and after consultation with leadership and Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) guidelines, we made the difficult decision to humanely euthanize the animal". The fate of the horns is not known.

Wild Florida, September 15, 2022; WKMG-TV News 6, January 30 and February 7, 2023; FOX 35 Orlando, January 31, 2023.¹⁴



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

January 13, 2023

Hatigaon, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

A horn is seized and Abdul Ali and Kusum Ali arrested. They live next door to the Hatigaon tea plantation.

Pratidin Time, January 13, 2023.¹⁵

NEPAL

OPERATION ROUTE TO ROOT

January-Beginning of February 2023

Saraswati Nagar, Sitapaila and Gongabu, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Province; Waling, Syangja District, Gandaki Province; Bharatpur, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province; Madhyabindu-2, Nawalpur District, Gandaki Province, Nepal



January was a dark month for rhinos in Nepal:

- On Tuesday, January 3, 2 individuals were arrested with a freshly amputated, 522-gram horn in their hands.

- On Friday, January 20, a 14-year-old female rhino and her 4-year-old calf were found lying in a swamp several meters apart. The mother's horn had been cut off by poachers. Preliminary investigations suggest that both were electrocuted.



- In late January/early February, police arrested 13 suspects between the ages of 30 and 62, including 4 women, in the districts of Chitwan, Syangja and Kathmandu. They are part of a network of poachers, intermediaries, sellers, importers and exporters of horns, all the branches and ramifications of which remain to be discovered and shut down.

myRepublica, January 22, 2023; Online Khabar, January 22, 2023; The Rising Nepal, February 11, 2023.¹⁶

RHINOS AND FELINES

AFRICA

MOZAMBIQUE

February 23, 2023

Maputo, Maputo Province, Mozambique



Trang Kiu Trang was stopped at Maputo airport with lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I) and rhinoceros by-products in November 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.50). She has just been sentenced to 16 years in prison. Club of Mozambique, February 24 and 28, 2023.¹



FELINES



Pallas's cat (*Otocolobus manul*). Photo Anna Barashkova

On the Trail n°39

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

Animal	Part	US\$	Country	Ref. (year)
Tiger	Tiger cub	8,000 - 25,000	USA	2 (2023)
		25,000	Mexico	1 (2022)
	Frozen adult tiger	64,000	Malaysia	15 (2023)
Leopard	Claw	60	India	37 (2023)
Jaguar	Jaguar skin hat	70	Bolivia	9* (2023)
	Skin	1,340	Peru	23* (2023)
Asian golden cat	Head	75 - 80	Thailand	76 (2023)
	Skin	5 - 30		
	Tail	11.50		

*cf. chapter Multi-species

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 2023

Albuquerque, State of New Mexico, United States of America

Things are heating up again in Albuquerque. On January 10, police arrived at a shooting at 304 Indiana Street. They find a man with a leg wound lying on the sidewalk, and hear more shots fired from a nearby mobile home. There, two men are arrested and stripped of their semi-automatic weapons. Traces of blood lead to a caravan, inside of which just remains a several-month-old Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) weighing less than 10 kg. This marks the 2nd time in 6 months that a Bengal tiger was released from a violent home in Albuquerque (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.171).



At the end of January, federal police accused David Mendoza-Enriquez of smuggling exotic animals between Mexico and New Mexico. Two of Mendoza-Enriquez's hideouts were raided after authorities received confidential information. Inside both, weapons, drugs, cash, and evidence of animal trafficking were uncovered. In Mexico, Mr. Enriquez bought a tiger cub for 25,000 US\$, a capuchin (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) for 15,000 US\$ and a crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) for 12,000 US\$. He tried to sell them for double or triple the price. Mendoza-Enriquez is already in prison for drug trafficking.

Albuquerque Police Department, January 10, 2023; New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, January 11, 2023; USA Today, January 12, 2023; KRQE News 13, January 30, 2023.¹

January 23 and February 28, 2023

Phoenix, State of Arizona, United States of America

Carlos Alcaraz, 25, is arrested for trying to sell a tiger for 25,000 US\$ over the Internet. He allegedly bought him from a stranger on an unknown date for 8,000 US\$. Inside his home, authorities seized the tiger cub housed in a puppy cage, snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix II since February 23, 2023)



and a juvenile American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II). The female tiger was put under the care of the specialized refuge, the Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center. Its director has offered encouraging news: she's started eating again. She has enough space and toys to entertain herself and move around until her relocation to a different facility where she will live out the rest of her life alongside fellow tigers.

Tigers in Arizona, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.51-52 and n°8 p.42.

FOX 10 Phoenix, January 24 and March 10, 2023; Phoenix Police Department, January 24, 2023.²

MEXICO

January 31, 2023

San Emeterio Border Post, Sonoyta, State of Sonora, Mexico. Border with the United States of America.



Customs seized a Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) from a semi-trailer truck on Federal Highway 2. Ángel N., the driver, was taken into custody. The tiger was transferred to a transit shelter in Hermosillo pending a decision on his final destination. Expreso, January 27, 2023; Profepa, January 31, 2023.³

BANGLADESH

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 5, 2023

Sindhatali, Sindhatali District, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

Rab-6 (Rapid Action Battalion) conducted a raid on Hafizur Sheikh, Ismail Sheikh and Asif Sheikh and seized, as planned, a tiger skin.

The Daily Star (Bangladesh), February 6, 2023.⁴

INDIA

January 2023

State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The year is off to a bad start for Madhya Pradesh, the tiger State.

- On Monday, January 2, a sub-adult tiger was found dead in the Kanha reserve in the Mandla and Balaghat districts, his body intact. Officials suspect he either came into contact with a power line or ingested poison.

- On the night of Wednesday, January 3 into Thursday, January 4, a 2-year-old tiger and a striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) were electrocuted on the edge of the Panna reserve near Vasudha. A canine brigade guided forest police to 5 different villagers' homes. The suspects, including 3 tribals, tried to escape.

- On Wednesday, January 11, near the Pench reserve, forest patrol discovered a third tiger's rotting, brush-covered body.

Ajay Dubey, the tireless advocate of tigers, accused forest officials of negligence. "They arrested four or five accused in the Panna poaching cases and jailed them without questioning them."

A glimmer of hope: T15, Collarwali's daughter thusly named because she

was the first to wear a geolocation collar in the Pench reserve, was filmed by a camera trap while surrounded by 4 tigers. Collarwali, also known as "Super Mom" or "Badi Mata", gave birth to 29 tiger cubs between 2008 and 2018. It seems T15 is taking after her mother; she gave birth in 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022. Fourteen of her cubs have become adults and are now dispersed throughout the Pench reserve (292 km²) and the buffer zone.

The Times of India, January 5 and 12, 2023; The Free Press Journal, January 9, 2023; New Delhi Television, January 11, 2023.⁵



January 2023

State of Maharashtra, India

The year is off to a bad start for tigers in Maharashtra.



The transboundary Pench Tiger Reserve extends into Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. An adult tiger spent several weeks floating in a lake near Sillari (population of 450 according to the last census in 2011). The corpse was labouriously brought to shore on Thursday, January 12. Between January 15 and February 1, officials arrested 7 suspects and recovered 11 tiger claws, fangs, and skull and skin fragments.

On the night of Saturday, January 14, an adult tigress was electrocuted, indicated by the burns on her coat. Her body was spotted at dawn by a locomotive driver 50 meters from the railroad track near the Majri-Bhadrawati road crossing. Forest officials were alerted and arrived on scene as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, hundreds of villagers rushed to the scene. The corpse was not looted, but instead burned onsite after a post-mortem examination. A farmer is believed to have installed an electric fence by diverting a line from the public grid. This marks the third big cat in the district to die a violent death this year. In early January, a tiger drowned at the bottom of a well, and on Friday, January 13, another died at the Gorewada Rescue Center.

On another note, Western Coalfields Ltd (WCL) is expanding their open-cast coal mines and encroaching upon the forest heritage of tigers. Mine workers and their families are now coming into greater contact with tigers. Local authorities demanded that WCL install a (non-electrified) fence around their right-of-way, repair the protective walls around workers' housing, and step up security patrols. These protocols should help reduce conflicts between tigers and human activities, as well as mitigate the widespread notion that tigers are pests.

The Times of India, January 13, 16, 29 and February 1, 2023; Nagpur Today, January 14, 2023; First India, January 17, 2023.⁶

REPEATED OFFENCE

January 26, 2023

Poolangulathupatti, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

A skin resembling that of an adult tiger, 167 cm long and 84 cm wide, was seized from Arjun's home, along with a real homemade rifle. Experts will examine the skin closely. The man was also wanted for poaching a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) in 2020.

The Times of India, January 27, 2023.⁷

TIGERS - followed

February 1 and 9, 2023

Ambukuthi, Wayanad District, State of Kerala, India



A tiger cub was found strangled on the ground by a noose. He would have caused panic in Ponmudikkotta in the preceding weeks. Harikumar, the farmer who discovered the body, committed suicide after forest officials contacted him by telephone and summoned him as a witness. His wife said he was harassed.

Kerala Kaumudi, February 1, 2023; The Hindu, February 1, 2023; Mathrubhumi, February 2, 2023; On Manorama, February 9, 2023; Kerala Kaumudi, February 10, 2023; The Times of India, February 11, 2023.⁸

February 4, 2023

Balbai, Umari District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



A tigress between 8 and 10 years old died in the forest. She was the victim of a severe electric shock near food gardens.

Asian News International, February 4, 2023; The Free Press Journal, February 4, 2023.⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 6, 2023

Nandgaon, Nashik District, State of Maharashtra, India



A tigress was electrocuted by a cable branching off the public grid... 11,000 volts to the mouth. The farmer wanted to protect a chickpea crop from wild boar. A crowd gathered to see the scene up close but was sent away by foresters and veterinarians. Tension quickly mounted. This marks the 4th violent death of a tiger in the district so far in 2023. PiPa News, February 6, 2023; The Times of India, February 7, 2023.¹⁰

February 7 and 24, 2023

Kebbeppura, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India



- A dead tiger is found adrift, inflated like a buoy.

- Three weeks later, a farmer is arrested. He admitted that the victim was electrocuted by a fence. With the help of 5 neighbours,

he threw the carcass into a pond after weighing it down with stones to prevent it from rising to the surface.

The Hindu, February 8, 2023; News Trail, February 10, 2023; The Indian Express, February 24, 2023.¹¹



February 11, 2023

Boundary of Chandrapur and Wardha Districts, State of Maharashtra, India



A dead tiger floats down the middle of the river. This marks the 5th violent tiger death in the district since the start of the year. The tiger was likely poisoned or electrocuted and then, as is becoming almost a habit, dumped in the river in hopes that the carcass will float away downstream and disappear off the radar.

The Times of India, February 12, 2023.¹²



February 24 and March 10, 2023

Sadiya, Tinsukia District, State of Assam, border with the State of Arunachal Pradesh, India



A Ford India was carrying a gruesome treasure: a hide measuring 2.15 meters long and 1.45 meters wide, 4 canines, a skull and 46 bone fragments. The driver was arrested and the passenger, suspected of masterminding the affair, fled into the forest despite the presence of some 15 foresters and WCCB officers. The tiger had been poached in the Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary (4,149 km²) in Arunachal Pradesh. A man was arrested on March 10 in Mebo, Assam for his suspected involvement in poaching and trafficking tiger byproducts between Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

The Sentinel, February 26, 2023; East Mojo, February 27, 2023; India Today, February 28, 2023; WCCB, February 28, 2023; Arunachal Times, March 13, 2023.¹³

INDONESIA

February 2023

Peunaron Lama, East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



A tiger cub dies in a field. Next to him is a bag of agrochemical poison. This was in retaliation for the death of 2 goats.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, February 23, 2023; SINDOnews, February 23, 2023.¹⁴

MALAYSIA

OPERASI BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

February 23, 27 and March 2, 2023

Gua Musang, State of Kelantan, Malaysia



- Seizure of the body of an adult tiger cut in half in a freezer, and of 3 cell phones which will allow us to learn more about the organisation and relationships of the 3 suspects. The global value of the remains, meat, whiskers, bones, teeth, claws and skin included, is valued over 65,000 US\$. Two of the suspects pleaded guilty. They were sentenced on March 2, 2023 to 22 months in prison, 10 months for violating the Wildlife Conservation Act of 2010 and an additional 12 months for being unable to pay the 450,000 ringgit (100,480 US\$) fine. The third suspect pleaded not guilty. He was released on bail of 30,000 ringgits (6,700 US\$) pending trial.

- A fourth man was arrested on February 27. He is the owner of the weapon and ammunition with which the Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) was poached.

New Straits Times, March 11, 2023.¹⁵

NEPAL

February 26, 2023

Amargadhi, Dadeldhura District, Sudurpashchim Province, Nepal

Rajendra Jaisi (26) and Bir Bahadur Oli (27) were arrested with over 4 kilos of tiger bones, lower jaws, vertebrae, ribs, skulls and femurs in their backpacks. They had 96 bone and bone fragments in their possession.

The Nepali Post, February 26, 2023.¹⁶

THAILAND

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 8, 2023

Thong Pha Phum, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand



"On the Trail" n°35 p.47 recounted how a patrol had come across a bivouac deserted by poachers where the remains of a tigress and a tiger cub were being processed in a national park close to the border with Myanmar. Phukua Yindee, 38, Jorhang Panarak, 39, his brother Ratchanon Charoensap, 31, Supachai Charoensap, 35, and Cho Aye, 67, were sentenced to 4 years and 9 months in prison and fined 750,000 baht (21,370 US\$), a "paltry" sum according to The Thaiger. Tiger advocates also believe that the sentence is not a deterrent. The initial sentence was 9 and a half years. It was halved because the 5 convicts pleaded guilty. It was a professional conspiracy. The skins were tanned from head to tail, thanks to the skill of Cho Aye, who turned himself in to the police after the other 4, specifying that he had not taken part in the execution. The meat and bones were smoked to prevent rotting. The 5 men knew that they could make a lot of money from the slaughter.

The Thaiger, March 6, 2023; Bangkok Post, March 7, 2023.¹⁷

TIGERS - followed

VIET NAM

January 22, 2023

Dien Lam, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

During the Tet festival (Lunar New Year), Truong Sy Hai, Vu Van Thuong and Le Tuan Minh were arrested. They were trying to sell 9 tiger cub skins, a stuffed tiger head and an Asiatic buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*, Appendix III in Nepal) horned skull.

Dân tri, February 13, 2023.¹⁸

EUROPE

GREECE

February 28 and April 10, 2023

Spata, Region of Attica, Greece

At the end of February, a stunted white tiger cub was found alive in a garbage can outside Attica Zoo, 25 km from Athens. It ended on April 10 after 12 vets concluded that there was no alternative but to euthanize him.

Proto Thema, March 8 and 19 and April 10, 2023.¹⁹



RUSSIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 12 and mid-March 2023

Nanaysky District, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

The heroic fairytale was just a fabrication. A young man was savagely attacked by a tiger while enjoying a leisurely fishing trip (sturgeon?) in the frigid waters of the Amour basin. His cousin valiantly left his rod and nets to shoot the assailant several times with his rifle. Turns out, an investigation revealed that the tiger had attacked the young man in self-defense after he had been shot. After losing blood in the taiga, the young man was taken to a hospital where his left arm had to be amputated.

AmurMedia, March 14 and May 29, 2023.²⁰

February 21 and 26, 2023

Innokent'evka, Khabarovsk Krai, and Primorsky Krai, Russia



- An emaciated and limping Siberian tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) was captured with a noose dragging on his paw. The depth of the wound is not yet known. He could no longer hunt, was harassed by dogs, reduced to trying to steal chickens from barnyards, and accused of mischief by inhabitants of Dzhonka and Innokent'evka.

- Transferred to the Primorye Krai's specialized veterinary clinic, the tiger died on February 26, despite the determination and skill of his caretakers. Amur Tiger Center, February 24 and 26, 2023.²¹



LIONS - *Panthera leo* (Africa), Appendix II.

***Panthera leo persica* (Asia), Appendix I.**

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 5, 2023

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya



Unknown persons had poisoned the carcass of a giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II). A passing lion fell victim. The vets intervened in time, so the prognosis of the lion was favourable. The giraffe carcass was burned to prevent further damage.

Big Life Foundation, January 2023.²²

January 2023

Manyeleti Game Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



A pregnant lioness, the dominant female of the pride, was freed from a metal trap around her neck thanks to the intervention of Tintswalo Safari Lodge.

Tintswalo Safari Lodge, January 23, 2023.²³

KENYA

From January 22 to February 17, 2023
Mara North Conservancy and Masai Mara
National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya



Two lions and 3 lionesses were treated. They were all victims of one or more spears, demonstrating the assailants' fierce desire to kill. The head, rib cage, neck, spinal cord and ears make up the preferred targets. Fortunately, all the prognoses following their anaesthesia and treatment were favourable. One of the lionesses had been spotted near the Musiara airstrip but then disappeared. She finally rested under a tree, and caretakers kept her cubs at a distance while removing the spears.

SWT/KWS Sky Vet program, October 2022 to January 2023; SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February and March 2023.²⁴

MOZAMBIQUE

February 10, 2023
Manica, Manica Province,
Mozambique. Border with Zimbabwe.



The SERNIC fooled lion skin sellers. Authorities arrested 3 individuals. The lion had fallen into a trap in the Changará district, Tete province. One of them explained how their matter took a bad turn: "We were in talks with a buyer, he had paid for us to travel by train so that we could finalize the deal in Maputo, and all of a sudden things went wrong, we were questioned and taken to the police station." Indeed, the 3 traffickers were intercepted en route and taken to the police station in Chimoio, Manica province, 1,160 km from Maputo. They are being held in custody in Manica, the provincial capital. Integrity Magazine, February 10, 2023.²⁵

ASIA

ISRAEL

February and March 2023
Central District, Israel

Officials intercepted a lion cub often seen on TikTok, passed from hand to hand. After veterinary care and time spent negotiating and fundraising, "Zion", previously known as Abu Malek, was transferred to South Africa's Simbonga Game Reserve & Sanctuary. He is in a 3,000 m² enclosure, where he will hopefully "make old bones".

Israel Nature and Parks Authority, February 15, 2023; Haaretz, May 23, 2023; Free the Wild, June 2, 2023.²⁶



PAKISTAN

February 25, 2023
Dera Ghazi Khan, Province of Punjab,
Pakistan



A circus director was fined 220,000 rupees (840 US\$) for the illegal exploitation of a lion.

Veterinary News and Views, February 28, 2023.²⁷

EUROPE

FRANCE

FAMILY AFFAIRS
February 20, 2023
Bourgoin-Jallieu, Department of Isère,
France



Stéphane Gougeon received a 4-month suspended prison sentence for illegally exhibiting a lion in travelling circuses. The Gougeon family clan and related entities operate the Nouveau Cirque Triomphe, Cirque Idéal and Cirque Italiano. Le Dauphiné Libéré, January 16 and February 20, 2023; One Voice, February 22, 2023.²⁸

February 20, 2023
Bobigny, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis,
France

The clandestine taxidermist who processed the skin of a lion exploited by the Gougeon/Mordon clan (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.70 and above) faced a judge in Bobigny. He acknowledged his responsibility, but the court decided to dismiss the case.

One Voice, February 22, 2023.²⁹

LIONS - followed

MOLDOVA

January 13, 2023

**Palanca, Stefan Voda District, Moldova.
Border with Ukraine.**

Fishermen on the Dniestr bank spotted a man walking a lion cub in the forest. The man turned out to be farmer Vasile Mereuță. After an investigation, Moldova's environmental protection services asserted that the Odessa Zoo gifted Mereuță the 6-month-old feline in exchange for his support to refugees. The lion was supposed to be transferred on Monday, January 16 to Chișinău Zoo, 130 km from Palanca. In the days that followed, however, Odessa Zoo denied ever donating the lion, and Chișinău Zoo said it could not accommodate the additional resident: "We have already received 4 lion cubs from Kharkov Zoo in autumn 2021." Mereuță claims to have received the cub from an association in Ukraine as recompense for his aid in evacuating pets to Romania and Moldova. "I've volunteered with several associations in Ukraine and rescued dozens of horses, ponies and donkeys." Mereuță seems to have good knowledge of equines, but that does not apply to lions. He agreed to smuggle this exotic animal into Moldova, and it is insulting to animal protection groups in Ukraine like UAnimals to suggest that they thank their volunteers by giving them lion cubs or baby giraffes. According to Karl Luganov, director of urban planning and animal protection in Chișinău, "no animal protection association would offer a lion cub to an ordinary citizen." "All over the world, NGOs are fighting against the keeping of these animals by private individuals."



#diez, January 14, 15 and 25, 2023; Ziarul de Gardă, January 14, 2023; AGORA, January 16, 2023; Publika.md, January 16, 2023.³⁰



LEOPARDS - *Panthera pardus*, Appendix I

AFRICA

KENYA

Beginning of February 2023

Kirurumo, Meru County, Kenya

A leopard cub caught in a trap is rescued. After the anaesthesia, a man from KWS entered his cage to make him comfortable and safe. The animal was released at the Loisaba Conservancy, 100 km from Kirurumo. Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, February 5, 2023.³¹



ASIA

INDIA

January 2, 2023

Sabaur Area, Rupnagar District, State of Punjab, India

Just 30 km from where a leopard cub was captured and chewed up by a pack of hunting dogs on December 27, 2022 ("On the Trail" n°38 p.60), a male leopard, no more than 5 years old, fell victim to a firearm. In the Rupnagar district, farmers can obtain a firearms licence to hunt wild boar and nilgais, who are considered crop pests. They can also arrange for a licenced hunter to shoot the "vermin" roaming their fields. When a wild boar or nilgau is shot, forestry services must be informed, and the farmer is free to eat the meat with his family or bury the animal at home. The Rupnagar district is home to many guns. .../...

LEOPARDS - followed

On this night, the leopard was shot by 5 large-calibre bullets in the left flank at the spinal cord level. The vandals amputated a paw, which makes for a desirable souvenir that reportedly brings prosperity. Prabhat Bhatti, a pro-leopard activist who attended the post-mortem, claims, "Poachers hunt at night using powerful torches to down boars and deer. At night when poachers shine powerful flashlights, the leopard can freeze when caught in the glare and lends the poachers an easy shot at close range. They regard the leopard as a danger to their hunting dogs and to themselves."

Punjabi Tribune, January 3, 2023; The Times of India, January 3, 2023; The Tribune (India), January 3, 2023.³²



January 12, 2023

Bamhnouda and Jamuniya, Jabalpur District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



A resident of Jamuniya named Singh strangled a leopard by hanging a noose steel trap along his run. He let the 73cm x 55cm skin dry for 2 months before selling it to Choubey, 33. He sold other parts, including the paws, head and tail, separately and fed the remains to dogs. Police recovered the skin from Choubey following a car chase.

Amar Ujala, January 13, 2023; WCCB, January 17, 2023.³³

January 14 and 18, 2023

Dabem-Morpilla Forest and Morpirla, South Goa District, State of Goa, India



Poro Velip, 78, was arrested for allegedly catching a leopard with a wild boar trap. He removed the cat's lower jaw teeth and claws. Due to his state of health, Velip was released on bail of 20,000 rupees (240 US\$). He cannot leave Goa unless authorized by the court. He must face 5 days of questioning by investigators.

Herald Goa, January 17, 2023; Gomantak Times, January 19, 2023.³⁴

January 17, 2023

Bamurha, Panna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The tiger State is also losing its leopards. A male leopard cub was found lying in a field, an unfortunate victim of a violent death. Midday Tuesday, villagers alerted forestry services, who took 6 hours to arrive even though they're situated right next door. Forestry services claimed that they were absorbed in the Anubhuti program, a biodiversity awareness program that leads groups of schoolchildren on guided nature outings. The Bamurha forest is adjacent to the Panna tiger reserve, where 2 tigers, a hyena and 2 nilgaus were poached within just 45 days of each other.

Naidunia, January 18, 2023; One India, January 18, 2023.³⁵

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Night of January 17-18, 2023

Bholagadia, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

A 1.65-metre-long skin, likely belonging to a 7-8-year-old leopard, was seized from the Sahu brothers along with 127,000 rupees (1,532 US\$). Police searched their home after receiving information about a possible adulterated alcohol deal. Genduru Ho, who was visiting the Sahu brothers overnight, was also escorted by police.

Odisha Bytes, January 18, 2023; The New Indian Express, January 19, 2023.³⁶

January 24, 2023

Yelwal, Mysuru District, State of Karnataka, India

Mr. R. Lokesh, short of money, was preparing to sell leopard claws. He claimed to have found the cat dead in a field in Mavinapura several years ago. He hoped to find a buyer in Yelwal (population 10,000 per the last census in 2011), 130 km away. Ashok Ganapagowda helped Lokesh execute his delicate and hopefully fruitful mission (a leopard's claw sells for around 5,000 rupees or 60 US\$). It was a bad day for both of them. Yelwal police, informed by a tip, seized the claws.

Deccan Herald, January 26, 2023.³⁷

January 28, 2023

Kotpalahri, Kangra District, State of Himachal Pradesh, India



A male leopard (2 years old, 1.5 meters long) who got caught in a trap intended for lynching was rescued before a crowd kept a safe distance away by police. After taking time to recover from stress and injuries, the leopard will be resettled in the Chhoti Dhar forest, his usual habitat. The Tribune (India), January 29, 2023.³⁸

LEOPARDS - followed

February 1, 2023

Near Manbhanj, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India



Officials seized a supposed leopard skin, 1.98 meters long from head to tail by 30 cm wide, from a roadside restaurant and arrested 8 people. Pragativadi, February 1, 2023.³⁹

February 12, 2023

Anandpur Sahib Tehsil, Rupnagar District, State of Punjab, India



Wildlife protection officers from the Chhatbir Zoo rescued a female leopard caught in a clutch cable trap. She was about to be strangled. Favourable prognosis.

The Tribune (India), February 13, 2023.⁴⁰

February 13, 2023

Deola Taluk, Nashik District, State of Maharashtra, India

Raju Sand Jagtap haggles over the 2-year-old ex-leopard. The classic policeman-disguised-as-buyer trick worked again. Jagtap was arrested and the skin seized.

Sakal, February 14, 2023.⁴¹

February 28, 2023

Kharpada, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Jitendra Pawar, an agricultural day labourer, and his clerk Sonu Waghmare wanted to sell the skin of the leopard they poached for 225,000 rupees (2,760 US\$). They fell into the trap set by police and the police informer.

The Times of India, March 4, 2023.⁴²

INDONESIA

January 12, 2023

Bekasi, West Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

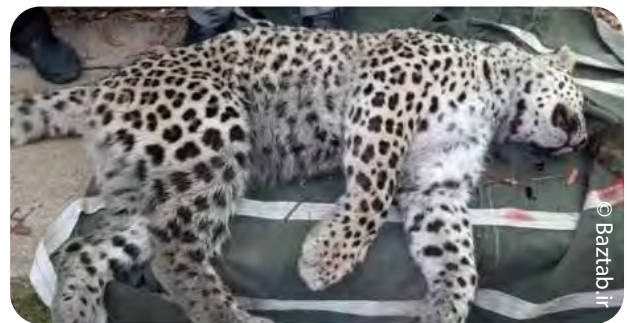
facebook

At 11:15 p.m. in a hotel parking lot, police arrested a young man, 22, who came to deliver the 4 paws, skin and head of a leopard, as well as a sea turtle shell. He put them up for sale on Facebook and was duped by fake buyers from the Ministry of the Environment and Forests, alerted by their colleagues in the cybercrime unit. Niaga.Asia, January 16, 2023.⁴³

IRAN

January 25, 2023

Near Gharchagheh Protected Area, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran



Rangers quickly arrived on scene with everything they needed to anaesthetise, treat and transfer a leopard who got locked in a sheepfold. Unfortunately, one guy grabbed a shotgun, opened the door and fired his 12-gauge at point-blank range. He was arrested and brought to justice. The event left the leopard plus 11 sheep dead and 14 other sheep injured. The province's Director General of Environmental Protection deplors the fact that sheepfolds are not better protected from the incursions of wild animals.

Baztab.ir, January 26, 2023.⁴⁴

January 3, 2023

Mureed Jo Tarr, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

A leopard accused of attacking and killing dogs and cows has been lynched. He was first shot in the head and then beaten to death by an axe. The body was then buried 8 km from the village. Right before this took place, Mir Aijaz Talpur, a member of the SWD (Sindh Wildlife Department), visited the site early Tuesday afternoon and promised to return quickly with his team. "The plan was to bring the tranquilizer gun from Karachi and to transfer the leopard to Kherthar mountain ranges." An hour after his departure, however, the crowd went ahead and killed the leopard. Talpur denies that the leopard wreaked havoc on the herds of domestic animals. "We did not find remains of any livestock killed or attacked by the leopard." On February 22, 2021, a leopard was lynched by villagers in the same Tharparkar district (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.86). The News International, January 4 2023; The Express Tribune, January 5 2023.⁴⁵

Mid-February 2023

Tirah Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Locals spotted and killed 2 leopard cubs in the mountains, marking the 5th and 6th official victims of the year. It's unclear whether this was a preventive move (small leopard will grow big and become a terror) or an attempt at trafficking and ill-gotten gains.

Dawn, February 18, 2023.⁴⁶**CHEETAHS - *Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I****AFRICA****KENYA**

February 13, 2023

Voi, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

Victor Nyange, Josephat Malasi, and Gregory Mwawasi were arrested in possession of 2 cheetah skins measuring 1.72 and 1.73 meters in length. Nyange was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, Malasi and Mwawasi to 7 years' imprisonment. Office of The Director Of Public Prosecutions, February 14, 2023.⁴⁷



January 2023

Somaliland Autonomous Region, Somalia

© Cheetah Conservation Fund

Three dehydrated cheetahs covered in wounds were seized by agents of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. They were then handed over to the Cheetah Conservation Fund. After emergency treatment and 2 weeks' quarantine, they began to regain their strength. Cheetah Conservation Fund, March 17, 2023.⁴⁸

CARACALS - *Caracal caracal*, Appendix II except for the Asian populations listed under CITES Appendix I.**EUROPE****RUSSIA**

February 6 and July 11, 2023

Voronezh, Voronezh Oblast, Russia

A Toyota Land Cruiser was speeding along, not really respecting the curbs. Police began chasing the car, lights flashing. Mortar fire erupted from the Toyota. Police responded by shooting out the tires. The driver immediately offered to take a breathalyzer test. In fact, he was under the influence of narcotics, and from the dashboard to the passenger seat was a caracal. Yevgeny Vasilyev recently bought him for 300,000 roubles (4,315 US\$).

36on.ru, February 6, 2023; Obozrevatel.Vrn, February 6, 2023; Voronezh Oblast Police, February 6, 2023; Vesti Voronezh, February 8 and July 11, 2023.⁴⁹



© Воронежский зоопарк

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 2023

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A juvenile female serval with a bullet wound to the shoulder was brought to the clinic. After a few weeks' care, she will undergo a period of rehabilitation in the wild at Phinda Private Game Reserve before being released.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, February 2, 2023.⁵⁰

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 14, 2023

Ava, State of Missouri, United States of America



Despite being native to Africa's savannahs and deserts, one serval adapted to the rigors of winter and storms in Missouri. In her hiding place amidst a few bales of hay, farmers and naturalists found bird bones and feathers. The female serval was baited and captured in a cage, then transferred 2 hours down the road to the Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas. No one knows where she came from or who abandoned her. People had spotted her on and off for 6 months, mostly at night, and were surprised by her sight, presuming they'd seen a bobcat or a big cat instead. More and more servals are roaming the United States, sometimes treating residents to unforgettable surprises: a serval in a bathtub, another in a bedroom in the middle of summer. The Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge has taken in 3 in 3 years. Servals are all the rage in the pet world, and their fate is not always, by any means, as fortunate as that of the Ozark Mountain serval.

Servals in the USA, see "On the Trail" n°27 p.79, n°28 p.86, n°32 p.88, n°33 p.91, n°34 p.82 and n°35 p.58. McDonald County Press, January 26, 2023; FOX Weather, January 27, 2023.⁵¹

Saturday January 28, 2023

Cincinnati, State of Ohio, United States of America

Cocaine-positive serval captured in a treetop. First mistaken by onlookers for a leopard cub, then for an adult savannah cat, the 13-15 kg feline gave the animal brigade a hard time. "I'd rather deal with a tiger," says Ray Anderson, head rescuer. The serval was transferred to the Cincinnati Zoo for treatment and detoxification. He is believed to have escaped from a car in a traffic jam.

FOX 19 NOW, March 7, 2023; Cincinnati Animal CARE, March 9, 2023.⁵²

ASIA

VIET NAM

January 18, 2023

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

A passenger attempted to return to Viet Nam from the Czech Republic with a serval but abandoned him on the airport turnstiles. The poor animal, originally from Africa and a victim of fashion in the USA and Europe, will end his life in a specialized shelter or zoo.

ENV, January 19, 2023.⁵³

EUROPE

FRANCE

Beginning of January 2023

Nogent-Le-Phaye, Department of Eure-et-Loir, France



Arrival of a female serval illegally held by a private individual at La Tanière zoo-refuge. Police were looking for drugs and seized the alleged savannah cat at the same time.

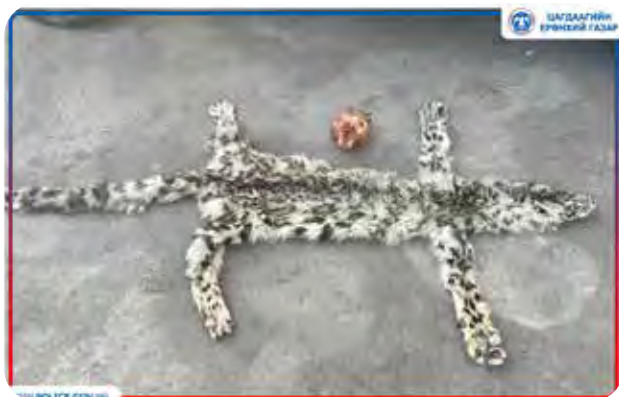
La Tanière, January 9, 2023.⁵⁴

SNOW LEOPARDS - *Panthera uncia*, Appendix I

ASIA

MONGOLIA

February 15, 2023
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia



In the Sükhbaatar district, 2 suspects were transporting the skin and skull of a snow leopard poached in the Govi-Altai aimag, 900 km away. They were caught before they could find a buyer. Mongolian Police, February 17, 2023.⁵⁵

RUSSIA

February 7, 2023
Biysk, Altai Krai, Russia



The skin and head of a snow leopard are seized from a home. At this stage, his origin is impossible to determine. Either he was poached in the krai or smuggled in from Mongolia, Kazakhstan, or Kyrgyzstan.

Barnaul Incident, February 7, 2023; Virtual Customs, February 7, 2023; Interfax Russia, February 7, 2023.⁵⁶

LEOPARD CATS - *Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II except for the populations from Bangladesh, India and Thailand which are listed under CITES Appendix I

EUROPE

RUSSIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

End of January 2023

Tigrovoye, Primorsky Krai, Russia

A village woman who was apparently exasperated by an Amur leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis euptilurus*) stealing her chickens ended up killing him and hanging him in her yard.

Vostok Media, February 1 and 3, 2023; Moskovski Komsomolets Vladivostok, February 2, 2023.⁵⁷



PALLAS'S CATS- *Otocolobus manul*, Appendix II

EUROPE

RUSSIA

January 17, 2023

Barun-Khemchiksky District, Republic of Tuva, Russia

A dead Pallas's cat was found inside a camouflage backpack in the back seat. It was 7 p.m. The gang was returning from hunting, and a passenger told police that he got caught in a wire trap they set near the village of Don-Terezin.



Pallas's cats are recognizable by their stocky silhouette, short legs and flat head. They are no heavier than domestic cats. Their thick fur (up to 7 cm) enables them to withstand strong winds and temperatures down to -50°C. They can be found at altitudes of up to 5,600 meters. They are threatened by habitat loss due to human activities and by poaching for their fur.

Tuva-Online, January 19, 2023; Zapad24, January 19, 2023.⁵⁸

JAGUARS - *Panthera onca*, Appendix I

AMERICA

BOLIVIA

February 19, 2023

Oruro, Province of Cercado, Department of Oruro, Bolivia

Carnivals allow for all kinds of outrageousness. A carnival in Oruro, a city with over 300,000 inhabitants, was no exception. A neighbourhood association (Fraternidad Bloque Movima Tobas Central Oruro) paraded around with an unfurled adult jaguar skin, prompting protests and a complaint. The Fraternidad is said to promote hunting. In addition to jaguar skin, it offered owl (Strigidae, Appendix I or II), fox (family Canidae) and viscacha (family Chinchillidae) byproducts to its dancers at the parade.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, February 19 and 23, 2023.⁵⁹



PERU

February 24, 2023

Chimbote Border Post, Province of Mariscal Ramón Castilla, Department of Loreto, Peru. Border with Colombia.



A jaguar skull is seized from a boat on the Amazon River.

Loreto Regional Forestry and Wildlife Development Management, February 24, 2023.⁶⁰

PUMAS - *Puma concolor*, Appendix II, except for the populations of Costa Rica and Panama, which are in Appendix I

AMERICA

MEXICO

January 25, 2023

State of Sonora, Mexico

Profepa (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) took in a young puma found at a private home.

Profepa, January 25, 2023.⁶¹

BOBCATS AND LYNX - *Lynx* spp., Appendix II

AMERICA

CANADA

January 12, 2023

Calgary, Province of Alberta, Canada

Bobby the female bobcat made headlines in Calgary. Since the beginning



of the year, Bobby has haunted the Chaparral neighbourhood, limping and rattling with an iron trap piece attached to her left front paw. After several days and nights of attentive residents observing and photographing the cat, Melanie Whalen, head of Calgary's Animal Care Service, decided to gently bait and capture her. Bobby was then treated with all the care she deserved: bandages, fluoroscopy of her nails and claws, dental surgery (she lost a fang while trying to escape the trap set by a perverse stranger), stitches, vitamins, ointments, care provided by Calgary's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.



In the spring, she was transferred to the Cochrane Ecological Institute, where her agility, climbing and nail retraction skills were evaluated and improved. In July, her release was on the horizon.

Calgary Wildlife, January 12 and July 5, 2023; CBC/ Radio-Canada, January 12, 2023.⁶²

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Beginning of February 2023
Newaygo County, State of Michigan,
United States of America

A man applied for an exemption to mark a bobcat that had been "accidentally" caught in a trap. He had not anticipated that officers would come and check the trap in question, which was not only set on public land, but was also a prohibited conibear trap. A complaint has now been lodged against him. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, February 18, 2023.⁶³



MEXICO

Mid-January 2023
Mexico City, Mexico

A 15-year-old bobcat was rescued. He had been kept for years in a private home in the Iztapalapa district, where Profepa believes he was not treated with dignity or respect. He also suffered from a respiratory infection. He was transferred to a UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) where, according to Profepa, he will receive the necessary attention and care. El Heraldo de México, January 17, 2023.⁶⁴



EUROPE

SPAIN

End of February 2023
Badajoz, Province of Badajoz,
Autonomous Community of
Extremadura, Spain


A farmer who poached an Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*, Appendix I) in 2019 was sentenced to 2 years in prison and damages amounting to 114,158 € (124,500 US\$). The poacher shot the lynx on his estate at point-blank range. There were 80 pellets in his body. After he killed him, a complicit farm worker agreed to transport the remains outside the estate. He was sentenced to a year and a half in prison. El País (with EFE), February 28, 2023; General Council of the Judiciary, March 3, 2023.⁶⁵

FRANCE

February 14, 2023
Morbier, Department of Jura, France. Border
with Switzerland.


Hikers and countrymen spot a Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II) limping on 3 paws between Morbier and Lézat. The lynx was eventually captured in a baited cage and transferred to the Athénas Center, the Good Samaritan of lynx and birds of prey, near Lons-le-Saunier. He suffers from an open, infected fracture caused by a rifle bullet. There are an estimated 100 lynx in the Jura mountains. They are victims of poaching and accidental or provoked road collisions.

France 3 Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, February 22, 2023.⁶⁶

NORWAY

February 1, 2023
Central Norway Region, Norway

Just 3 hours after the season opened, a set of hunters had killed 13 Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II), including 6 females. This not only fulfills the SNO's overall quota (Statens naturoppsyn, Nature Inspectorate) but exceeds the authorized quota for females. The SNO deplores that hunters are either unable or unwilling to distinguish males from females when they are on the move, and even when they are dead.

County Governor of Trøndelag, February 2, 2023; NOAH, February 10, 2023.⁶⁷

RUSSIA

January 31, 2023
Guryevsk, Kemerovo Oblast, Russia

"Instead of catching him and taking him back to the forest, they shot him!", protested an animal rights advocate on social media. The Eurasian lynx had come close to the town (population 22,000).

Moskovski Komsomolets Kuzbass, February 1, 2023.⁶⁸

BOBCATS AND LYNX - followed

February 16, 2023

Krasnodar Krai, and Moscow Zoo, Moscow Oblast, Russia

Authorities recover 3 Eurasian lynx kittens (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II) (a female and 2 males) of unknown origin. They were likely destined for exploitation by street photographers in Black Sea resorts when young, and afterwards to pet cat markets or abandonment. They were transferred to Moscow Zoo, 1,300 km from the seizure. "They're doing well, they've put on weight and their winter fur" says Svetlana Akulova, zoo director. Volokolamsky Urban District Administration, February 16, 2023; RIA Novosti, February 16, 2023.⁶⁹

SWITZERLAND

January 13, 2023

Canton of Valais, Switzerland

A hiker came across the dead body of a Eurasian lynx in mid-October 2022. Following a post-mortem examination in December by the University of Berne's Institute of Animal Pathology, Valais authorities declared in January 2023 that this was a case of poaching.

Lynx poaching in Valais, see "On the Trail" n°30 p.66-67 and n°34 p.81.

Canton of Valais, January 13, 2023; Le Nouvelliste, January 13, 2023.⁷⁰

MULTI-FELINES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 31 and February 22, 2023
Verkeerdevlei, Free State Province, South Africa

Hendrik Steyn's farm receives a visit by SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) inspectors and DESTEA (Department of Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs) agents.

- A female leopard spent 5 months confined in a trailer. She was wading through excrement, decomposing poultry and offal from her prison diet. She was transferred to Dr. Peter Cadwell's veterinary clinic in Pretoria.

- Rescue of 2 bat-eared foxes (*Otocyon megalotis*) and 7 hyraxes (family Procaviidae).

- Another 70 parasite-covered, starving and self-mutilated animals, including 3 serval kittens and 3 caracal kittens, rescued.

Hendrik Steyn was arrested and charged with animal cruelty. He was released on bail. On his Facebook page, he presents himself as a breeder and exporter of small cats. "We ship worldwide."

Karin Lourens, February 23, 2023; Bloemfontein SPCA, February 28, 2023; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, March 1 and 26, May 8 and June 5, 2023; News24, March 1, 2023; Ban Animal Trading, March 2, 2023.⁷¹



SENEGAL

February 21 and March 1st, 2023

Kedougou, Kedougou Region, Senegal

Arrest of Aly Bonkoungou, a citizen of Burkina Faso, at Dali's restaurant. His suitcase contained a lion skin and head (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), a serval skin (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), a crocodile skin (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) and unidentified bones with a total estimated value of the equivalent of 1,500 US\$ on the local market. Aly is also alleged to be involved in gold smuggling based in Mali.

Arrested and brought before the court, he was sentenced to 1 month's imprisonment on charges of importing, possessing, putting into circulation and attempting to sell the remains of fully or partially protected species.

The operation was carried out by officers from the research brigade of the central police station and the general directorate of national parks, with the support of the NGO Eagle Sénégal.

EAGLE, February 22, 2023; Sud Quotidien, February 22, 2023; EAGLE Sénégal, February and March 2023.⁷²



ASIA

INDIA

January 3, 2023

Boudh, Boudh District, State of Odisha, India

Himalaya Dash was found in possession of a tiger skin and a leopard skin. The skins were transferred to the Dehradun Wildlife Institute for authentication. The operation is credited to the STF (Special Task Force) and Boudh forest officials.

Asian News International, January 4, 2023; The Hindu, January 4, 2023.⁷³

REPEATED OFFENCE

Sunday February 19 and Wednesday February 22, 2023

Arasur, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

They're back: Mangal, Sunita, Bimala, Ramchandrar, Ratna and Krishnan were arrested again. They all belong to the same tribe and range in age from 28 to 59. In 2012, most were sentenced to 3 years in prison for tiger poaching in Karnataka. To ensure they don't leave behind any traces, they skin the tiger on the spot and distribute his meat to every member of the bivouac, including the hide tanner and trap maker. The Bawarias and Bahelyas' expertise dates back to the time of the maharajas and British colonists. They would guide the colonists on tiger hunts and were highly respected and rewarded. Today, they are considered nomads and renegades, or petty traders in the markets. They have kept their roots in the world of tigers, and know their scratches on trees, their every smell. Such knowledge has been passed down from generation to generation. In an earlier publication of "On the Trail", Robin des Bois suggested that they would make excellent guards in reserves and other tiger territories.

They were found in possession of tiger skin, leopard skin, teeth, claws, bones, whiskers and other by-products of big cats killed primarily in the Nilgiris district.

The Times of India, February 22, 2023; The Hindu, February 23, 2023; Wildlife SOS, March 6, 2023.⁷⁴



IRAN

February 19, 2023

Tehran Province, Iran

Under a search warrant, an adult caracal and 2 fishing cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*, Appendix II) were recovered at a hideout south of Tehran.

Borna News, February 20, 2023.⁷⁵

THAILAND

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 20, 2023

Bangkok, Thailand



Officials confiscated from Phatcharapha Prasongdee and Sitthichai Boonlai, a couple in their 30s, 2 heads, an Asian golden cat (*Catopuma temminckii*, Appendix I) tail and 19 skins, tiger-skin talismans and 16 bottles of presumed tiger oil. Asian golden cat heads were sold for 2,600 to 2,800 baht (75 to 80 US\$), skins for 200 to 1,000 baht (5 to 30 US\$) depending on size, tails for 400 baht (11.50 US\$), tiger skin talismans for 300 baht (9 US\$) and oil bottles for 199 baht (5 US\$). The carcasses were sold over the Internet and cut to customer specifications.

Bangkok Post, January 21, 2023.⁷⁶

EUROPE

FRANCE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 9, 2023

Rouen, Department of Seine-Maritime, France

The Caresse de tigre association, Zdravko Pesut and Brigitte Klimond have been found guilty of illegal exploitation of their big cats. Caresse de tigre was fined 8,000 € (8,520 US\$), Pesut 4,000 € (4,260 US\$) and Klimond 6,000 € (6,390 US\$). All fines were suspended. The court does not recognize feline trafficking, animal mistreatment and endangering the lives of others as offences. The NGO Aves, which spent 2 years investigating the couple's actions, deplores this but is satisfied with the sentence. See "On the Trail" n°31 p.70.

76actu, January 9, 2023; France 3 Normandie, January 9, 2023.⁷⁷



WOLVES, ASIATIC WILD DOGS, PAINTED DOGS, FOXES AND HYAENAS



Bengal fox cubs (*Vulpes bengalensis*). Photo Uday Agashe

AFRICA

ZIMBABWE

February 20, 2023

Savé Valley Conservancy, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Rescue of a female painted dog (*Lycaon pictus*) deeply wounded in the neck by a trap.

African Wildlife Conservation Fund, February 20 and March 30, 2023.¹



ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

Beginning of February 2023

Hazrati Sultan District, Samangan Province, Afghanistan

Two grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) are dead, caught in 2 traps next to each other.

National Environmental Protection Agency, February 7, 2023.³



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 2023

State of Michigan, United States of America

The poacher captured a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) "unintentionally", he said. In an attempt to get out of this predicament, he called the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on his own initiative. 12 other traps were discovered and dismantled. The poacher was charged.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, January 21, 2023.²



SAUDI ARABIA

February 2023

Riyadh Province, Saudi Arabia

Officials confiscated a hyena (family Hyaenidae) from a private individual who now faces a fine of 30 million riyals (8 million US\$) and/or a maximum prison sentence of 10 years. The Forces invite all witnesses of wildlife and environmental damage to contact 911 in the Riyadh and Mecca provinces, and 999 and 996 in other provinces.

Al Bayan, February 25, 2023.⁴

INDIA

OPERATION WILEP

February 2, 2023

Kamakhya, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

The RPF (Railway Protection Force) seized 2 live Bengal fox cubs (*Vulpes bengalensis*, Appendix III in India) from 2 garbage bags a guy was carrying to Mumbai.

Bengal foxes live in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. They are small (50-60 cm long, 2-4 kg), sandy in color with black tail tips, and prefer semi-arid plains. They are threatened by habitat loss from human activities and by hunting for their meat and fur. Their tails, fangs and claws are sometimes used in traditional medicine and religious rituals.

Railway Protection Force, February 2, 2023; The Sentinel, February 3, 2023.⁵

February 8, 2023

Mangalvedha Taluk, Solapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

The video of a motorcycle chasing a striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and the canine's subsequent capture, torture and death has sparked outrage. One of the suspects has been arrested and charged. Three accomplices are being sought. Hyenas are victims of people's mistrust and hatred, as well as road collisions, habitat degradation and poaching.

Mid-Day, February 11, 2023.⁶

Mid-February 2023

Pathrai, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India

A dhole or Asian wild dog (*Cuon alpinus*, Appendix II) was found dead, caught in a trap, during a routine patrol of the Pench Tiger Reserve periphery. The reserve's headquarters is comprised of 39 villages. Guards are making more preventive rounds to dismantle traps lying around. "Our detection rate has increased and therefore, such poaching cases are coming to light." Pench officials have also initiated educational campaigns aimed at informing herders and "vaidus", traditional healers, to fight against trapping and superstitions. The Times of India, February 15, 2023.⁷



February 16, 2023

Solapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

A striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) returned to the wild after a 3-month recovery at RESQ (same pronunciation as "Rescue") in Bavdhan. He was found trapped in a net with a severe paw haemorrhage in November.

The Times of India, February 26, 2023.⁸



UZBEKISTAN

February 13, 2023

Jizzakh, Jizzakh Region, Uzbekistan

A shepherd holds the head of grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). The images are circulating on social networks. The environmental authorities establish that the incident occurred 2 years ago. The culprit, J.Z., was identified and fined 3 million soums (265 US\$).

Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, February 13, 2023; ekolog.uz, February 14, 2023.⁹



EUROPE

GERMANY

February 21, 2023

Potsdam, Brandenburg State, Germany

The public prosecutor appealed the acquittal of Johannes B., a hunter from the Netherlands invited to a hunt involving 80 hunters and 40 dogs (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.99). At 11 a.m. on January 18, 2019, B. shot a grey wolf cub (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) at point-blank range, killing him 50 meters away. He claims to have mistaken him for an adult wolf and that his 6 dogs were in danger. B. also claims that he didn't know he was in "wolf country". Everyone (pro-wolf or anti-wolf) knows that some 40 packs roam the Land of Brandenburg (29,500 km²); such ignorance coming from a hunter as experienced and esteemed by his peers as B. is inconceivable. The wolf cub reportedly grabbed one of his dogs, shook him and threw him into the air, but the victim's post-mortem examination confirmed that not a single hair was found in his fangs. B. was once again acquitted.

Berliner Zeitung, February 21, 2023.¹⁰



FRANCE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 23 and April 14, 2023

Mouans-Sartoux and Grasse,
Department of Alpes-Maritimes,
France



A couple were keeping at home 2 Arctic wolves (*Canis lupus arctos*, Appendix II) "recovered" from a wildlife park in Seine-et-Marne, around 60 kilometres from Paris. They are founders of the Avaloup association, which specialises in finding people who have disappeared in avalanches. "The sense of smell of wolves is much more powerful than the sense of smell of Malinois dogs," says Daniel Hirsch. "We just wanted to save lives," confirms Joëlle Hirsch. The rescue performances of their successive wolves have never been proven, although they are hoped for by the mayor of the commune and a network of supporters.

The 2 visits carried out in the summer of 2022 by the OFB (Office Français de la Biodiversité, French Biodiversity Agency) were unfavourable. "In 30 years of inspection, I'd never seen anything like it; it was the first time I'd seen private individuals make their 2 wolves sleep at the foot of their bed with cuddly toys", recalls one of the OFB inspectors.

On January 23, 2023, the 2 wolf cubs were seized and transferred to a facility in Brittany. The Breton establishments holding wolves are in Hanvec, Lescouët-Gouarec, Pleugueneuc, Meillac and Langoëlan.

On January 28, the mayor of Mouans-Sartoux organised a demonstration in support of the Hirsch couple and the return of the cubs to the Alpes-Maritimes.

On February 2, a senator from the Alpes-Maritimes called for the return of the wolves in a written question to the Minister of Ecological Transition, and by mid-March a petition along the same lines had reportedly attracted more than 30,000 signatures.

In April 2023, the Grasse Criminal Court heard the Hirsch case. Before the hearing, Daniel Hirsch told anyone who would listen: "If we're told we can get them back, we'll take the car and go and get them right away". That's Hirsch for you. They don't mind driving

2000 km with 2 wolves in the car and stopping at a motorway service area. And that's the mistake the couple made, treating the wolves like lapdogs.



The court upheld the confiscation of 'Alaska' and 'Toundra' and fined Mr and Mrs Hirsch 500 € (545 US\$) each for illegally keeping non-domestic animals.

France 3 Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, January 29, 2023; Var-Matin, February 28 and March 9, 2023; Nice-Matin, April 14, 2023; Official Journal of the French Republic, June 29, 2023.¹¹

WOLVES IN THE ALPES-MARITIMES

Eight white Arctic and black Canadian wolves were forced to escape from the Alpha park in Saint-Martin-Vésubie after a catastrophic flood in October 2020. Five died poached or trapped in mudslides (cf. "On the Trail" n°31 p.74).

51 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) were shot during 2022, 14 by simple defence shots and 37 by reinforced defence shots.

In November 2023, a wolf was found dead in the village of Touët-sur-Var (population 690). During the night, he had been accidentally or deliberately hit by a vehicle. Many families with children approached the corpse before it was taken away by the OFB.

According to the Alpes-Maritimes sheep federation, wolf attacks are 20% higher in 2023 than in 2022. Most farmers are calling for a further simplification of shooting procedures. Instead, wolf protection associations are proposing night-time herd parks and the recruitment of shepherd helpers.

InfoLoup n°40, August 2023; France Bleu Azur, September 10, 2023; Nice-Matin, November 13, 2023.¹²

GREECE

January 19, 2023

Agnanti, Region of Central Greece, Greece

Hanging wolves seems to be all the rage. Following incidents in Croatia ("On the Trail" n°32 p.97 and n°38 p.71), Italy (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.98 and n°37 p.60) and France ("On the Trail" n°34 p.88), it's Greece's turn. In the village of Agnanti (population of 218 per the last census in 2011), a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was found hanging from an olive tree.



Filoi Kardias, January 19, 2023; Zoosos.gr, January 19, 2023.¹³

ITALY

January 13, 2023

Sonnino, Province of Latina, Region of Lazio, Italy

A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) lay on the ground in a pool of blood. A resident alerted the mayor, which immediately arrived on scene and alerted Priverno game wardens, municipal police, civil protection services and veterinary surgeons. The body was transferred to a laboratory in Fogliano, 700 km from Sonnino. "According to initial findings, it was a male aged 4-5 years killed by a shotgun blast." The chief magistrate of Sonnino (population over 7,000) was dismayed: "I hope that this is an isolated act and that it will not be repeated on our territory. I hope that the investigation will be successful, so that the perpetrators of this barbarity can serve their just punishment." LatinaToday, January 14, 2023.¹⁴

January 20 and February 1, 2023

Zanego and Zignago, Province of La Spezia, Region of Liguria, Italy

Now it's Liguria's turn to mourn.

- On the afternoon of Friday, January 20, a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was found dead near Zanego. A sudden death, perhaps poisoning, a settling of scores between wolves, lightning on the snow. Nobody could explain the death. Yet on Thursday, in the hills, a hunt for who knows what brought together more than 50 hunters, not counting the dogs. Shots rang out and there were cars everywhere. The only official victim was a poor red fox cub (*Vulpes vulpes*) that happened to pass by. Two days later, at the very spot where the wolf mysteriously died, a metal detector uncovered a buckshot. The ranger remains cautious: "This ammunition is certainly a clue, but it's not enough."

- Twelve days later, a she-wolf was found dead near a stream in Zignago, 50 km from Zanego. No explanation of the death; it's an omerta. The carabinieri merely points out that "the wolf is a protected species that is not dangerous to man, whose diet consists mainly of wild prey."

Il Secolo XIX, January 21, 2023; La Nazione, January 24 and February 3, 2023.¹⁵

January 23, 2023

Monti Sibillini National Park, Province of Macerata, Region of Marche, Italy

The Sibylline Mountains are covered in snow. The ground is velvety white. Footprints sink into the wadded layer and a snowplough has come to clear the small road from Bologna to Acquacanina, forming high white embankments to the left and right. Three grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), pack mates, stroll quietly and unquietly along the salty pavement. A few minutes later, someone in his car will find them sprawled on the asphalt in his headlights: 2 dead, the third in agony. At first, the

park manager relays to news networks that this was an accidental collision. "In the park [700 km²] we have to limit speeds and be attentive, unexpected encounters are always possible, we can't ask animals to obey traffic regulations..." Two days later, the truth came out: a large rancher (the kind who drives around in his 4x4 with a shotgun just in case) chased the 3 wolves for several hundred meters, targeting them in his headlights, and eventually struck them with the bull bar of his truck.

Cronache Maceratesi, January 24, 2023; Il Resto del Carlino, January 25, 2023; Vivere Urbino, January 26, 2023.¹⁶

End of January 2023

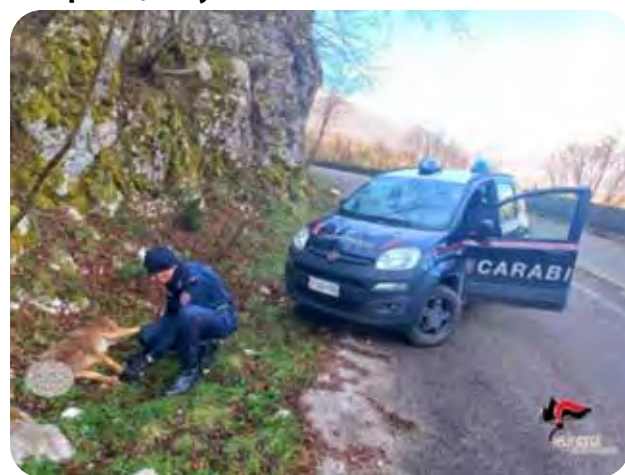
Aspromonte National Park, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

This marks the 4th region to mourn the death of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) in January 2023. The body was discovered by hikers in the park (640 km²), lying beside a dirt track with a hole in its side, not a drop of blood around it. According to anti-poaching volunteers from the Adorno group, the wolf was killed elsewhere and transported here to hide him from public view. It was the Adorno group that revealed the crime; park management kept quiet.

Gruppo Adorno ODV Volontari Antibracconaggio, January 30, 2023; LaC News24, January 30, 2023.¹⁷

Beginning of February 2023

Cusano Mutri, Province of Benevento, Region of Campania, Italy



This is the 5th Italian region to mourn the death of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) since the start of the year. The wolf was on the side of the road, still in the simulacrum of a road accident. She had 3 bullets in her hide.

Il Messaggero, February 7, 2023.¹⁸

February 16, 2023

Nago-Torbole, Autonomous Province of Trento, Region of Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy

During the pre-election period, all parties are fighting. The word "poaching" is taboo.

This marks the 6th region to mourn the death of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). A veterinary inspection revealed that this wolf fell victim to a firearm. Officially, this marks the first time a wolf in Trentino died by firearm since their return 13 years ago. Still, in 2019, a decapitated wolf with his paws amputated was thrown into a river; in 2020 a wolf was poisoned in the Lavazè valley, and in December 2022, a wolf was spotted by several people limping from a trap or bullet wound ("On the Trail" n°38 p.72).

Autonomous Province of Trento, February 16 and 17, 2023; Il Dolomiti, February 17 and 18, 2023.¹⁹



Sunday February 19, 2023

Valfurva, Province of Sondrio, Region of Lombardy, Italy

A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), more or less 2 years old, had a large-caliber bullet pierce through his body, from left to right flank. The corpse was found at an intersection. Wolf killers often have a clear desire to flaunt their crimes and raise tensions between anti-wolf and pro-wolf advocates.

Animali e ambiente nel cuore, February 21, 2023; La Provincia di Sondrio, February 21, 2023.²⁰

NORWAY

February 7, 2023

Våler, Eastern Norway Region, Norway

Just 150 km from Oslo, Norway's capital, a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) became the subject of guerrilla warfare, both legal and on the ground. In Våler, a wolf hunt commenced February 10 instead of January 1, the delay caused by appeals from the NGO NOAH, which bravely defends wolves in court (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.72). In 13 minutes, 4 wolves were shot. In addition, a wolf was pursued by a pack of 60 hunters. Three fines of 12,000 to 15,000 kroner (1,085 to 1,360 US\$) were imposed on the hunt's 3 leaders. Their hunting rights were suspended for 2 years, and they may not carry or transport a weapon during this time. The SNO (Statens naturoppsyn, Nature Inspectorate) notes that the she-wolf was shot in violation of the Animal Welfare Act, Article 3. "It was a slaughter and not a legal hunt."

Dagsavisen, February 16 and June 5, 2023; Nationen, February 21, 2023.²¹



POLAND

January 24, 2023

Adamowo, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland

A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was pinned to the ground for 2 days by the rope of a snare that compressed his lower abdomen. He struggled for 48 hours, digging a trench with his paws. His groans finally caught the attention of people in the neighbouring village. The wolf was freed from the noose at 6 p.m. and thereafter escorted to a rescue center in Bielsko-Biała (Silesian Voivodeship), 430 km from Adamowo. The diagnosis is relatively optimistic. He is a cub, around 9 months old. Care must be effective and quick if he is to be released without being imprinted by human activities. The NGO Wilk ("Wolf"), the veterinary practice Vet-House and caretakers from Warsaw Zoo were involved in the rescue. The trapper is wanted by the police.

Association for Nature "Wolf", January 25, 2023; Codziennik Mławski, January 25, 2023; Polish Police, January 25, 2023.²²



February 1, 2023

Trawica, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

A 3-year-old grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) spent several hours in agony. A rifle bullet struck the wolf in the middle of the night, near a private property located within the confines of a hunting club. The wolf was rushed to a Koszalin veterinary clinic. Police, forest rangers and the Larus Foundation assisted in the rescue attempt. At 8:00, the wolf was raising his head, but an hour later, he was inert.

Association for Nature "Wolf", February 1, 2023.²³

ROMANIA

January 1, 2023

Ibănești, Mureș County, Romania

Members of Asociația Valori Superioare discover a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) strangled to death in a trap in the Gurghiu Mountains in the Carpathian Mountains. On the same day, they reported to the gendarmerie the presence of a brown bear cub (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) desperately trying to free himself from a trap. The association also fights against illegal deforestation.

Mihai Gotiu, January 1, 2023.²⁴



SWITZERLAND

January 23, 2023

Canton of Vaud, Switzerland

The canton of Vaud announced in a press release that, according to DNA analyses, the 2 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) shot in November 2022 by wildlife wardens were a spring-born female cub from the Marchairuz pack and the breeding male from the same pack. The death of the male, known as "Gros Pépère" (Big Old Guy), sparked outrage among the Swiss Wolf Group, which advocates for large carnivores in French-speaking Switzerland. Gros Pépère was not known as a wolf that attacks sheep, and his shooting at Le Brassus, near the French Jura border, violated the Wolf plan enacted by the Federal Office for the Environment. One of the plan's objectives is to protect the breeding stock. The embarrassing press release from the canton of Vaud announced a reinforced commitment to "monitor" the Marchairuz and Risoud packs; a breeding female from the Risoud pack was killed in September 2022 by a wolf warden as she ventured into the French Jura.

Modification of the law on wolf regulation shots in Switzerland, see "On the Trail" n°38 p.74.

State of Vaud, January 23 and September 19 2023; Avenir Loup Lynx Jura, January 25 2023; 24 heures (Switzerland), January 27 2023; SWI swissinfo.ch, February 20 2023.²⁵





Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*). Photo Gregoire Dubois

AMERICA

CANADA

Beginning of February 2023 Fernie, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Chicken farmer Dax McHarg was fined 15,152 \$ (11,370 US\$), banned from hunting for 10 years and ordered to perform 100 hours of community service for killing a grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*, Appendix II) and her cub in October 2021, decapitating them and amputating their paws, keeping the trophies at home, and burying the bodies on his property. CBC/Radio-Canada, February 10, 2023; British Columbia Conservation Officer Service, February 10, 2023.¹



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January, February and April 6, 2023 Yakima, State of Washington, United States of America

Jeremy Allan Hunter was sentenced to 3 months in prison for wildlife trafficking and 3 months for possessing an undeclared weapon, a .410 Rossi rifle. He had tried to sell an American black bear skull (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) (100 US\$) and another skull painted gold (250 US\$) over Facebook. The 2 sentences are combined. Authorities seized the golden skull, the skull and jaws belonging to an elk (*Cervus canadensis*) from a freezer inside his home. Yakima Herald-Republic, February 6 and April 13, 2023.²



January 2023 Roscommon, State of Michigan, United States of America

The poacher had placed his bait for American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) 31 days before the authorized date, which lead to a 515 US\$ fine and the seizure of 2 cell phones. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, January 21, 2023.³



January 4, 2023

Little Falls, State of Minnesota, United States of America

Michael J. Thielen was sentenced to 2 years of probation, 800 US\$ in restitution to the State, 685 US\$ in fines and penalties, confiscation of his 700-800 US\$ firearm, and the loss of hunting privileges in every US State except Hawaii and Massachusetts. He killed an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in his backyard one night in July 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.78).

Star Tribune, January 5, 2023.⁴



February 2023

State of Oregon, United States of America

A hunter has been sentenced to a 5-year suspension of his hunting licence, 24 months' probation and 200 hours' community service for placing bait in September 2020 and July 2021 to attract American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), a practice banned in Oregon.

Oregon State Police, February 2023.⁵



ASIA

BANGLADESH

Night of January 20-21, 2023

Chakaria Upazila, Cox's Bazar District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

While awaiting an arrangement with correspondents in India, Dipok Das kept 2 Asian black bear cubs (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), up to 2 months old, smuggled from Myanmar, in captivity. The cubs were placed in the Gazipur Zoo.

New Age, January 22, 2023.⁶

CHINA

Beginning of January 2023

Manzhouli Station, Hulunbuir Prefecture, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Border with Russia.

At a railway border crossing, a man from Russia hid in his pants 2 bear gall bladders (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II), which he claimed were meant to treat his parents, and 4 bear teeth, which he intended to "offer" to friends. He bought the whole lot in Zabaykalsky for 215 US\$.

Yantai Police, January 17, 2023.⁷

INDONESIA

Beginning of February 2023

Mekar Makmur, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Two Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) caught in 2 nylon traps on a plantation met opposite fates. The female bear was released shortly after her rescue, suffering only bruising. The male, on the other hand, had a paw amputated on the spot before being freed. He was evacuated to Bukit Mas and placed under the care of the SRA (Sumatra Rescue Alliance). Four men are suspected, including Harjo Syahputra, the foreman of the oil palm plantation where 29 active nylon traps were spotted by Mount Leuser National Park rangers and volunteers.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, February 15, 2023.⁸

MONGOLIA

January 2, 2023

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Seizure from B., aged 44, in Baganaur district, of 2 skins and a head of brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I in Mongolia), skins of cervids (family Cervidae) including Eurasian elk (*Alces alces*) and heads of wild boar (*Sus scrofa*).

iSee.mn, January 6, 2023.⁹

VIET NAM

February 22, 2023

Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam

Five Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) were held in captivity inside a house for 20 years. They were kept in separate cages and suffered from alopecia and dermatitis. Bile trafficking is suspected. They were handed over to authorities by the family, thus avoiding prosecution. The bears were handed over to AAF (Animals Asia Foundation) who, after observation, quarantine and recovery, will be able to return the bears to semi-liberty in their sanctuary for crippled bears. It is estimated that there are still over 100 captive bears in Hanoi, most of them subject to bile extraction.

VnExpress International, February 22, 2023.¹⁰

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Beginning of January 2023 Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Someone tried to sell a hibernating brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) den 200 km from Krasnoyarsk on social networks. The seller claims to have all the necessary information, in particular geolocation. This invitation to hunt brown bears has been withdrawn.

Prospekt Mira, January 10, 2023; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Krasnoyarsk, January 11, 2023.¹¹



The den for sale !

January 27, 2023 Velizhsky State Reserve, Smolensk Oblast, Russia

A brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was shot. The shooter is being sought. Damage to the State is estimated at 448,500 roubles (6,575 US\$). The Velizhsky reserve was created to "protect local game populations", in particular European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), and contribute to the development of hunting in the region. It covers more than 250 km².

SmolNarod.ru, February 1, 2023.¹²

Beginning of February 2023 Khandagayty Border Post, Republic of Tuva, Russia. Border with Mongolia.

Carefully hidden in the glove compartment, the brown bear paw (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was nevertheless discovered by customs officials. The 46-year-old woman, who said she had nothing to declare, returned to Mongolia without her amulet.

TuvaMediaGroup, February 3, 2023.¹³



February 3, 2023

Maysky District, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, Russia

After a 2-year investigation, police have identified those responsible for poaching 2 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), a European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and a sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) - an exotic species deliberately introduced between 1968 and 1985 - near Lashkuta, Elbrusky district. The area is now home to a small but stable population of sika deer, sustained by those that escape local breeding farms. Police seized 6 firearms and 1,200 rounds of ammunition from the 2 suspects. Until they are summoned to court in the neighbouring Elbrusky district, they are under house arrest in the Maysky district, roughly 100 km from the Georgia border. Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, February 3, 2023.¹⁴

SWITZERLAND

January 9, 2023

Boncourt Border Post, Canton of Jura, Switzerland. Border with France.



A 61-year-old Swiss national returned from France with the scalp of an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in his trunk. His "gift" was confiscated.

Federal Office of Customs and Border Security, January 12, 2023.¹⁵

GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, SAIGA ANTELOPES, NILGAIS, URIALS, ARGALIS, IBEXES ...



Arabian gazelle (*Gazella arabica*). Photo Ahmed Almansoori

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 2023

Chicago O'Hare International Airport, State of Illinois, United States of America

Seizure in a parcel from the Republic of Congo of 13.6 kg of presumed legs, hooves, bones and skin fragments of duiker (subfamily Cephalophinae) or steenbok (*Raphicerus campestris*). There are 3 duiker species in the Congo listed in CITES Appendix II: the bay duiker (*Cephalophus dorsalis*), the yellow-backed duiker (*Cephalophus silvicultor*), and the blue duiker (*Philantomba monticola*).

US Customs and Border Protection, February 13, 2023.¹

ASIA

INDIA

January 17, 2023

Tembhri and Kharda, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India



Dilip Narayan Mungale, Rahul Bhimrao Lokhande, Hemant Bisansing Chicham and Itwarisingh Dhansing Sayam had electrocuted a nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), hacked his meat with an axe and then feasted. An indiscretion reached the ears of the Forest Department, which came to arrest them. Bhaskarhindi.com, January 18, 2023; The Times of India, January 18, 2023.²

January 23, 2023

Mundghasa, Bundi District, State of Rajasthan, India

The discovery of the carcasses of 4 nilgais (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in a pasture on the outskirts of the village underlines the extent to which poaching of Asia's largest antelope is commonplace in the State. In this case a commission was to be set up to investigate nearby meat sellers. Their meat is highly prized and some believe it to have medicinal properties. According to a source in the Forest Department, "The blue bull population has dwindled alarmingly in non-protected areas. [...] Their hunting does not attract high penalties or severe punishments. In recent times, they have been killed at large scale in districts like Ganganagar, Bundi, Kota and others."

The Times of India, January 26, 2023.³

February 8, 2023

Ladampura, Bhind District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



The 5 nilgais (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) didn't stand a chance. Mukesh Rathore, a prominent farmer in the village, had connected the fences surrounding his fields to an electricity transformer. When he discovered the corpses, he rushed to dismantle his installation, but local residents reported him to the Forest Department and Mukesh Rathore fled. The increasing number of electrocution of protected animals (tigers, elephants, etc.) by fences illegally installed around agricultural plots to protect them from wild boars (*Sus scrofa*) led the State of Madhya Pradesh in 2003 to authorise hunters to shoot animals attacking crops. But the operating conditions were so complicated that the regulation was never implemented. An amendment was proposed this year. Shooting authorisations would be transferred to the Forest Department.

The Times of India, February 10, 2023.⁴

IRAN

February 2023

Esfarayen, North Khorasan Province, Iran

At the home of a man suspected of poaching, police seized 8 kg of urial meat (*Ovis vignei*, Appendix I), 17 12-gauge cartridges and a wild bird.

Irib News Agency, February 14, 2023.⁵

February 2023

Chah Nasar, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran



Acting on alerts from the village of Shah Nasar, officials raided a poacher's home and seized 2 urial skulls (*Ovis vignei*, Appendix I) and a head, along with a sniper rifle and fishing nets. The administrative fine was set at 250 million rials (5,950 US\$). Trial to follow.

Tasnim News Agency, February 16, 2023.⁶

KAZAKHTAN

January 3 and March 23, 2023

Karatal District, Jetisu Region, Kazakhstan



- A 4x4 was intercepted by police officers and agents from Ok-hotzooprom, the State wildlife protection service. The 4 men on board, residents of the neighbouring oblys of Almaty, were in possession of 2 rifles and 3 decapitated goitered gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*).

- The poachers were sentenced to 3 years' restricted freedom and a 5-year hunting ban. They must also pay 18.6 million tenge (41,420 US\$) in damages, 48,000 tenge (105 US\$) in legal costs and 276,000 tenge (615 US\$) to the national victims' fund.

Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 4, 2023; Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 3 and March 24, 2023.⁷



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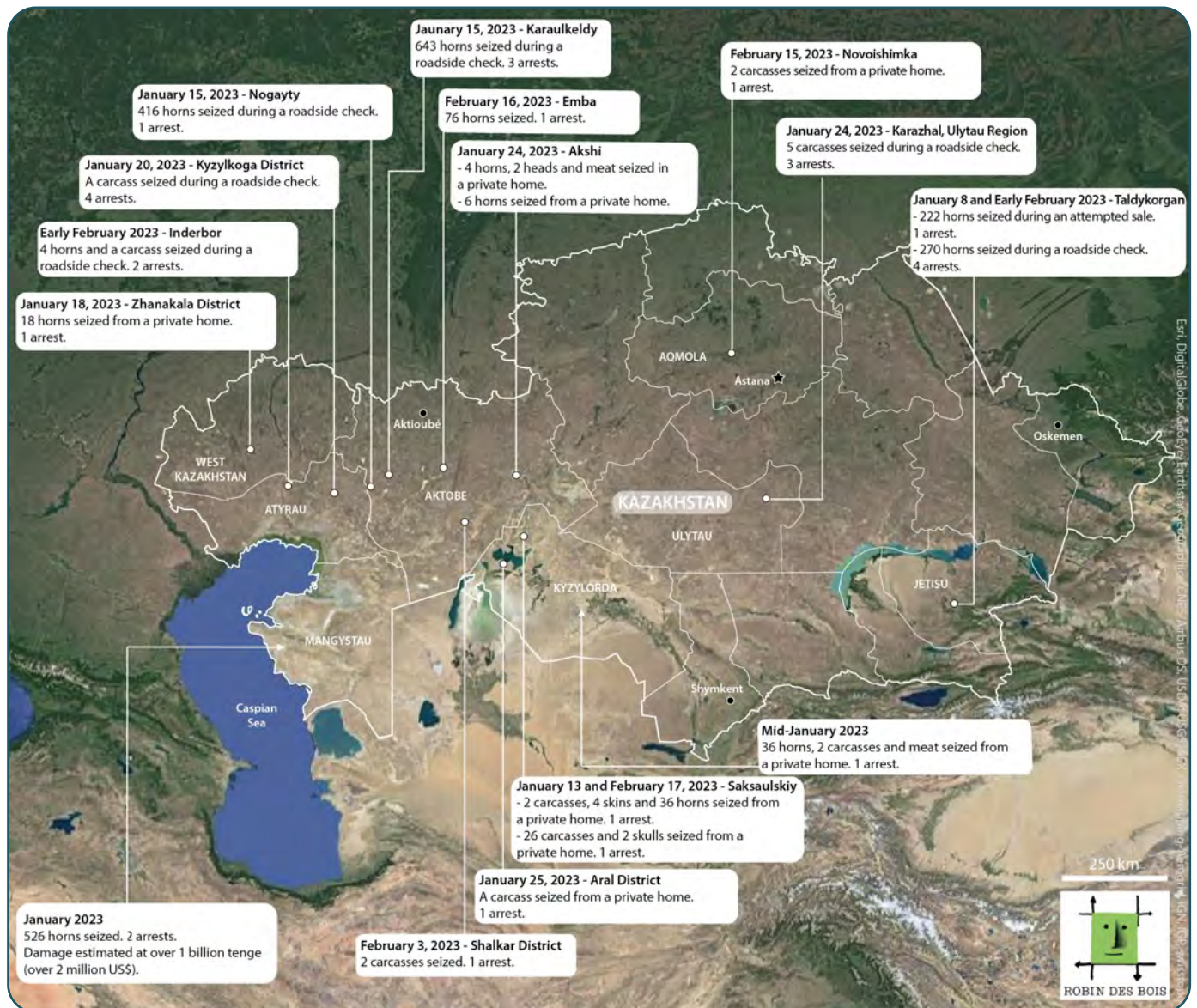
End of January 2023

Sozak District, Turkistan Region, Kazakhstan

Two private homes were searched as part of the fight against religious extremism. Two undeclared firearms, ammunition, narcotics and prayer books were seized by the police, as well as meat, horns and heads of Altai argali (*Ovis ammon*, Appendix II). Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 23, 2023.⁸

KAZAKHSTAN

Seizure of horns (2,257), carcasses (44), skins and meat of saiga antelope between January 1 and February 28, 2023



Saiga (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II)

Sources, see page 190



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Early February 2023
Taldykorgan, Jetisu Region



© Комитет лесного хозяйства и животного мира

January 18, 2023. Zhanakala District, West Kazakhstan Region



© МАТІР РК

February 15, 2023
Novoishimka, Aqmola Region



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February 16, 2023
Emba, Aktobe Region



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January 2023
Mangystau Region



© polisia.kz

February 3, 2023
Shalkar District, Aktobe Region

KYRGYZSTAN

Mid-January 2023

Ak-Suu District, Issyk-Kul Region, Kyrgyzstan

There was a dead Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the Toyota Land Cruiser. A.A.T. fined 100,000 soms (1165 US\$).

AKIpress News Agency, January 18, 2023; Kaktus, January 18, 2023.⁹



Mid-February 2023

Osh Region, Kyrgyzstan

Sh. A., aged 50, was fined 100,000 soms (1,160 US\$). This resident of the Nookat district was arrested on December 28, 2022, while driving back the 3 Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) he had just killed in the Kadamjay district (Batken province), 80 km away.

NazarNews TV, February 18, 2023.¹⁰



MONGOLIA

Beginning of February 2023

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Chinese national charged with trafficking goitered gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*) horns.

Prosecutor General's Office of Mongolia, February 13, 2023.¹¹

Mid-February 2023

Khanbogd District, Ömnögovi Aimag, Mongolia

In July 2022, E.E., a national of Mongolia, A.A, S.I, A.M, A.N, A.Kh, nationals of Saudi Arabia, and A.A, a national of Jordan, had shot 2 goitered gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*), a male and a female, without a permit. E.E. was fined 5.4 million tugriks (1,560 US\$), A.A. was fined 15 million tugriks (4,330 US\$) and the 5 Saudi Arabia nationals were each fined 12 million tugriks (3,460 US\$). The 7 poachers must also jointly pay 7.4 million tugriks in ecological damages and 39.5 million tugriks (11,400 US\$) corresponding to the value of the 2 vehicles that contributed to the poaching.

GoGo Mongolia, February 13, 2023; iSee.mn, February 13, 2023.¹²



End of February 2023

Jargalan District, Govi-Altai Aimag, Mongolia

A. charged with poaching and transporting a goitered gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*).

Prosecutor General's Office of Mongolia, February 27, 2023.¹³

UZBEKISTAN

January 26, 2023

South Ustyurt National Park, Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan

Arrest of J. Ye. and M.I. Seizure of 13 dead goitered gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*), a shotgun and 35 rounds of ammunition. Ecological damage estimated at 195 million soums or 17,460 US\$.

Goitre gazelle poaching in the South Uttarakhand National Park, see "On the Trail" No. 33, p.115.

Ministry of Natural Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan, January 26, 2023; Republic of Karakalpakstan Prosecutor's Office, January 27, 2023.¹⁴

SULTANATE OF OMAN

February 2023

Ash Sharqiyah South Governorate, Sultanate of Oman

Authorities arrested 3 poachers who killed several Arabian gazelles (*Gazella arabica*), a species endemic to the Sultanate and now threatened with extinction. Poaching or smuggling wild animals such as the Arabian oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*, Appendix I), Arabian leopards (*Panthera pardus nimr*, Appendix I), caracals (*Caracal caracal*, Appendix I), houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I), striped hyenas (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan), Arabian tahrs (*Hemitragus jayakari*), sand gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa marica*), Nubian ibex (*Capra nubiana*) and Arabian gazelles is punishable by a prison sentence of 6 months to 5 years.

Arabian gazelles in the Sultanate of Oman, see "On the Trail" n°33 p. 115.

Muscat Daily, February 23, 2023.¹⁵

TURKIYE

January 2023

Sarikaya National Park, Antalya Province, Türkiye

Two suspects who had previously evaded authorities by wearing balaclavas during their national park incursions were finally caught red-handed and arrested, thanks to National Parks agents and police. Surprised by their presence in the park, the suspects pretended to be mushroom pickers. In their bags were axes, binoculars, an assortment of 2 rifles with magazines and knives, some of which were stained with blood. Genetic analysis is currently underway to confirm that the blood is that of wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Pending an outcome to the investigation and trial, an administrative fine of 45,000 lire (2,400 US\$) has been imposed.

Hurriyet.com.tr, January 31, 2023.¹⁶



January 25, 2023

Near Hasangazi, Tunceli Province, Türkiye

After a nature photographer alerted authorities, they recovered the body of a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) on the side of a road. The necropsy showed that he had been riddled with bullets.

TRT HABER, January 25, 2023.¹⁷

January 28, 2023

Baylık, Tunceli Province, Türkiye

Officials arrested 4 poachers who arrived 2 days before to kill a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Wild goats are protected by national law, by Appendix III of CITES and by the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, to which Türkiye is a signatory, and listed by the IUCN as endangered. Traces of the victim's blood led investigators to the poachers' homes in the village of Baylık.

Cumhuriyet, January 30, 2023.¹⁸

EUROPE

RUSSIA

January 13, 2023

Kamyshinsky District, Volgograd Oblast, Russia



A truck intercepted on the R-228 highway came from Saratov and was heading for Elista in Kalmykia (560 km). Inside were 19 boxes filled with 1,500 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). Komsomolskaya Pravda Volgograd, January 14, 2023.¹⁹

February 1, 2023

Simferopol, Republic of Crimea



Crimean customs handed over the horns of 2 Altai argali (*Ovis ammon*, Appendix II), a male and a female, to Crimean University's Morphology Division. They seized the horns from a Russian citizen's luggage. In 2021 he tried smuggling them into Ukraine.

Crimea News, February 2, 2023; RIA Novosti Crimea, February 2, 2023.²⁰

Beginning of February 2023

Pallasovsky District, Volgograd Oblast, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.

A shepherd spotted a small herd of saiga antelopes (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) on the steppe and saw it as a godsend. He chased them on his motorcycle until the exhausted antelopes fell into a ravine. Those still breathing were slaughtered by the poacher, and 10 pairs of horns were seized from his home. The damage to nature is estimated at one million roubles (14,400 US\$), or 100,000 roubles (1,440 US\$) per animal.

Riac34, February 10, 2023.²¹

February 22, 2023

Pallassovka, Volgograd Oblast, Russia

In April 2022, 2 farm workers freed a saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) entangled in a fence. They then transported him on their quad bike and killed him in a shed for later consumption. They pleaded guilty and paid 300,000 roubles (4,315 US\$) in damages. The court sentenced them to 5 years in prison, with 2.5 years of probation (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.88). Volgograd Oblast Prosecutor's Office, February 22, 2023.²²



End of February 2023

Burachky Border Post, Pskov Oblast, Russia. Border with Latvia.

196 horns (40 kg) of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) seized from a Moldavian national leaving Russia.

Vluki.ru, February 28, 2023.²³



Reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*). Photo Ad Konings

AFRICA

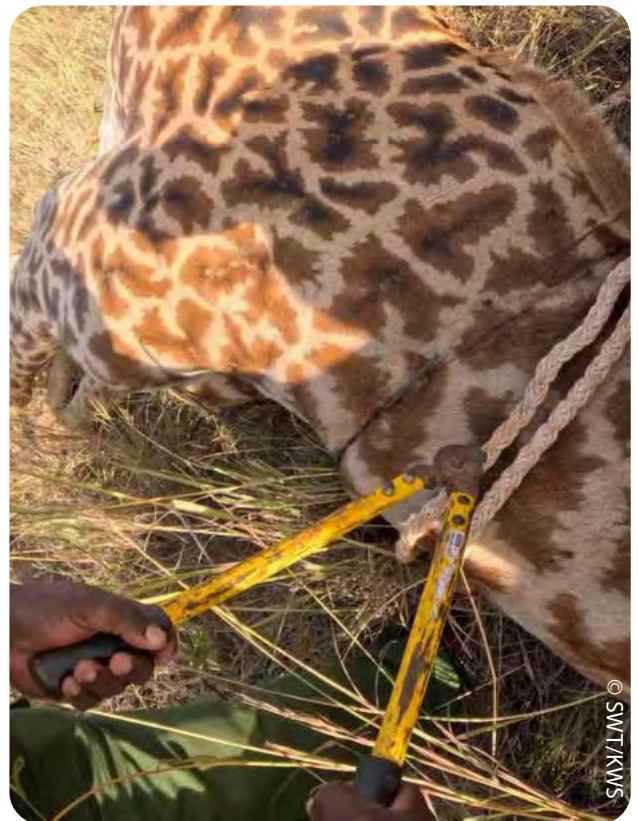
KENYA

January to March 2023

Kenya

Many giraffes fall victim to traps, getting captured by the leg or neck. Twelve post-operative diagnoses were favourable. These included 2 reticulated giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*) and 3 Masai giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis tippelskirchi*). One giraffe was found dead with a deep cut on his left hind leg caused by a "sharp projectile". Another, with a spear embedded in his side for several days, died before the medical team arrived. An adult female giraffe with front and hind leg injuries resisted anaesthetics, escaped the care team and drowned in a lake. Her body was recovered and buried.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, January, February and March 2023; SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, January and February 2023; SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, January and February 2023; SWT/KWS Sky Vet program, October 2022 to January 2023; SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2023; SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2023.¹



January 12, 14 and 15, 2023
Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya



Giraffe anti-poaching actions:

- Unsuccessful attempt to treat a giraffe wounded by a spear. He escaped the rangers.
- Discovery of a dead giraffe carcass in a trap.
- Discovery of the skinned carcass of a giraffe. The suspects fled on motorcycles with the meat.

Big Life Foundation, January 2023.²

February 1, 2023
Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

The carcass of a giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II) killed by poachers is reported to the rangers. When they arrived at the scene of the crime, they discovered 3 bags of zebra meat (genus *Equus*, Grevy's zebra, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya).

Big Life Foundation, February 2023.³

February 4, 6, 15, 16 and 24, 2023
Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

A sad toll for the month of February:

- An adult giraffe killed. The culprits left by motorcycle for Tanzania.
- A giraffe carcass butchered 2 days ago. The poachers fled by motorcycle.

- A giraffe carcass. He died after being wounded by a spear to the left hind leg.
 - A man is arrested with 40 kg of meat taken from the carcass of a male giraffe.
 - Another giraffe carcass butchered. The 3 suspects escaped by motorcycle.
- Big Life Foundation, February 2023.⁴

TANZANIA

February 14, 2023
Minjingu, Manyara Region, Tanzania

Kipara, 19, and Richard, 23, were about to skin and butcher a poached giraffe. They were arrested, and 2 accomplices fled the scene. Giraffe meat sells for between 5,000 and 10,000 shillings/kg, or between 2-4 US\$/kg in Magugu (43,300 inhabitants) 40 km from Minjingu. TAWA (Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority) and rangers of the Burunge protected area, between the Tarangire and Manyara National Parks, led this intervention. In the wildlife corridor, 200 families have settled illegally, some of them engaging in invasive agricultural activities.

The Guardian (Tanzania), February 24, 2023.⁵

ZEBRAS AND DONKEYS

AFRICA

KENYA

January to March 2023
Kenya



The Covid-19 pandemic saw a proliferation in the number of traps to supply urban cities, the markets of which were closed down. The savannah is infested, and both zebras (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) and giraffes are suffering. Five have received favourable post-operative prognoses. One female, however, received a very unfavourable prognosis after getting strangled by a trap and her left hind hoof torn off by another trap. She was treated and extricated, but even if she recovers, she will be easy prey for lions and other carnivores. A male is also of great concern. He has been spotted in the middle of a herd of hartebeests. He has been wearing a trap around his neck for several days. Authorities have been unable to approach and anaesthetise him due to the rugged terrain and his fierce behavior.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2023; SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2023; SWT/KWS Sky Vet program, October 2022 to January 2023.¹



January 1, 8, 14 and 26, 2023

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Report on anti-poaching actions for zebras (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) in January:

- Discovery of the carcass of a zebra killed by poachers.
- Attempt to rescue a zebra wounded by a spear to the left hind leg.
- Arrest of 2 suspects in possession of an unspecified quantity of zebra meat.
- Arrest of a suspect in possession of 400 kg of zebra meat.

Big Life Foundation, January 2023.²

February 9 and 26, 2023

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

- Discovery of a zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) killed by a spear.
 - Discovery of a zebra killed by a poisoned arrow.
- Big Life Foundation, February 2023.³



February 12, 2023

Machakos, Machakos County, Kenya

Massacre of 4 zebras (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) in Machakos (population 64,000). During the Covid period and the closure of the traditional food markets, urban dwellers got into the habit of taking meat from the wild animal commons, a habit but also a windfall for the meat merchants. When KWS officers arrived on the scene, they found bones, offal and blood. The Star (Kenya), February 13, 2023.⁴

February 22, 2023

Rwasumali, Kiambu County, Kenya

Clandestine slaughterhouse on a 5-hectare plot. Discovery of 30 fresh donkey carcasses. The trucks used to transport the meat were seized. The meat was sold in Kiambu (population 148,000) and in the neighbouring county of Nairobi or by the roadside under the name of beef and in the form of mutura, supu and matumbo, local delicacies. Nothing was wasted: the hides were sold to the Chinese.

Donkeys in Kenya, cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p.98, n°16 p.111, n°17 p.125, n°18 p.121, n°19 p.131, n°20 p.130, n°21 p.122, n°22 p.125, n°25 p.121, n°28 p.135 and n°33 p.120.

Directorate of Criminal Investigations (Kenya), February 22, 2023; NTV (Kenya), February 22, 2023; The Star (Kenya), February 23, 2023.⁵



MALI

January 28, 2023

Kati, Koulikoro Region, Mali

Mali Actu sums up the case as follows: "It was following various denunciations that Divisional Commissioner Sory Ibrahima Sangaré put his research brigade on the case. Police Lieutenant Bourama Toulema, alias 'Zote', investigated the case promptly and meticulously with the aim of catching these people, who could be described as 'public dangers'. And it didn't take long, because with determination, professionalism and experience, the said BR chief and his men were able to locate and arrest 5 people, on January 28, 2023, in the middle of the day, at around 2 p.m. in a house in Kati which they use as a slaughterhouse, as they were caught clandestinely slaughtering a dozen donkeys after having stolen them". The 5 suspects, known by the initials B.C, A.C, L.C, B.C, and A.Co, are also motorbike taxi drivers, farmers or workers. They sold donkey meat on the markets under other names.

Mali Actu, February 13, 2023.⁶

NIGERIA

February 2, 2023

Seme Border Post, Lagos State, Nigeria. Border with Benin.

The Seme border customs commander outlined the seizures made in January, highlighting 6 passports from the Republic of Malta bearing the photo of a single woman and 6 different names, an impressive stock of driving licences and passports from neighbouring countries, 6 million US\$ in counterfeit banknotes made in Nigeria and destined for Benin, and 550 donkey skins worth a total of 11 million naira, or 24,950 US\$ and 45 US\$ per skin.

"The significant of the seizure is that it shows how much our endangered species are being eroded by unpatriotic elements."

Nigerian Tribune, February 2, 2023.⁷



Grevy's zebra (*Equus grevyi*). Photo Roxie

BISONS, BANTENGs AND GAURS

ASIA

CAMBODIA

January 6, 2023
Phnom Aural Wildlife Sanctuary,
Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu
and Pursat Provinces, Cambodia



© Wildlife Crime Hotline

A 6-month-old female gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) was rescued by rangers, Wildlife Alliance members, local community members and a veterinarian. The unfortunate animal had been trapped for several days before she managed to extricate herself, tearing off part of her leg in the process. When local guides found her unconscious in the middle of the forest, they immediately raised the alarm. Despite being transferred in a stretcher (20 hours in total, including 4 hours on foot in the middle of the forest) to the Phnom Tamao rescue centre and treated, she died 2 days later. The scourge of traps continues to claim victims.

Wildlife Crime Hotline, January 9, 2023; Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, January 12, 2023.¹

January 22, 2023
Kork Sompur, Oddar Meanchey
Province, Cambodia. Border with
Thailand.



An adult female banteng (*Bos javanicus*) hides in a cashew plantation. She limps and lies down. The monks and lay people of the Sorng Rukhavorn community forest alerted the PTWRC (Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre) and suspected that she had been caught in a trap and had managed to escape, but with injuries or fractures. After considering transporting her to the refuge 500 km away, the rescuers decided to tie her up by the horns and wait for the carers to arrive, given her weight (around 500 kg) and the difficulty of finding a means of transport quickly. On January 18, in Kampong Speu province, a male banteng died after being caught in a trap in a community forest.

The Phnom Penh Post, January 23, 2023.²

EUROPE

POLAND

January 8, 2023
Choszczno County, West Pomeranian
Voivodeship, Poland

A bullet in the neck with an entrance wound and an exit wound. Large calibre. The windpipe was pierced. The European bison (*Bison bonasus*) was in great shape at the age of 6. In 6 months, 6 bison were poached (cf. "On the Trail" n°37 p.90 and n°38 p.94). The murder took place on a private hunting concession where 16 Belgian hunters had come to feast. Another shooting error, a bison mistaken for a wild boar. The Rogacz Stargard hunting society says it wants to get to the bottom of the matter by giving the police the names and contact details of the foreign hunters. Will the dead bison trigger international arrest warrants for the blind as a bat Belgians?

Zachodniopomorskie Towarzystwo Przyrodnicze - Dzika Zagroda, January 9, 2023; Kurier Szczeciński, January 10, 2023.³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 23, 2023

Lębork, Pomeranian Voivodeship,
Poland



The executioner of the European bison (*Bison bonasus*), Remigiusz Ciunczyk, is sentenced to one year and 5 months in prison, ordered to pay 15,000 zlotys (3,410 US\$) in damages to the West Pomeranian Society for the Protection of Nature, suspended from driving for 2 years, and ordered to pay 28,900 zlotys (6,570 US\$) jointly with Przemysław Jr. to the Pomeranian Voivodeship. The latter was given a one-year suspended prison sentence with 3 years' probation for helping to decapitate the bison and for arms trafficking. Przemysław Sr. was sentenced to 7 months' imprisonment suspended on 2 years' probation and fined 1,000 zlotys (225 US\$) for supplying weapons to Remigiusz Ciunczyk and his son. Andrzej S., the buffalo butcher, was also fined 1,000 zlotys. Remigiusz, an experienced hunter despite his age (22 at the time of the incident), claims to have mistaken the bison for a wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.119). Dziennik Bałtycki, January 23, 2023; Kurier Szczeciński, January 23, 2023; Super Express, January 23, 2023.⁴



© Robert Gębalski

"Spud" (potato) took centre stage, stuffed, in his killer's house

MUSK DEER, DEER, ELK, FALLOW DEER...



Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*). Photo Vladimir Yu. Arkhipov

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 11, 2023

Eaton, State of Indiana, United States of America

Arrest for theft of taxidermist Shawn Huntington. He was taking in 400-500 US\$ to process white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) skins, heads or capes but was no longer returning the "finished products" to hunters, even though until 2020 he had a reputation for returning "good work" after a year at the most.

Alerted by customers, agents from the IDNR (Indiana Department of Natural Resources) knocked on his door and he had to open up to them, even though he always played dead when confronted with requests from hunters by phone, email or surprise visit. In his home and Buck Fever Taxidermy, the agents found a rack full of skulls and antlers and 3 freezers full of stinking skins covered in ice.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources, January 11, 2023; Outdoor Life, January 13, 2023.¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 12, 2023

Omaha, State of Nebraska, United States of America

The Bowmar couple met 10 years ago in a bodybuilding contest, and since then they have pursued an arduous career together as youtubers showing off their archery exploits on white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), with smiles always sponsored by the best toothpaste brands. Their video of poaching an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with a spear equipped with a GoPro have made them both famous and notorious.

They supplement their lifestyle with an eponymous brand of adulterated food supplements and have been sued and set fire to the vicinity of their estate in Ohio by burning green waste on a very dry and windy day.

Josh and Sarah Bowmar and Bowmar Bowhunting LLC are going through a rough patch at the start of this year: 3 fines of 25,000 US\$, 44,000 US\$ to be paid jointly and severally to avoid seizure of assets, 13,000 US\$ in restitution to the State of Nebraska and for each of them 40 hours of community service and 3 years' probation during which they are banned from hunting in Nebraska. .../...





In 2015, 2016 and 2017, the Bowmars took part in around 15 hunting parties organised near Broken Bow, Nebraska, by Hidden Hills Outfitters, which supplies guns and guides, bullets, tents and other survival accessories to wealthy hunters. The Bowmars are among 30 convicts who were fined a total of nearly 800,000 US\$ in fines, 30 months in prison, 47 years' probation and 72 years' ban or restriction on hunting rights for killing around a hundred wild animals, including deer and pronghorns (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico) after luring them with bait, with prohibited weapons and ammunition, out of season, or by shooting at fleeing deer from their 4x4s and other all-terrain vehicles, and for also illegally transporting trophies out of Nebraska.

Thirteen others escaped justice by handing over their illegal hunting trophies to the authorities through out-of-court proceedings. The pro-hunting media have come to the Bowmar's defence, saying that they were in the wrong places at the wrong times, that they set up 'Kids in the Outdoors', which teaches urban children to bow hunt and fish, and that they take part in the Dallas Safari Club's anti-poaching campaigns.

Bowmar, see "On the Trail" n°31 p.90.

Hidden Hills Outfitters, see for example "On the Trail" n°30 p.158 and n°31 p.90.

Des Moines Register, January 13, 2023; U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Nebraska, January 19, 2023; Red Lake Nation News, January 26, 2023; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, February 2023.²

**Between January 12 and 14, 2023
Springfield, State of Illinois, United States of America**



This magnificent double drop tine white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was found decapitated in a small wood at the intersection of University Drive and West Lake Shore Drive. He was shot with a crossbow from the junction between the evening of Thursday January 12 and the morning of Saturday January 14, according to officers from the Department of Natural Resources. An appeal for witnesses has been launched.

Illinois Conservation Police, January 24, 2023.³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 26, 2023

Jordan, State of Montana, United States of America



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks tells all about a gang of buddies, father and son who poached in Garfield County. It all started in 2015 in Missouri 2,000 km away in a fuel pump during an unannounced control of a car and after the discovery in the skip of 7 hunting trophies that the driver, a certain Cole Lawson III, claimed to be transporting to South Carolina 1,400 km away on behalf of other hunters.

In fact, the investigation proved that between 2013 and 2017, he had killed 2 pronghorns (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico), 2 elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and 3 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) without a licence. Lawson III was ordered to pay 9,375 US\$ in restitution to the State of Montana and was banned from hunting for 10 years.

Cole Lawson IV, his son, was sentenced to 500 US\$ in restitution and a 6-month suspended prison sentence for poaching a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in 2017. .../...

Jack Lawson, brother of Cole Lawson IV, was sentenced to 1,035 US\$ in restitution, a 6-month suspended prison sentence and the loss of his hunting privileges for one year.

Jason Bunker was sentenced to 8,000 US\$ in restitution, a 6-month suspended prison sentence and a 2-year hunting ban for poaching an elk and a wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) in 2017 and 2019. Brothers Shawn and Daniel Ervin were sentenced to 3,300 US\$ in restitution for poaching a white-tailed deer, female mule deer and common goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*).

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, January 26, 2023.⁴



Bucephala clangula

Beginning of February 2023

Adams County, State of Illinois, United States of America

Poaching of an 11-point white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in November 2022. The antlers were spotted at a taxidermist's by Mr Blazinic, a police officer from the Department of Natural Resources. A summons has been issued to the suspect in Virginia and to one of his friends who obstructed the investigation.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, February 15, 2023.⁵

February 2023

Romulus, State of New York, United States of America

In November 2022, a hunter spotted a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) at a taxidermy shop, well known to the locals because of the unique shape of his antlers. Suspecting poaching, he alerted the authorities. The person responsible was identified and forced to admit that he had lured the animal with bait. The events had been filmed by trap cameras. The case was settled out of court: the culprit paid 650 US\$ and handed over the woods to the State.

Department of Environmental Conservation, March 15, 2023.⁶



February 7, 2023

Salmon, State of Idaho, United States of America



These exceptionally tall and wide antlers belonged to a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), the lord of the forest, who was shot dead with a rifle when only archery was permitted. The echoes of the shot alerted the archers and JT Johnson was quickly spotted. He was fined 2,100 US\$ and given 2 years' probation. The antlers were seized from his home. Idaho Fish and Game, February 28, 2023.⁷

February 11 and 15, 2023

Calcasieu Parish, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Michael Joseph Spell, 33, is cited for poaching 4 deer (genus *Odocoileus*) on private property in Sulphur and in the Tensas Wildlife Management Area and Brittany Pratt, 26, is cited for poaching a deer with Spell in autumn 2022. Seizure of 3 sets of antlers from Spell. Spell and Pratt face fines of between 250 and 500 US\$ and will have to pay back the value of the deer, up to 8,000 and 2,000 US\$ respectively.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, February 15, 2023.⁸

Sunday, February 12, 2023

Montpelier, State of Idaho, United States of America

The bull elk (*Cervus canadensis*) was last seen alive at around 8.45 a.m. on Sunday February 12 and was found dead in the early afternoon with his antlers and ivories removed. He had been shot with a firearm. His antlers were characterised by a club-shaped drop tine on one side. Members of the public are asked on a confidential basis to contact Citizens Against Poaching or Idaho Fish and Game if they have any information about these very special antlers.

Idaho Fish and Game, February 24, 2023.⁹

February 24, 2023

Hancock County, State of Illinois, United States of America

Conservation officer Wheatley spots the pick-up of a man he has arrested in the past in a ravine. In the trunk was a deer (family Cervidae) head of unknown origin. The poacher is issued a summons to appear in court.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, February 28, 2023.¹⁰

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 28, 2023

Sebring, State of Florida, United States of America

After the seizure of 21 sets of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) antlers, 156 pairs of wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) feet and 155 wild turkey "beards" from his home in Taylor County and a hunting camp in Lafayette County, Brent Hurst is charged with offences ranging from second-degree misdemeanours to third-degree felonies. He took his minor son with him on his poaching trips. The investigation to foil him lasted 2 years.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, March 1, 2023.¹¹

REPEATED OFFENCE

February 2023

Mount Vernon, State of Oregon, United States of America

Seizure of the antlered skull of a freshly poached elk (*Cervus canadensis*) from a multiple repeat offender banned from hunting for life.

Oregon State Police, February 2023.¹²

PERU

January 19, 2023

District of Pilcomayo, Province of Huancayo, Department of Junín, Peru

Rescue of a Peruvian guemal (*Hippocamelus antisensis*, Appendix I) by the Serfor (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre). He was tied to a post outside a house on the banks of the Río Cunas, at an altitude of more than 3,000 metres. The species' range extends across the Andes Mountains from Ecuador to Argentina. They live at altitudes of between 3,500 and 5,000 metres in small groups of 4 or 5. They are hunted by pumas and mountain foxes enjoy eating the fawns. They lose habitat at mid-altitude to crops and up there to domestic camelid herds. Their diet consists exclusively of vegetation gathered from rocks and stones. Their small antlers are of no major interest to hunters. Fawns are "kidnapped" or "adopted" after their parents have been poached. They are then sold as pets or raised to adulthood to be sold to butchers allied with tanners. In Peru they are known as taruca.

Serfor, January 19, 2023.¹³



Peruvian guemals
(*Hippocamelus antisensis*)

ASIA

CHINA

February 2023

Beijing International Airport, China

X-ray detection of 5 oval shapes in the luggage of an incoming passenger. Seizure of 5 musk deer (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I or II) preputial glands. Chinese Customs, February 27, 2023.¹⁴

INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Night of January 21 to 22, 2023

Zirakpur, Mohali District, State of Punjab, India

Seizure from a hotel of a Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I) preputial gland. It weighs around 80 grams. According to an expert from the Wildlife Trust of India, it has been cut by a professional. It contains between 25 and 40 grams of musk. This is a first in Punjab. It was being haggled over by 3 sellers and 3 buyers. The musk deer was poached in the Anni region at an altitude of around 2,000 metres. Kasturis, the vernacular name of preputial glands, are used in perfumes and luxury beauty creams and are reputed to be effective against heart and respiratory problems. On the international market, the pure musk of kasturis sells for 80 US\$/gramme.

The Tribune (India), January 22, 2023; The Times of India, January 23, 2023.¹⁵



January 31, 2023

Thamarassery, Kozhikode District, State of Kerala, India

Arrest of 2 men aged 53 and 54 near a bus stop at 4 p.m. Seizure of a musk deer (*Moschus spp.*, Appendix I for species found in India) preputial gland.

Mathrubhumi, February 1, 2023.¹⁶

UZBEKISTAN

January 9 and 10, 2023

Tashkent Independent City, Uzbekistan. Border with Kazakhstan.

For sale via Telegram, a 2-year-old Persian fallow deer (*Dama dama mesopotamica*, Appendix I) for 3,000 US\$. The ad is reported to the authorities by ekolog.uz. The next day, H.J. and B.L. are intercepted while transporting the fallow deer by truck in the Yangihayot municipal district. He was seized and handed over to the Tashkent Zoo.

Persian fallow deer are in danger of extinction due to intensive hunting. They now live only in Iran and Israel.

Ministry of Natural Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan, January 10, 2023; ekolog.uz, January 11, 2023.¹⁷



EUROPE

GERMANY

February 16, 2023

Hermeskeil, Rhineland-Palatinate State, Germany

Deer/car collision. The deer died on the spot. He was dragged to the side of the road to restore traffic flow. During the night, the body was dragged into the forest and the antlers were sawed off.

PIRSCH, February 26, 2023.¹⁸

BULGARIA

End of January 2023

Yasna Polyana, Burgas Province, Bulgaria



Seizure by the Regional Forestry Directorate and the police in the "strandja", a traditional house, of ash and oak trees felled illegally and cut into logs, and of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and fallow deer (*Dama dama*) antlers supposedly dropped during the shedding process and not declared. All deer antlers "gathered" in the forest must be declared within a month and kept at home, subject to payment of a fee depending on the size of the antler (1.5 leva/kg, 0.8 US\$/kg).

Desant, January 24, 2023.¹⁹

February 21, 2023

Yasna Polyana, Burgas Province, Bulgaria

Search of Anton Nikolov's home. Seizure of 10 antlered skulls of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), 7 of fallow deer (*Dama dama*), one of roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), 10 antlers supposedly gathered in the woods, a stuffed common pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and 20 wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) heads. The family is in trouble. Because of his criminal record, Anton is not allowed to possess weapons for several years, and his 2 twin sons are involved in a vast and nebulous drug trafficking affair.

Ropotamo State Hunting Farm, February 21, 2023; Flagman.bg, February 22, 2023; Novini.bg, February 23, 2023.²⁰

HUNGARY

Sunday, January 29, 2023

Kölesd, Tolna County, Hungary

Seizure by the police of a fallow deer (*Dama dama*) antlered head from the boot of a car. The 2 passengers said they had gone mushroom picking, stumbled across the deer carcass and cut off the head without knowing that it was illegal to do so. The black market value of the trophy is estimated at 400,000 forints (1,065 US\$).

Hungarian Police, January 30, 2023.²¹

POLAND

January 19, 2023

Opole Lubelskie, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland

Arrest of a man. He was suspected of illegally setting snares, and a search of his home led to the seizure of 2 pairs of European roe deer antlers (*Capreolus capreolus*) and a hare carcass (genus *Lepus*). Snares had been set up in the vicinity of the house.

Lublin Police, January 20, 2023.²²

ROMANIA

January 17, 2023

Hălmăgel, Arad County, Romania

Police seized weapons, explosives and dangerous substances from 2 young men aged 18 and 24, a mould for making lead shot, 12-gauge cartridges and 14 trophies of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) under a search warrant.

Glasul Aradului, January 18, 2023.²³

UNITED KINGDOM

February 24, 2023

Workop, Nottinghamshire County, England, United Kingdom

Search of a private home. Several dozen police officers were mobilised. Seizure of 15 deer antlered skulls (family Cervidae), 13 red fox tails (*Vulpes vulpes*), a switchblade knife, a firearm, a barrel of bleach for whitening bones, steel wire and a quad bike. The charges against Daniel Taylor are numerous: possession of a class B drug, possession of a firearm and a dangerous weapon, poaching deer and other mammals from other people's property and cruelty to animals. He was released on bail.

Nottinghamshire Police, March 2 and August 29, 2023; West Bridgford Wire, March 2, 2023.²⁴

RUSSIA

January 24, 2023

Chita, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia

A deputy head of the Natural Resources Service of the Krai (covering more than 430,000 km²) was sentenced to 8 years and 6 months in prison. He had demanded 2 million roubles (27,300 US\$) to grant an applicant a licence to hunt Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II). This considerable bribe shows the economic importance of the smuggled preputial glands of the small moschid. The cash transaction took place in a car in Chita on August 25, 2021. By chance or thanks to secret information, the police monitored it closely. The civil servant did not deny having received hidden money. Neither he nor his lawyer accept the charge of active corruption. They prefer to talk about fraud. The sentence did not come into force because the convict appealed. Chernovsky District Court in the City of Chita, January 24, 2023; Chita.ru, January 25, 2023.²⁵



January 26, 2023

Shelekhov, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

Sentence of the poacher of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.116) to 3 years' suspended imprisonment with of 2 years and 6 months' probation.

Irkutsk Oblast Prosecutor's Office, January 26, 2023.²⁶



End of February 2023

Cheremkhovsky District, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

Seizure of 15 dead female Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II), sables (*Martes zibellina*) and elk (*Alces alces*) caught by steel wire nooses. After capture, the animals are shot in the head. Nearly a hundred traps were dismantled in the vicinity of the hunting hut.

Siberian musk deer prefer the mid-mountain taiga to protect themselves from lynx, wolverines and yellow-throated martens. If attacked, they try to take refuge on a steep rock or in a crevasse. In winter, they feed on lichen. Males, like Himalayan musk deer, secrete musk in the form of wax in their preputial glands. To collect one gland from an adult male, 4 to 5 females or juveniles who have not reached sexual maturity are killed, and the entire species is threatened by this indiscriminate poaching. In 2011, the population was estimated at around 100,000 individuals in Siberia (13 million km²).

Oblastnaya - Official Internet Portal of Legal Information of the Irkutsk Oblast, March 3, 2023; Vesti Irkutsk, March 5, 2023.²⁷





White-bellied spider monkey (*Ateles belzebuth*). Photo osoandino

WESTERN AFRICA

GUINEA

January 5, 2023

Kenema District, Eastern Province, Sierra Leone

A female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) around 1-year-old and a Diana monkey (*Cercopithecus diana*, Appendix I) were seized by police and an accompanying team from the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary. John Kamara, founder of the NGO Sierra Leone Environment Matters, contacted police from Australia after one of the NGO's volunteers relayed the information to him. The "owner" of the primates was contacted by telephone in the USA. The United States Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs supported the rescue. Both monkeys were in poor health. They are regaining their strength and will remain in quarantine for at least 3 months.

Lively and curious, Diana monkeys live in the tropical rainforests of Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Guinea. They live in groups of 10 to 30 and are led by a dominant male. They are essentially frugivorous. They weigh between 2 and 8 kg (males are heavier) and have an estimated lifespan of 20 years.

Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, January 4, 5, 6, 7, 12 and 17, 2023.¹



© Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary

January 19, 2023

Kounsitel, Boké Region, Guinea

Forest rangers seized 68 baboon heads (*Papio* spp., Appendix II) inside 6 bags carried by 3 poachers. The heads were incinerated before the judge, and the poachers were detained pending trial. The monkeys were reportedly trapped 80 km up north. Two baboon species can be found in Guinea: the olive baboon (*Papio anubis*, Appendix II) and the Guinea baboon (*Papio papio*, Appendix II). Guineematin.com, January 21, 2023.²

NIGERIA

January 5, 2023

Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

Clawfrican PetHub posts and offers for sale on its Instagram account domestic cats and other wild felines, monkeys, parrots and snakes. More exceptionally, a baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) was offered for sale. As soon as the ad was reported to the police by Do the Right Thing, it disappeared. Do the Right Thing, March 4, 2023.³



SIERRA LEONE

January 2023

Freetown, Western Area, Sierra Leone

A chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) with an amputated arm was seen moving on the ground by a trap camera. He probably lost his arm while freeing himself from a poacher's trap. It's better to be caught by a camera trap than a poacher's trap. Even so, his future is uncertain.

Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, January 18, 2023.⁴



CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

January 2023

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Transfer to the Limbe Wildlife Centre refuge of a juvenile olive baboon (*Papio anubis*, Appendix II) kept as a pet. He had been seized by the environmental authorities.

Limbe Wildlife Centre, April 9, 2023.⁵



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Beginning of January 2023

Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

A young chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) was "found" tied by a rope on a pile of garbage in Lomami province. He was transferred to the Lwiro refuge 800 km away and is now full of energy and hunger.

Lwiro Primates, January 2 and 5, 2023.⁶



Mid-January 2023

Bena Dibele, Sankuru Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

The first bonobo cub (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I) rescued from trafficking in 2023 died before reaching the Lola ya bonobo sanctuary, Lingala for "bonobo paradise". Environmental authorities intercepted him from a poacher's cage on a pirogue on the Sankuru River,

along with several red-tailed monkeys (*Cercopithecus ascanius*, Appendix II). The cub was entrusted to the Amis des Bonobos du Congo (ABC - Friends of Bonobos of the Congo) who, despite their efforts, were unable to save him from malnutrition, diarrhea and the trauma of capture.

Friends of Bonobos, January 16 and 20, 2023.⁷



Beginning of February 2023

Democratic Republic of the Congo

A baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) was rescued thanks to a joint effort by police, the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) and Conserv Congo. Details of this success over wildlife trafficking are unknown. Adams Cassinga, February 9, 2023.⁸

EASTERN AFRICA

MAURITIUS

Sunday February 26, 2023

Port Louis, Port Louis District, Mauritius

A long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) that frequented the Plaine-Verte district was shot dead by a firearm, according to witnesses who heard 3 shots. Police, however, deny this recount of events. The macaque was unwelcome, and some residents described him as threatening. The director of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation reminded the public to call authorities when in the presence of dangerous animals. Long-tailed macaques are the only primates present in Mauritius; they were introduced in the 16th century by Portuguese and Dutch sailors from Sumatra or Java.

Defimedia.info, February 26, 2023; Linfo.re, February 27, 2023.⁹

ZAMBIA

January 11, 2023

Petauke, Eastern Province, Zambia



Seizure of a 3-week-old vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) from Daniel Tembo. In the same district, another baby vervet was already dead when members of the Zambia Primate Project arrived to seize him.

Zambia Primate Project, January 27, 2023.¹⁰

January 27, 2023

Kabwe, Central Province, Zambia

In the Mwalala district, a man is holding a monkey. He agrees to meet members of the Zambia Primate Project. The team is accompanied by agents from the Department of National Parks & Wildlife. The individual flees, leaving behind a vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II). If all goes well, he will be released back into the wild after a period of quarantine and relearning how to live in the wild.

Zambia Primate Project, January 30, 2023.¹¹

January 30, 2023

Kafue, Lusaka Province, Zambia



Handing over of a female vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) by James Chungu. A year earlier, on his way to buy goats, he reportedly spotted her in the hands of a group of children and said he took her in out of compassion. Zambia Primate Project, January 31, 2023.¹²

February 2, 2023

Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia

Rescue in extremis of a week-old vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) wandering on a road. His mother had died in a trap.

Zambia Primate Project, March 1, 2023.¹³



February 22, 2023

Kabwe, Central Province, Zambia

Seizure of a 9-month-old male baboon (*Papio* spp. Appendix II) by DNPW (Department of National & Wildlife) agents from an expatriate. The man claims to have bought him for 700 kwachas (40 US\$) from people who had been mistreating him. He says he plans to hand him over to the authorities once he has fully recovered.

Zambia Primate Project, March 1, 2023.¹⁴

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 11, 2023

Bloomington, State of Illinois, United States of America

Strange but true... the ruckus inside a family garage came from a ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I). The Madagascar-born refugee was gently captured, transported to Miller Park Zoo and quarantined. He is in good health. At this stage, the investigation has not revealed any more about his origin. Authorities reminded the public that it is illegal to keep exotic animals in Illinois, that lemurs have large canines that can cause serious injuries, and that they can carry pathogens transmissible to humans.

Miller Park Zoo, January 13 and 17, 2023; USA Today, January 15, 2023.¹⁵



January 13, 14, 30 and 31; February 2, and March 16, 2023

Dallas and Lancaster, State of Texas, United States of America

The Dallas Zoo suffered enclosure a series of enclosure damages and had 2 emperor tamarins (*Saguinus imperator*, Appendix II) stolen, casting doubt on the overall safety.

On January 13, a clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I) enclosure was cut up. One panther escaped, but was found nearby using infrared drones. The next day, the enclosure for dusk leaf monkeys (*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II) was also damaged. No monkeys were stolen. On January 30, 2 emperor tamarins disappeared after their cage was broken into. Thanks to information from the public, Dallas police found them the next day inside the closet of an abandoned house in Lancaster, some 20 km away. Police arrested 24-year-old Davion Irvin after spotting him at the Dallas World Aquarium. He was indicted on March 16 of theft and animal cruelty, and remanded in custody. He reportedly admitted to being the perpetrator and said he would steal animals again if released.

Irvin was not involved in the suspicious death of a vulture at the Dallas Zoo in early January (see page 91 ref. 11)).

The Dallas Morning News, January 15 and 31 and February 20, 2023; Dallas Zoo, January 31 and February 1, 2023; Dallas Police Department, February 1, 2023; NBC DFW (with AP), February 8, 2023; ABC 7 Chicago, March 17, 2023.¹⁶

Saturday, January 28 and Beginning of February, 2023

Broussard and Opelousas, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Shortly before midnight on Saturday, 12 common squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*, Appendix II) were stolen from "Zoosiana". A few days later, police arrested Joseph Randall from Opelousas, 50 km away. He was charged by the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center on charges of burglary and of cruelty to animals. None of the squirrels were found. Broussard Police Department, January 29 and February 7, 2023; Zoosiana, January 30, 2023.¹⁷

February 8, 2023

Brownsville, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Savannah Nicole Valdez attempted to smuggle a baby spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) into the United States and fled before surrendering (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.108). She was sentenced to 3 months in prison, time spent in custody while awaiting sentencing followed by two-year's supervised release, to include one year with location monitoring.

Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, March 2023.¹⁸



February 17, 2023

Wilmington, State of Massachusetts, United States of America

Cambodia's involvement in the trafficking of endangered species is certainly making headlines in the United States and around the world. The arrest of Masphal Kry, Director of Wildlife and Biodiversity in New York in November 2022 while on his way to Panama as head of the Cambodian delegation to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, has taken a new twist. Charles River Laboratories has been taken to court on suspicion of importing at least 1,000 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) under the name of farmed monkeys, even though they are likely to have been caught in the forests. The arrest of Masphal Kry should in itself have triggered a general alert among importers of animals intended for animal experimentation in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Laboratories were negligent in continuing to import monkeys from Cambodia. Shares in Charles River Laboratories dropped by 10% on the same day that the world leader in animal testing found itself in the spotlight of legal news.

Masphal Kry's trial is underway. He made his first court appearance in Miami on April 21, 2023.

For the time being, the Charles River laboratories in Europe are not concerned.

Charles River Laboratories, February 22, 2023; Boston.com, February 23, 2023; Born Free USA, March 15, 2023; NBC News, March 16, 2023; The Guardian, March 20, 2023; Radio Free Asia, April 21, 2023; United States District Court District of Massachusetts, May 19, 2023.¹⁹

LATIN AMERICA

BOLIVIA

Mid-February 2023

Tiquipaya, Province of Quillacollo, Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia

Pofoma (Policía Forestal y prevención de Medio Ambiente) and the Biodiversity team intercepted a capuchin (*Cebus* spp., synonymous of *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) listed for sale on social media.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, February 16, 2023.²⁰

BRAZIL

January 6, 2023

Campo Grande, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

An adult tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonym of *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) arrives at the CRAS (Centro de Reabilitação de Animais Silvestres). He was seized from a property where he had been held captive since his infancy. After the quarantine period, he joined 2 congeners also stolen from the forest as juveniles. One man was fined 500 reais (96 US\$). He will also have to answer for environmental offences, and his fine could increase as the tufted capuchin is threatened with extinction.

((o))eco, January 10, 2023.²¹

Mid-January 2023

Itaboraí, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Trafficking in capuchins (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) ends in a soap opera. "Influencer" Nicole Bahls showed off 2 capuchin babies on social media and afterwards received a visit by Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) agents. The capuchin papers provided her boyfriend, a "businessman" who owns a chain of service stations, were fake and immediately confiscated. Nicole shared her emotion at seeing them go and declares herself a victim too. "I didn't take the monkeys to make them pets, I let them be monkeys". She didn't know that poachers go into the jungle, kill the mothers and kidnap the young to sell them. She probably thought they come on their own, attracted by the smell of money and make-up. Portal Uai, January 18, 2023.²²



January 17, 2023

Rio de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Seizure from a veterinary student of capuchins (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) without legal documentation. They had been captured in the forest. They were living in unsanitary conditions. They were transferred to CETAS (Centro de Triagem de Animais Silvestres) in Seropédica. The student was trying to sell them. He was fined 22,000 reais (4,310 US\$). He will go on trial at a later date. Other capuchin monkeys were seized from one of his customers, who was also fined 10,000 reais (195 US\$).

Ibama, January 19, 2023.²³

February 24, 2023

Juiz de Fora, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of a capuchin (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) held captive, malnourished and displayed on social networks.

Guia Muriaé, February 24, 2023.²⁴

PERU

Mid-January 2023

District of Coronel Gregorio Albarracín Lanchipa, Province of Tacna, Department of Tacna, Peru

SERFOR (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) and the Public Prosecutor's Office intercept an Andean saddle-back tamarin (*Saguinus fuscicollis*, Appendix II) from a house where he was held captive as a pet.

Planeta en verde, January 18, 2023.²⁵

End of February 2023

Department of San Martín, Peru



Two young white-bellied spider monkeys (*Ateles belzebuth*, Appendix II) were rescued from the hands of a family who had purchased them directly from poachers near the forest. Neotropical Primate Conservation recalls that spider monkeys, like all primates, are not pets, and that they need a wild habitat and a social life in a group. The white-bellied spider monkeys have been entrusted to the rescue centre of the NGO Ikama Peru in Lagunas, with the aim of relearning how to live in the wild.

Neotropical Primate Conservation, February 24, 2023.²⁶

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

January 2023 Rantau Prapat, Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

A white-handed gibbon (*Hylobates lar*, Appendix I) was handed over to BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam). The animal was sent to a BKSDA partner conservation center.

Mistar.id, January 22, 2023.²⁷

Beginning of February 2023 Gorontalo, Gorontalo Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia



The wildlife smuggling evacuation route via the port of Manado in the very north of the island and bound for the Philippines (first stop) seems to be confirmed. Four long-nosed monkeys (*Nasalis larvatus*, Appendix I), 2 of whom were dead, and 2 Moloch gibbons (*Hylobates moloch*, Appendix I), all alive, were seized from a rental car at the Gorontalo road terminal, 400 km from Manado. The same ring had already attempted to export orangutans, turtles and monitor lizards via the same route. The operation was carried out thanks to the cooperation of the Gorontalo II Regional Conservation Section, the BKSDA and the Sulawesi Security and Law Enforcement Agency.

Tribun Manado, February 11, 2023.²⁸

February 1, 2023 Medan, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Handing over of 2 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II with Palau reserve) to BKSDA forest officers and transfer to the care of the Scorpion Foundation rescue centre. For them, captivity and baby clothes are a thing



of the past. They are due to be released within 90 days. The former keeper has signed an acknowledgement of handing over in due form.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, February 4, 2023.²⁹

ORANGUTANS

January 13, 2023

Iskandar Airbase, Pangkalan Bun, West Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia



A male orangutan (10 years old, 30 kg) was evacuated from the vicinity of the Iskandar air base runway. He had taken refuge in a forest used by military personnel as a jogging track. The base staff are concerned about the safety of aircrafts and orangutans. The latter was transferred to the Tanjung Keluang nature tourism area, which joins Tanjung Puting National Park and Lamandau Reserve.

Antara News, January 16, 2023; Kotawaringin News, January 17, 2023.³⁰

January 21, 2023

Kuta Pengkih, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Whatever the village chief may say, the Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo abelii*) nestled in a bamboo grove in the heart of a coffee plantation was dug out with a stone. His 2 bound hands were covered in blood. Rescued by SOCP (Sumatran Orang Utan Conservation Program) and YEL (Yayasan Ekosistem Lestari), he died 36 hours later.

Republika, January 21, 2023; Tribun-Medan, January 22, 2023; Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, January 25, 2023; The Jakarta Post, January 25, 2023; Mongabay Indonesia, January 26, 2023.³¹

January 26, 2023

Melawi Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

A Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) who spent 6-7 years in captivity was finally rescued. The owner had reportedly found him in the forest, orphaned, lost, just a few months old. The rescue was carried out by BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam, Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation) with the help of Melawi police and YPOS (Yayasan Penyelamatan Orangutan Sintang, Sintang Orangutan Rescue Foundation). The Sintang regency borders the Melawi regency. *Tribun Pontianak*, January 31, 2023.³²

January 27, 2023

Iskandar Airbase, Pangkalan Bun, West Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia



Another rescue at the air base (see above), this time a mother orangutan (approx. 18 years old, 35.5 kg) and her baby (a male, approx. 2 years old, 7 kg). They settled in a small forest 100 meters from the airstrip at Iskandar air base. Staff feared for both their lives and for aircraft safety. The successful operation lasted 2 hours, thanks to BKSDA officers and members of the Orangutan Foundation (UK), assisted by airbase personnel. *Borneo News*, January 27, 2023.³³

February 1, 2023

Natam Baru, Southeast Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

A one-year-old baby orangutan was rescued. He was in the hands and cage of a farmer who said he found him near his mother's corpse in the forest. The baby was immediately taken to the Batu Mbelin Care and Rehabilitation Center in Sibolangit kecamatan.

Orangutan Information Centre, February 6, 2023.³⁴



February 1, 2023

Busang District, East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Hercules broke into a villager's hut at 1:30 p.m. on January 30. The resident immediately informed the village chief, who alerted the Busang Hagar surveillance post. Arriving on site the following day, the experts lost track of Hercules. He was nowhere to be found, but returned a few hours later. At 8:30 a.m. on February 1, a vet, animal keeper and porters anaesthetised him and placed him in a cage. Adverse weather conditions and uncertainties about the anaesthetic's after-effects dissuaded the rescuers from releasing him immediately. On February 2, after a briefing, the team decided to release him along the banks of the Buluq River. As soon as the cage opened, Hercules ran resolutely into the forest. The team retrieved the cage and headed back to Busang Hagar.

Hercules was released on October 23, 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.114).

Centre for Orangutan Protection, February 3, 2023.³⁵



February 21, 2023

Betung Kerihun National Park, Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Officials released a male and a female Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*), ages 10 and 9, into Betung Kerihun National Park after they spent 5 years relearning to live in the wild at the YPOS forestry school. The boat trip lasted several hours and ended on the Rungan Riverbanks. YPOS experts will observe them for 3 months to ensure their autonomy and ability to build treetop nests. Hopefully the adventurous pair will produce offspring.

Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, February 24, 2023; Sintang Orangutan Center, February 25, 2023; Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, February 28, 2023.³⁶

THAILAND

January 25 and February 16, 2023

Wat Khao Nor, Nakhon Sawan Province, Thailand

- This case offers cause for concern. Members of a wildlife "trafficking gang" are blending in with Thai tourists visiting the Khao Nor Buddhist temple. They seize the opportunity to capture long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) by luring them in with food and injecting them with a tranquilizer syringe. Some 50 syringes have been found in recent weeks, and the macaque population around the temple is dwindling. They are likely destined for animal experimentation or food markets.



- Thaweeluk, 37, and Phromphiram, 23, were arrested in flagrante delicto for hunting with syringes. The sweet-shirt of one of the 2 individuals clearly displayed his belligerent intentions! They had already hit 10 macaques. One monkey could not cope with the anaesthetic and died, 4 were deeply asleep and 5 were drowsy. They were taken to a refuge where a saline solution was administered intravenously. The Thaiger, January 25, 2023; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, January 27, 2023 and February 17, 2023; The Nation Thailand, February 18, 2023.³⁷



January 31, 2023

Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Authorities recovered 5 live primates from inside an Indian traveler's 2 suitcases bound for Chennai, India. The victims included 2 common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) from Brazil and 2 monkeys (*Cercopithecus* spp., Appendix I or II), one of whom was a red-tailed monkey (*Cercopithecus ascanius*, Appendix II) from Africa. The smuggler has been charged for violating laws on wildlife preservation and protection and on animal epidemics. Trafficking in "exotic" primates in India, see in particular "On the Trail" n°38, pages 117 and 118. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, February 1, 2023.³⁸



February 2023

Ban Thai Charoen, Loei Province, Thailand

The rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) at Tham Pha Mak Ho temple are also being targeted by wildlife traffickers. The monkey population, which roams between the forest and the area around the temple where monks and tourists feed them rice, seeds and fruit, is said to have fallen from 3,000 to 200 individuals. According to the testimony of a villager, men posing as forest officers came armed with tranquiliser guns in December 2022 to capture monkeys "in excessive number" on the outskirts of the temple, with the stated aim of "relocating" them. According to Edwin Wiek, founder of the Wildlife Friends Foundation of Thailand (WFFT), the macaques could be smuggled out to Laos. Cambodia, a major supplier of laboratory macaques to the United States, has also been pointed out (macaques Cambodia - USA, see "The tribulations of a monkey dealer", "On the Trail" n°38 p. 109 and this issue page 76 ref.19). The end of exports of macaques for animal experimentation from China in March 2020 has created a shortage and a rise in prices, from 20-30 US\$ per animal to 200-300 US\$ on the local market. In the United States, prices have reached record levels, a radical argument against animal experimentation. On September 29, 2022, the US Senate authorised the use of alternatives to animal testing (e.g. cell-based assays) and eliminated mandatory animal testing for certain products.

According to Lt Col Anek Nakthorn, all Thai monkey populations are potential targets for traffickers. Video surveillance cameras have been installed in high-risk areas, and street vendors have been urged to report any suspicious individuals. Thai Public Broadcasting Service, February 13, 2023; The Guardian, February 26, 2023.³⁹

VIET NAM

January 7, 2023

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

The city's Forest Protection Department seized a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) chained in a cage from a private individual and entrusted him to the Cu Chi shelter.

ENV, January 7, 2023.⁴⁰

January 9, 2023

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Another new resident for the Cu Chui rescue center. This one, a pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II), was chained to a tree outside a vegan restaurant.

ENV, January 9, 2023.⁴¹

January 12, 2023

Ba Ria, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

A Northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) was tied to a tree with a chain around his neck, too short to allow both feet on the ground. Reported to ENV, he was confiscated within an hour and a half by Forest Protection Department agents.

ENV, January 12 and 13, 2023.⁴²

Beginning of February 2023

Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a captive long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) in a private home.

ENV, February 12, 2023⁴³

Beginning of February 2023

Dong Giang District, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam

Another macaque chained to a tree by private individuals rescued thanks to ENV's intervention. The stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) was seized and released.

ENV, February 13, 2023.⁴⁴

February 2023

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure of 5 monkeys in the city centre, including 3 Northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II), a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II). Transfer to Cu Chi refuge.

ENV, February 26, 2023.⁴⁵

SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

January 21, 2023

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh



Four grivet monkeys (*Chlorocebus aethiops*, Appendix II) were seized in the airport's cargo area. Abu Bakar Siddique, a Bogura resident (180 km from Dhaka) fraudulently imported them from Mali. They were quarantined at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park. According to the Daily Star, a grivet monkey can sell for 4,500 US\$. The species lives in the wild in Mali, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan and Djibouti.

The Daily Star (Bangladesh), January 24, 2023.⁴⁶

February 24, 2023

North Amkhola, Patuakhali District, Barisal Division, Bangladesh

Cruelty without trafficking, but an event that shows that the prospects for peaceful coexistence between Man and animal are bleak. In the morning, a capped langur (*Trachypithecus pileatus*, Appendix I) is reported in the village. The forest officers come to the spot and ask the population not to harm him. No sooner have they turned their backs than the langur is beaten to death and buried. He is said to have broken into a house and attacked a baby. This version is wept aside by Patuakhali's Animal Lovers group. It predicts that such incidents will recur if exemplary punishment is not imposed to those involved in the lynching.

Dhaka Tribune, February 25, 2023; New Age, February 26, 2023.⁴⁷



Capped langur (*Trachypithecus pileatus*)

INDIA

February 6, 2023

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The Indian passenger was returning from Bangkok, Thailand, with 2 monkeys from West Africa in a box in his luggage: a sooty mangabey (*Cercocebus atys*, Appendix II) and a white-collared mangabey (*Cercocebus torquatus*, Appendix II). This seizure was made possible by the scanner and the vigilance of customs officers.

Chennai Customs, February 6, 2023; The Times of India, February 6, 2023.⁴⁸



February 23, 2023

Shastri Nagar, North West Delhi District, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

Cruelty without trafficking, things are bad in India too. A rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) was hanged from a tree, filmed and the video was widely viewed on social networks. It was shared by animal activist Asher R. Jesudoss, who accused French expatriates and journalists of illegally hunting and filming rhesus macaques in Delhi "with the help of ruthless mercenaries".

Asher R. Jesudoss, February 24, 2023; Latesly, February 24, 2023; The Free Press Journal, February 25, 2023.⁴⁹

February 24, 2023

Sengundram, Tiruvallur District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Suspension from duty of 4 police officers, Ashok, Vallarasu, Mahesh and Krishnamoorthy, for the purposes of the investigation. They allegedly let orangutan traffickers get away during a road check last week in the north of the Greater Chennai Metropolitan Area. The fate of the 2 "reddish-orange hair" monkeys was allegedly decided in exchange for a bribe of at least 200,000 rupees (2,453 US\$).

DT Next, February 24, 2023; The Times of India, February 25, 2023.⁵⁰

February 25, 2023

Ichchara, Cachar District, State of Assam, India

Fueat Singh Bey, poacher of a capped langur (*Trachypithecus pileatus*, Appendix I), was surrounded and caught by local residents and handed over to the police. The over-the-counter sale of air guns has been blamed. They can kill birds, primates and squirrels. Tejas Mariswami, divisional forest officer, promised a ballistic investigation. Amir Sohail Choudhury, a researcher at Assam University, has found that such guns are modified to kill large mammals.

Barak Bulletin, February 25, 2023; Hindustan Times, February 26, 2023.⁵¹

WESTERN EUROPE

AUSTRIA

Mid-January 2023

Vienna International Airport, Vienna State, Austria

Officials thwarted an attempt to smuggle 10 pygmy marmosets (*Callithrix pygmaea*, Appendix II), 2 emperor tamarins (*Saguinus imperator*, Appendix II) and a white-lipped tamarin (*Saguinus labiatus*, Appendix II) from the Czech Republic to Malaysia, via Austria. Only 2 marmosets were fitted with the obligatory microchip, and their papers contained false microchip numbers. At the start of the smuggling operation, Czech customs officials were either fooled or looked the other way. Will they investigate the exporter of these little monkeys from Latin America?

Federal Ministry of Finance, February 12, 2023.⁵²

FRANCE

Sunday January 8, 2023

Lyon, Department of Rhône, France



Two men, ages 24 and 25, both "unfavourably known to the police", attempted to sell a white-eared marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) for the friendly price of 4,000 € (4,260 US\$). The Société de Protection des Animaux de Lyon spotted their ad on the dark web. Alerted, police officers paid a Sunday visit to the rue de l'Abondance apartment where the sale was to take place. The marmoset was entrusted to the Saint-Martin-la-Plaine Zoo. 20 Minutes, January 10, 2023; France 3 Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, January 10, 2023; Rhône National Police, January 10, 2023.⁵³

February 7, 2023

Brunoy, Department of l'Essonne, and Versailles, Department of Yvelines, France



GREY MOUSE LEMURS

This is the smallest of Madagascar's lemurs. They are too small to be cooked. They are threatened in their only country of origin by slash-and-burn agricultural methods, deforestation, and the loss of tree cavities that serve as nesting sites. Explorers and scientists quickly got into the habit of lining their pockets before returning home. Total body length: 14 cm, tail length: 16 cm. Newborns weigh 3 grams with a 3 cm-long tail. French zoologist Jean-Jacques Petter, who ended his career as director of the 4 zoological parks of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN), was the first to import them to France between 1967 and 1972, to study them in the MNHN's general ecology laboratory in Brunoy.

The colony of grey mouse lemurs (*Microcebus murinus*, Appendix I) now numbers between 400 and 500 captive-born individuals. They are bred in basements where the seasons and temperatures of Madagascar are artificially reproduced. Jean-Jacques Petter's successors at the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) continue to study the torpor that enables them to resist drought and water deprivation by drawing on the fat reserves accumulated in their hind legs and tails. In an interview with Le Monde (March 6, 2023), grey mouse lemur specialist Jérémy Terrien calls them "little buggers" and predicts that understanding their "seasonal molecular clock" could help combat human obesity, diabetes, and the aging of the brain.

In May 2021, the French NGO One Voice asked the Prefect of the Essonne Département for the inspection reports on the MNHN animal facility in Brunoy, France, between 2014 and 2021. In the absence of a response, in July One Voice referred the matter to the CADA (Commission d'Accès aux Documents Administratifs), which in September issued an unfavourable report on its request. One Voice then referred the matter to the Versailles administrative court, which, in a ruling published on February 7, 2023, ordered the Essonne prefecture to provide One Voice with documents concerning the breeding of grey mouse lemurs for animal experimentation.

Robin des Bois, for its part, explored the digital archives of the CNRS and found several documents showing researchers from all over the world all the possibilities offered in Brunoy to study "the world's largest colony of grey mouse lemurs founded in 1967 by Mr. and Mrs. Petter," and offering them 8 research protocols and various items of equipment, including a gas or chemical anaesthesia device enabling surgical procedures with the recording of cardiac and respiratory activity.

One Voice, October 4, 2021; Actu Essonne, February 9, 2023; Le Monde, March 6, 2023; Robin des Bois' archives.⁵⁴



SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

February 13, 2023

Naples, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Police control in a hotel. In a Tunisian man's room, a large black tail sticks out from a shoebox. It is the tail of a red-handed tamarin (*Saguinus midas*, Appendix II) at the end of his life. Entrusted to the veterinary school, he will only survive a few hours. In 2014, 2 red-handed tamarins from Brazil, Suriname, Guyana and French Guiana were seized in the Naples region.

Trafficking in red-handed tamarins in Europe, see "On the Trail" n°20 p.61 (Spain), n°26 p. 59 (Belgium) and n°38 p. 214 (France).

Corriere del Mezzogiorno, February 14, 2023; Kodami, February 14, 2023; Police Headquarters of Naples, February 14, 2023.⁵⁵

EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

January 31, 2023

Federal City of Saint Petersburg, Russia

Following a complaint from the prosecutor, the Moskovsky District Court banned a website offering to sell a ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I), a buffy-tufted-ear marmoset (*Callithrix aurita*, Appendix I) or white-eared marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) and De Brazza's monkey (*Cercopithecus neglectus*, Appendix II).

Interfax Russia, January 31, 2023.⁵⁶



ARMADILLOS, COATIS, CAPYBARAS AND PECCARIES

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Beginning of January 2023

Paraje Santillan, Province of Corrientes, Argentina

A Ford F-100 SUV was stopped on provincial highway 116, resulting in the seizure of 5 dead capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), 2 .22-calibre firearms and ammunition. The 3 occupants were taken into custody and released pending trial after criminal record checks. The peaceful rodents were donated to the Picitos Descalzo community refectory for butchering and consumption.

Corrientes Hoy, January 13, 2023.¹

BRAZIL

January 5, 2023

Campo Sêco, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Inside a suspicious car reported to the public alert hotline, military police discovered a .22-caliber rifle, 5 rounds of ammunition and a dead capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). The driver is Brazilian, the passenger Uruguayan.

Qwerty Portal de Notícias, January 5, 2023.²

January 20, 2023

Salvaterra, State of Pará, Brazil



The 8th Military Police Battalion raided a cabin along the banks of the Paracauari River. Inside, they discovered 75 kg of capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) meat and 2 bags of salt. The 2 poachers are facing 6 months to a year in prison for wildlife crimes. The name "capybara" (or lord of the prairie) comes from the Guarani language. They are also lords of the water, where they are hunted by caimans. They graze on grass and aquatic plants. On land, their best enemy is the jaguar, and their worst enemy is man. His fat is used to make ointments and remedies that reportedly cause miracles. G1 Pará, January 20, 2023.³



Capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). Photo Sam Darmstadt

January 31, 2023

Pacoti, State of Ceará, Brazil

Acting on information, military police located and arrested a poacher in the forest. They seized 2 rifles, 5.5 and 9 gauge ammunition, 3 packets of gunpowder, a machete, 2 traps, 13 torches, 9 batteries, a syringe, a net and 57 armadillo tails (family Dasypodidae). Armadillo tails are considered amulets by hunters, and some compete to see who can get the most. Military Police of Ceará, February 1, 2023; G1 Ceará, February 2, 2023.⁴



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 6, 2023

San Antonio, State of Texas, United States of America

- Coming face to face with a South American coati (*Nasua nasua*) while leaving your house is not a common sight in San Antonio. This is especially the case given that city bylaws forbid their domestication. Also, they travel in packs and primarily reside in South and Central America in tropical grasslands, dry forests and the fringes of the Sonoran desert. Pioneers effectively colonized the southwestern United States.

This female coati in San Antonio (population over 1.4 million) gave 4 animal brigade agents a hard time. In the end, she was gently captured and taken to Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation where, if all goes well, she should be released into a 100-hectare enclosure where 13 other coatids, rescued from cages, are already housed and living socially.

Adult portrait: total length 70 cm to 1.3 m, tail length 30 to 60 cm. Elongated head, mobile nose, cinnamon to grey-brown fur. 3 to 6 kg. Diet: invertebrates, lizards, small mammals.

City of San Antonio Animal Care Services, January 7, 2023; San Antonio Express-News, January 12, 2023; San Antonio Current, January 17, 2023.⁵

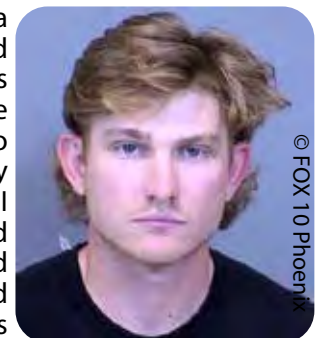


January 18 and 25, 2023

Surprise, State of Arizona, United States of America

Roger Alexander, 20, a university student and baseball player, was letting off steam one evening by beating to death a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II except in the United States of America and Mexico) that he had blinded in the headlights of his car. "I was under the understanding they are considered a nuisance animal". On the video he posted on the social networks, he laughs and smiles.

FOX 10 Phoenix, January 26, 2023; Arizona Republic, January 27, 2023.⁶



OTHER MAMMALS

HIPPOS, OTTERS, CIVETS, MONGOOSES, PORCUPINES, HEDGEHOGS ...



North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*). Photo Jeffrey H. Skevington

AFRICA

NAMIBIA

February 18, 2022

Muyako, Zambezi Region, Namibia. Border with Botswana.

A man shot a male hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) with an estimated economic value of 100,000 dollars (5,770 US\$). He said the animal was destroying his corn crops. His rifle and ammunition were seized.

New Era, February 21, 2023; Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), February 24, 2023.¹

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 2023

Lake City, State of Michigan, United States of America

A man was charged with poaching a North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*, Appendix II), eight white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and using 4 undeclared traps. He was sentenced to 2,615 US\$ in fines and court costs. His compound bow was seized.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, January 21, 2023.²



Beginning of February 2023

Chippewa County, State of Michigan, United States of America

The prosecutor brought charges against 2 men. The first had illegally trapped a North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*, Appendix II), while the 2nd, who held a hunting licence, was trying to declare her under his name. In addition, an American pine marten (*Martes americana*) has been trapped.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, February 18, 2023.³



ASIA

INDIA

February 12, 2023

Gobindapur, Nadia District, State of West Bengal, India

Of the large Indian civets (*Viverra zibetha*, Appendix III in India), only the meat and the 2 heads remained. Police arrived on scene too late; the 3 guests, preparing for a feast, had already fled. The Telegraph India, February 13, 2023.⁴

February 18, 2023

Angul District, State of Odisha, India

Four Indian grey mongooses (*Herpestes edwardsi*, Appendix III in India and in Pakistan) were rotting in a cage. They were seized by the WCCB and the Forest Department. Mongooses are sometimes kept as pets, but above all their hair is used to make brushes for watercolourists. WCCB, March 14, 2023.⁵

ISRAEL

January 26, 2023

Central, Haifa or Tel Aviv Districts, Israel

In Israel, too, people are beating up porcupines. Authorities intercepted a pick-up truck in the Sharon plain, near the National Parks, and 4 dead Indian crested porcupines (*Hystrix indica*) inside. They were tracked by 2 dogs and killed with sticks. Adult portrait: 1 m with tail, 13 kg, quills 30 to 50 cm long. He's an ace at passive defense. But he's no match for 3 men and 2 dogs.

Israel Nature and Parks Authority, January 26, 2023.⁶

SINGAPORE

January 31, 2023

Singapore

The prosperous city-State of Singapore is home to poachers who use strong glue to capture wild animals. This time, a small Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) was "deglood" with great delicacy and difficulty by the NGO ACRES (Animal Concerns Research and Education Society). Mothership, February 28, 2023.⁷



THAILAND

February 16, 2023

Huai Sala Wildlife Sanctuary, Si Saket Province, Thailand. Border with Cambodia.



Just 100 meters from the Cambodian border, the patrol located and removed 30 metal traps while saving an Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) from a slow death.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, February 17, 2023.⁸



VIET NAM

January 12, 2023

Hai Duong, Hai Duong Province, Viet Nam



Otter (Lutrinae, Appendix I or II) trafficking. Purchased on Facebook for 10 million dong (420 US\$) in November, the 2 otters captured in a river were transferred to the third floor of D.C.A.'s apartment. On January 12, D.C.A., having reached an agreement with A., was going to deliver the survivor to a restaurant. The police were on the scene. D.C.A., 33, was placed under house arrest pending his trial. Thanh Niên, January 20, 2023.⁹

February 11, 2023

Ben Tre Province, Viet Nam

In the car, Mr. Nguyen Van Tuan was carrying at least 30 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India). Total weight: around 60 kg. Lao Dong, February 13, 2023.¹⁰

EUROPE

BELGIUM

January 16, 2023

Namur, Province of Namur, Walloon Region, Belgium



Authorities fined 4 travellers 1,600 € (1,700 US\$) for feasting on 7 European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) in summer 2020. "It's part of our traditions, whether you like it or not", the leader of the gang affirmed. La DH Les Sports+, January 16, 2023; RTBF, January 16, 2023.¹¹

ITALY

Week of January 9, 2023

Noto, Free Municipal Consortium of Syracuse, Region of Sicily, Italy

Two crested porcupines (*Hystrix cristata*) were poached and beaten in a Natura 2000 site. Authorities seized a switchblade knife and the suspect(s) were reported and released pending trial.

Siracusa News, January 17, 2023.¹²

January 25, 2023

Santa Cristina d'Aspromonte, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

Seizure of 80 fat dormice (*Glis glis*) inside a 58-year-old man's 2 freezers.

Giornale di Calabria, January 25, 2023.¹³

Mid-February 2023

Sciacca, Free Municipal Consortium of Agrigento, Region of Sicily, Italy



Crested porcupines (*Hystrix cristata*) are hunted down in Sciacca. Already, "On the Trail" n°33 p.149 noted the sad exploits of a porcupine poacher. Now, in the middle of the road, a bag containing a trapped, torn apart, bloody porcupine was discovered. Only the quills enabled his identification. Ioana, a volunteer at the NGO Balzoo Sciacca, is despondent: "If it had been a cat, everyone would have been shocked, but as it was a porcupine, the story ended with the disposal of the carcass and our deep regret." Kodami, February 15, 2023.¹⁴

LITHUANIA

January 10, 2023

Juzintai Municipality, Panevezys Region, Lithuania



Two hunters poached common otters (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I) and Eurasian beavers (*Castor fiber*) in a pond using traps and nets. Environmental Protection Department, January 12, 2023.¹⁵



Indigo bunting (*Passerina cyanea*). Photo cjmatheson

NORTHERN AFRICA

SUDAN

January 2023

Khartoum, Khartoum State, Sudan

Police thwarted an attempt to smuggle grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). They were crammed into small crates. Some were dead. The survivors were handed over to Sudan Animal Rescue for treatment. "We praise the wildlife police in their efforts at foiling many smuggling attempts and we thank them for their cooperation and trust in us," says the NGO. There are no wild grey parrots in Sudan.

Sudan Animal Rescue, January 26, 2023.¹

CENTRAL AFRICA

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 2023

Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

After an information campaign, the "owner" of a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) decided to part with it. The bird was transferred to the Jane Goodall Institute for possible release.

PALF, January 2023.²

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

January 9, 2023

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Two common ostrich chicks (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 countries) stolen from their nest by shepherds were reunited with their mates thanks to the intervention of Big Life Foundation rangers. Big Life Foundation, January 2023.³

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid-February 2023

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Release of a pale chanting goshawk (*Melierax canorus*, Appendix II) from the veterinary clinic following a gunshot wound to the thorax and fractures to the right wing.

Pale chanting goshawks live in dry, arid regions of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Angola. They measure 55-60 cm in length and have a wingspan of around 110 cm. Their plumage varies in colour from pale blue to grey.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, February 16, 2023.⁴

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

January 5, 2023

Whitby, Province of Ontario, Canada

Sentence of Salvatore Trentadue to a fine of 10,000 dollars (7,360 US\$). His falconry records were falsified. He failed to report the death of a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), the escape of an American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II), the acquisition of a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II), the possession of a barred owl (*Strix varia*, Appendix II) and the sale of a turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*). For 2 years, his activities as a falconer will be monitored and he is banned from taking part in the Wild Take programme, which authorises falconers each year to take a bird of prey belonging to a list of species approved by the provincial authorities from the wild.

Government of Ontario, February 17, 2023.⁵



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 6, 2023

Houston, State of Texas, United States of America

Breakdown of an ambush:

May 30, 2020. At the Trader's Village flea market, an undercover agent buys an indigo bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) from Luis Alonzo Martinez for 60 US\$.

June 25, 2020. An undercover agent notices the same individual still selling indigo buntings in cages at the same market, and asks him for his cell phone number for a future purchase.

July 31, 2020. A new undercover agent contacts Martinez by phone and seals a deal to buy 18 indigo buntings at 45 US\$ each, for a total of 810 US\$.

From January to May 2021, Martinez speaks several times with a 4th undercover agent. He confirms that his indigo bunting business is illegal and says that he stores and sells the birds at his home.

In April 2021, the agent with whom Martinez has a trusting relationship offers to buy 20 indigo buntings and 2 cages for 750 US\$, specifying that a friend will transport them to Florida.

May 24, 2021. When the agent arrives at Martinez's house to finalize the deal, he comes across him and a customer haggling over painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*). After the customer leaves, he finally buys 20 indigo buntings for 35 US\$ each (a bargain!), 2 male painted buntings for 80 US\$ each, 4 female painted buntings for 75 US\$ each and a rose-breasted grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) for 75 US\$, all for 1,185 US\$. During the transaction, the agent took a video of a number of cages containing numerous birds in the garage.



On May 26, the undercover agent's "friend", an accomplice if you will of US Fish and Wildlife, transports the birds to Florida, which is theoretically forbidden unless an exemption is granted by Texas and Florida.

July 19-27, 2021. Martinez, informed of this clandestine export and decidedly hooked by US Fish and Wildlife, tries to sell a large batch of birds to yet another undercover agent.

July 28, 2021. A warrant is issued for Martinez's arrest in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The birds sold by Martinez were captured in gardens, parks, yards, sanctuaries and other protected areas where these tiny travelers escape the rigors of snow-and-freeze winters.

Martinez pleads guilty.

Houston Chronicle, January 7, 2023.⁶

January 6 and July 25, 2023

Nashville, State of Tennessee, United States of America



Holly Lamar, who held a falconry licence for 2 years, is a follower of "falcontherapy", an unconventional medicine similar to dolphin therapy that is said to cure post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression. On August 22, 2022, agents from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) confiscated Lamar's 13 raptors as part of a search warrant issued by the State's attorney. The TWRA accused Ms. Lamar of holding more raptors than authorized by her permit (13 instead of 5) and of not having certificates of origin. This is particularly the case with a barn owl she held (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II). Five months after her 7-year-old peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) named Faith was confiscated, it died in its refuge.

On July 25, Lamar, with the support of the American Falconry Association which boasts several thousand members, contested the legitimacy of the seizure. She said her peregrine falcon died for a lack of proper care and claimed damages in court commensurate with the psychological suffering she endured since the brutal seizure of "her children" and Faith's passing which had inspired her with a song, the loss of her zest for life and the loss of professional resources.

NewsChannel 5, January 11, 2023; Tennessee Lookout, February 14, 2023; The Tennessean, August 1, 2023.⁷

January 9, 2023

Irwin County, State of Georgia, United States of America

A bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) had to be terminated at Quailwood Animal Hospital. It had been found on Ponderosa Road, severely wounded by a gunshot.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division, February 22, 2023.⁸

January 10, 2023

Eagle Pass Port of Entry, State of Texas, United States of America

The driver of the pick-up coming from Mexico via the Camino Real bridge had hidden a parrotlet (*Forpus* spp., Appendix II) in a cardboard box in the back. A glance from the customs officers was enough to spot it. It was handed over to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

US Customs and Border Protection, January 12, 2023.⁹

January 20, 2023

Fort Pierre National Grassland, State of South Dakota, United States of America



At the intersection of War Creek Road and Military Place, the snow was disturbed by a reddish-white shape. A ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*, Appendix II) had fallen there, hit head-on by a bullet while perched on its observation post.

South Dakota Turn In Poachers, January 20, 2023.¹⁰

January 21, 2023

Dallas, State of Texas, United States of America

A shadow lies over the zoo. After the escape of a clouded leopard last week and the damage to the dusky leaf monkey enclosure (see page 76 ref. 16), it is now the turn of a lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II) to make the news. It was found dead in "unusual circumstances", says the zoo in a laconic press release. "We alerted the Dallas Police Department." A 10,000 US\$ reward has been promised by the management for the arrest and prosecution of the person or persons responsible. As for the cause of death, in a press conference the staff simply stated that the vulture had been mortally wounded. The Dallas Zoo is responsible for the species monitoring plan drawn up by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Infrared cameras will be installed in the most sensitive enclosures and human surveillance on site will be enhanced at night. Ben Sandifer, a good observer of the Dallas Zoo situation, points out that in 2004 a 150-kg gorilla escaped from his cage and injured several people before being killed, that 3 giraffes including a young one died in October 2021 and that in February 2022 five western lowland gorillas tested positive for Covid-19 due to transmission of the virus by carers.

On January 31, 2 emperor tamarins were also stolen from Dallas Zoo (see page 76 ref. 16).

Dallas Observer, January 24, 2023; KOLD (with CNN), January 24, 2023.¹¹

January 2023

Schoolcraft, State of Michigan, United States of America

A man was filmed firing a 22-caliber rifle repeatedly from his bedroom window at several hundred sandhill cranes (*Antigone canadensis*, synonymous with *Grus canadensis*, Appendix II) in a field. He was charged.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, January 21, 2023.¹²

January 23, 2023

Baltimore, State of Maryland, United States of America



Kyle J. Campbell is sentenced to 1,000 US\$ in restitution to the Maryland Natural Resources Police for violating the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. A duck and chicken farmer, Campbell thinks eagles are pests. One day in April 2020, he shot a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) with a borrowed rifle. He placed the body under a pile of green waste and described his feat to family members over the Internet.

Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, February 2023.¹³

January and March 5, 2023

Lowndes County, State of Mississippi, United States of America

Spotted by Ryne Long, an agent for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) wounded by a shot has its life saved. Taken in by the Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation, it was cared for for 2 months before regaining its freedom.

WLBT, March 6, 2023.¹⁴

February 7, 2023

DeSoto County, State of Mississippi, United States of America

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) was spotted by county employees. It was going in circles on the ground and seemed unable to take off. And for good reason! One wing was pierced by a rifle bullet and one eye was punctured by another projectile. He was admitted for emergency treatment at the Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation, a private institution that takes in 1,000 wounded birds a year, and then transferred, thanks to the goodwill of a Fedex pilot, to the American Eagle Foundation in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, 750 km away. He transported it in his private plane. The experts are not giving up hope. Once his wing has recovered, the survivor could relearn to fly and hunt with only one eye. Debbie Crum (Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation), February 7, 2023; WREG News Channel 3, February 8, 2023.¹⁵

REPEATED OFFENCE

February 9, 2023

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

Sentence of Imsaf Ali, 62, to 366 days in prison. In 2018, he was arrested in New York with birds in his socks. His lawyer pleaded for leniency. Her client, she said, was not trafficking for money alone. He had emigrated to the United States in 1984 and loves the birds of his childhood. The investigation file shows him to be one of the kingpins in the infiltration of song passerines such as the chestnut-bellied seed finch (*Oryzoborus angolensis*) and the plumbeous seedeater (*Sporophila plumbea*) into New York, a smuggling operation worth its weight in gold. Ali maintains a network of smugglers. In April 2021, one of them was paid 2,500 US\$ to import 35 birds in curlers (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.254). New York Post, February 10, 2023; The Washington Post, February 15, 2023; US Fish and Wildlife Service, May 30, 2023.¹⁶



On the Trail n°39. Robin des Bois

February 11, 2023

Between Bettendorf and Riverdale, State of Iowa, United States of America

A call for witnesses. Anyone with information about the shooting of a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) is asked to contact Officer Nick Rocca at 563-349-9418. The bird did not survive.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources, February 16, 2023.¹⁷

February 16, 2023

Wilmington, State of Delaware, United States of America



"I found a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) and took the foot". The police found it at his home. The man was fined 500 US\$. The prosecutor did not try to find out what the eagle had died of or by whom. He merely punished the theft and possession of the foot, which was in violation of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which applies to "whoever, within the United States or any place subject to the jurisdiction thereof, without being permitted to do so as provided in this subchapter, shall knowingly, or with wanton disregard for the consequences of his act take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, at any time or in any manner any bald eagle commonly known as the American eagle or any golden eagle, alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof of the foregoing eagles." Eagle parts must be handed over to the National Eagle Repository in Colorado. It puts them at the disposal of native populations who use them in their ceremonies. Delaware News Journal, February 20, 2023.¹⁸

Saturday, February 25, 2023

Calabasas, State of California, United States of America

Night-time break-in at a veterinary clinic. Four grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) and a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) were stolen!

All Animals Veterinary Hospital, February 25, 2023.¹⁹

February 25, 2023

Dubois County, State of Indiana, United States of America

Call for witnesses. Anyone with information leading to the identification of the person who shot a 3-4 year old bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) at the junction of County Roads 300 North and 175 East is asked to contact the DNR Law Enforcement District 7 office. According to the initial investigation, the emblem of the United States was eating at the side of the road when it was killed.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources, February 28, 2023; WISH-TV, February 28, 2023.²⁰

February 28, 2023

Stanton, State of Nebraska, United States of America

Ramiro Hernandez-Tziquin and Domingo Zetino-Hernandez, two 20-year-old Hondurans living in Norfolk, had parked up in a field and were looking forward to a nice little meal of bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) that they were about to prepare. They were in for a rude awakening when the police appeared and they had to admit that they had just shot the totally protected bird. Not to mention the fact that Hernandez-Tziquin has no driving licence.

Stanton County Sheriff's Office, February 28, 2023.²¹

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

January 6, 2023

Perico, Province of Jujuy, Argentina

The Ministry of the Environment and the Comando de Prevención Rural y Ambiental jointly intercepted 15 live blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) packed in bags. The man and woman came from the neighbouring province of Chaco and put up no resistance to the intervention.

El Tribuno Jujuy, January 6, 2023.²²

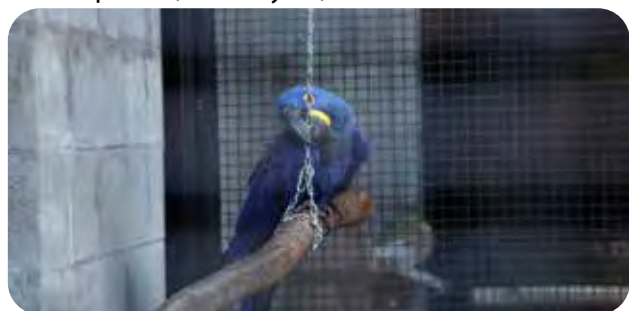
January 26, 2023

El Pilar Nature Reserve, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Released: a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II), red-crested cardinal (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), double-collared seedeater (*Sporophila caerulea*), saffron finch (*Sicalis flaveola*) and black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*). All were previously seized by the BCA (Brigada de Control Ambiental) and underwent a re-learning-to-live-in-the-wild course at the Temaikèn Foundation's "ecopark".

On the same day, 2 hyacinth macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I) and a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) were handed over to the Temaikèn Foundation. It now bears responsibility in ensuring the macaws' well-being and providing them with a living environment as similar to their natural habitats as possible. Macaws are exotic animals. They were smuggled into Argentina and cannot be released back into the wild.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, January 26, 2023.²³



BRAZIL

Mid-February 2023

São Paulo, State of São Paulo, Brazil

An Ibama-approved breeder has been sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment for keeping 61 wild saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) without a permit and without the green light of the competent authority. The court did not hear the breeder's argument that he was keeping the birds for pleasure with no intention of selling them. However, given that the birds were released in good health, the court converted the prison sentence into a fine, the amount of which is not available, and an obligation to make a donation to an institution dedicated to the protection of birds, the name of which is not available. Consultor Jurídico, February 24, 2023.²⁴



350 birds, including 4 parrots (Psittacidae, A. I or II), 2 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, A. II) and one blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, A. II). Early January 2023. Novo Hamburgo, Rio Grande do Sul



3 conures (*Aratinga* spp., A. II) and one copper seedeater (*Sporophila bouvreuil*). Beginning of February 2023. Conceição da Barra, Espírito Santo

BRAZIL

Seizure of 1,585 birds between January 1 and February 28, 2023



Sources, see page 190, details page 95



Buffy-fronted seedeater (*Sporophila frontalis*). Photo Anderson Sandro

1,585 birds seized in Brazil Map details

251 buffy-fronted seedeaters (*Sporophila frontalis*)
 150 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*)
 90 green winged saltators (*Saltator similis*)
 82 double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*)
 75 yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*)
 70 campo troupials (*Icterus jamaicii*)
 63 lined seedeaters (*Sporophila lineola*)
 31 red-headed cardinals (genus *Paroaria*)
 21 great-billed seed finches (*Sporophila maximiliani*)
 15 black tyrants (genus *Knipolegus*)
 11 copper seedeaters (*Sporophila bouvreuil*)
 11 white-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila leucoptera*)
 9 blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*)
 7 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II)
 7 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II)
 6 doves (genus *Columbina*)
 6 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*)
 6 rufous-collared sparrows (*Zonotrichia capensis*)
 4 Spix's guans (*Penelope jacquacu*)
 4 white-throated seedeaters (*Sporophila albogularis*)
 3 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II)
 3 conures (*Aratinga* spp., Appendix II)
 3 white-naped jays (*Cyanocorax cyanopogon*)
 3 chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*)

3 giant cowbirds (*Molothrus oryzivorus*)
 3 red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*)
 3 guans (genus *Penelope*)
 2 yellow-chevroned parakeets (*Brotogeris chiriri*, Appendix II)
 2 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II)
 2 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II)
 1 eagle (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II)
 1 red-spectacled amazon (*Amazona pretrei*, Appendix I)
 1 grey pileated finch (*Coryphospingus pileatus*)
 1 glaucous-blue grosbeak (*Cyanoloxia glaucocerulea*)
 1 variable oriole (*Icterus pyrrhopterus* synonymous with *Icterus cayanensis pyrrhopterus*)
 1 chestnut-bellied seed finch (*Oryzoborus angolensis*)
 1 yellow-rumped marshbird (*Pseudoleistes guirahuro*)
 1 toucan (family Ramphastidae)
 1 Gould's toucanet (*Selenidera gouldii*)
 1 hooded siskin (*Spinus magellanicus*)
 1 Temminck's seedeater (*Sporophila falcirostris*)
 1 plumbeous seedeater (*Sporophila plumbea*)
 1 thrush (genus *Turdus*)
 626 unidentified birds

COLOMBIA

February 15, 2023

Venecia, Province of Sumapaz, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia

Seizure of 5 yellow-backed orioles (*Icterus chrysater*). They had been held captive for a short time. They were immediately released.

Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cundinamarca, February 15, 2023.²⁵

February 22, 2023

Palermo, Department of Huila, Colombia

Seizure by environmental police of 3 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) and a blue-headed parrot (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II).

National Police of Colombia, February 22, 2023.²⁶

COSTA RICA

Mid-January 2023

Sarapiquí, Heredia Province, Costa Rica

Officials seized from a home a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) with its wings clipped, a mutilation intended to prevent its escape. Its value on the black domestic market can reach 4,000 US\$. The suspects are subject to legal proceedings.

Sancarlosdigital.com, January 19, 2023.²⁷

FRANCE (GUIANA)

Dimanche 29 janvier 2023

Sunday, January 29, 2023

Matoury, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

In French Guiana, the protection of flora and fauna is a priority issue for the national gendarmerie. While on patrol in French Guiana, valiant gendarmes intercepted 2 young men carrying 3 cages and several birds of protected species, including conures and caica parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II). They claimed they bought them in Suriname and wanted to sell them for 60 € (64 US\$) each. A search of their home resulted in gendarmes confiscating 17 more birds. Conures and caica parrots are listed in Appendix II of CITES and protected by ministerial decree in France. They are one of the main species captured in the wild and used as pet birds. They have been handed over to an approved association for the protection of Guyana's wildlife.

Gendarmerie of Guyane, February 5, 2023.²⁸

HONDURAS

January 22, 2023

Santa Rosa de Copán, Copán Department, Honduras



State agents intercepted 85 exotic birds on public roads, including a sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II), 6 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*), 6 peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan or *Pavo muticus*, Appendix II), 10 zebra finches (genus *Taeniopygia*), 13 cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), and 50 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*).

La Prensa, January 24, 2023.²⁹

JAMAICA

February 22, 2023

Saint James Parish, Cornwall County, Jamaica

Ricardo Deeble has been jailed pending trial. Before stealing 10 parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except 4 species) from a cage and selling them, he was already known to the Saint James court for various petty thefts. Seven birds were found, 2 were sold by Deeble and a third, according to him, flew away. The value of the 3 birds on the local market is estimated at 300,000 dollars (1,950 US\$). Damion Whyte, head of BirdLife in Jamaica, regrets that the NEPA (National Environment and Planning Agency) was not asked to determine the species of parrots and their level of protection.

Three species of parrot are subject to massive poaching and trafficking for the pet market in the country: yellow-billed amazons (*Amazona collaria*, Appendix II), black-billed amazons (*Amazona agilis*, Appendix II) and olive-throated conures (*Eupsittula nana*, Appendix II). Yellow-billed amazons and black-billed amazons are endemic. They are sold both on social networks and on the roadside.

Jamaica Observer, January 1st and March 5, 2023.³⁰

MEXICO

January 2, 2023

State of Tabasco, Mexico

Seizure of 18 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) whose heads had been painted yellow to pass them off as yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) to fetch a higher price. They were handed over to a wildlife conservation management unit (UMA-Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre). Their condition gives cause for concern.

Profepa, January 2, 2023.³¹

January 5, 2023

State of Mexico, Mexico

Seizure by Profepa of 3 orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, synonymous with *Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) for sale at a market. Profepa, January 5, 2023.³²

January 6, 2023

State of Morelos, Mexico

A store was reported by a vigilant citizen. It was holding 2 red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and a southern mealy amazon (*Amazona farinosa*, Appendix II). They were seized and taken to a UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) for treatment. Profepa, January 6, 2023.³³

January 10, 2023

State of Hidalgo, Mexico

Seizure of 32 birds including parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) at a market. Profepa, January 10, 2023.³⁴

January 18, 2023

Nogales, State of Sonora, Mexico

The US authorities handed over to Profepa a red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) seized at the border post. After veterinary examination, it was transferred to a zoo. Profepa, January 18, 2023.³⁵

PANAMA

End of January 2023

Vista Alegre, Western Panama Province, Panama

Ten birds, including 4 yellow-crowned euphonias (*Euphonia luteicapilla*) and 6 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), were held in a private home after their capture in the wild. They were seized along with 13 cages, thanks to a citizen's alert. El Siglo, January 25, 2023.³⁶



VENEZUELA

February 9, 2023

Punta de Mata, Monagas State, Venezuela



Seizure from a vehicle bound for Caracas of 34 orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), 20 hispaniolan parakeets (*Aratinga chloroptera*, Appendix II) and a white-faced capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II). Maicán González has been placed under house arrest pending completion of the investigation. El Diario (Venezuela), February 25, 2023.³⁷

THE CARIBBEAN

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

January 10, 2023

Pointe-à-Pierre, Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Region, Trinidad and Tobago



Thugs broke into the Wildfowl Trust, a zoo specializing in water birds, and stole 18 white-faced whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna viduata*), an extinct species in the archipelago since 1950. A breeding attempt was underway, with the intent to release the offspring into the wild. The economic loss is estimated at \$40,000, or 5,750 US\$ and 320 US\$ per bird. "We've had flights before, the biggest was in 2021." According to the Trust's management, local thugs receive orders from collectors and are paid commission once the job is done.

Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, January 13, 2023; Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, January 14, 2023.³⁸

February 1st, 2023

Freeport, Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Region, Trinidad and Tobago

The orange-winged amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II) was walking on Calcutta Road. A witness called for help. The X-rays revealed the truth. The bird was hit by a rain of pellets. The vital diagnosis is very guarded.

El Socorro Center for Wildlife Conservation, February 2, 2023.³⁹

February 9, 2023
Trinidad Island, Trinidad and Tobago

Police seizure in the south of the island of 4 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 36 yellow-crowned amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) and 2 weeper capuchins (*Cebus olivaceus*, Appendix II). Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, February 9, 2023.⁴⁰



CENTRAL ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

January 9, 2023
Shymkent City, Kazakhstan

A man selling European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) at the indoor market was fined 17,250 tenge (37.5 US\$). Shymkent City Police Department, January 9, 2023.⁴¹



February 6, 2023
Shymkent City, Kazakhstan

A man selling illegally caught European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) at the indoor market has been fined 17,250 tenge (37.5 US\$). Shymkent City Police Department, February 6, 2023.⁴²



OPERATION POACHER

February 26, 2023
Shymkent City, Kazakhstan

This time, 4 people selling European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) at the market were arrested by the police. Shymkent City Police Department, February 28, 2023.⁴³

KYRGYZSTAN

January 14, 2023
Alamüdü District, Chüy Region, Kyrgyzstan

Rescue of a weakened saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) by Ministry of the Environment agents. Its left talon was frozen and the toes had to be amputated. In view of its shy demeanour, the caretakers from the "Bugu-Enye" wildlife foundation in Novopokrovka believe that it was a captive. It will not be able to regain its freedom. "Bugu-Enye" Public Foundation, February 16, 2023.⁴⁴

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of January 2023
Port of Nansha, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

The export container was chirping. Sharp-eared customs officers found 227 birds inside cargo officially designated as "filters", including 32 Chinese hwameis (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II), 3 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*, Appendix II with reservations by Indonesia and Canada), 43 Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 109 Japanese white-eyes (*Zosterops japonicus*) and 40 yellow-throated buntings (*Emberiza elegans*). Chinese Customs, January 16, 2023.⁴⁵

January 26, 2023
Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Officials confiscated 10 bags of bird's nests from inside an incoming passenger's baggage. Total weight 10 kg. Based on a weight of 10 grams, the confiscation corresponds to 1,000 nests. Chinese Customs, January 28, 2023.⁴⁶

February 1st, 2023
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Sentence to 16 months in prison for attempting in November 2020 to import 62 eggs of parrots (Psittacidae) listed in Appendix II of CITES at the disembarkation of a flight from Johannesburg, South Africa, in breach of the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance. Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, February 1st, 2023.⁴⁷



February 13, 2023
Hefei Xinqiao International Airport, Anhui Province, China

Seizure of 11.6 kg of loose bird's nests in the luggage of a passenger from abroad. Chinese Customs, February 16, 2023.⁴⁸

CAMBODIA

February 16, 2023

Hengqin Border Post, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.

Seizure of 14.5 kg of bird's nests from a car coming from Macao. A nest weighs between 3 and 14 grams. Chinese Customs, February 24, 2023.⁴⁹

February 16, 2023

Sha Tau Kok Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.



Seizure of 8.94 kg of bird's nests cleverly concealed in the front wing of a car arriving from Hong Kong and entering mainland China. The cargo was quickly detected using X-rays deployed by customs officers.

Chinese Customs, March 6, 2023.⁵⁰



February 21, 2023

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong and Macau.

Seizure from the rear of the SUV of 4 cushions filled with 4.75 kg of bird's nests.

Chinese Customs, February 27, 2023.⁵¹

February 2023

Siem Reap Province, Cambodia

Seizure and release of Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*), purple swampfens (*Porphyrio porphyrio*), lesser whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica*) and white-breasted waterhens (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*), 75 in all. The man was fined for illegally trading in birds.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, February 13, 2023.⁵²

February 16 and 28, 2023

Sanlang Village, Trapeang Chan, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia

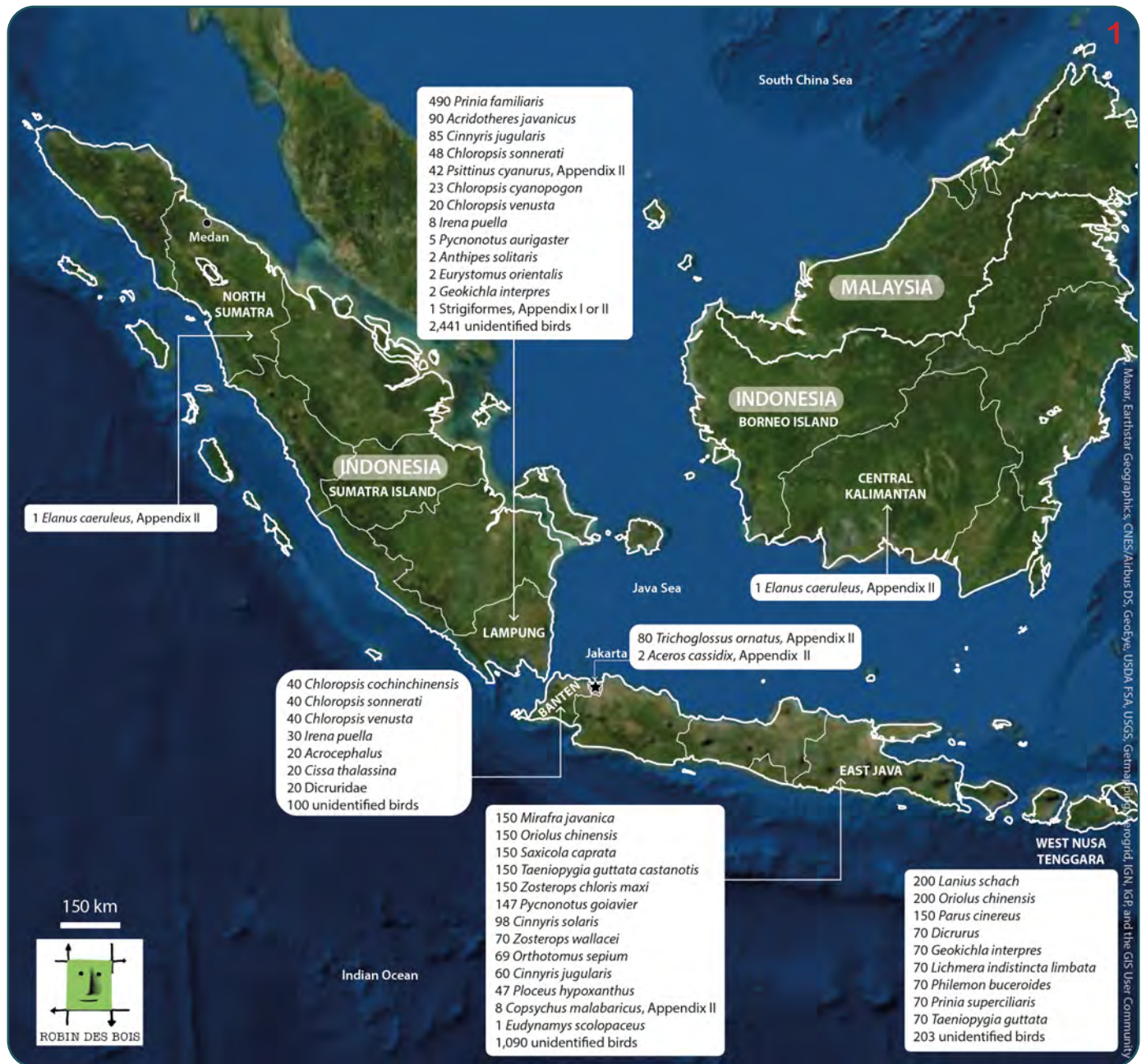


A change of tack. Six green peafowls (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II) seized by the forestry administration from Yim Sam Oeun were returned to Yim Sam Oeun on February 28. In the meantime, Prime Minister Hun Sen had sided with Internet users who had protested in full force and claimed the right to breed rare animals and even to trade in them to contribute to their conservation. "I request legal experts immediately amend the law and annul any sections related to the confiscation of animals from people." "We should motivate our people to raise them, rather than prevent their initiative." The Prime Minister has allocated 10 million riel (2,500 US\$) to the Oeun family to renovate the peafowl farm so that it can receive visitors, and he believes there are no problems with reforming the law before the general election scheduled for July 23. "A cabinet meeting will take an hour or two, and then it can go to the National Assembly." "I can sign a sub-decree in just a few moments." The wildlife trafficking lobby makes a point.

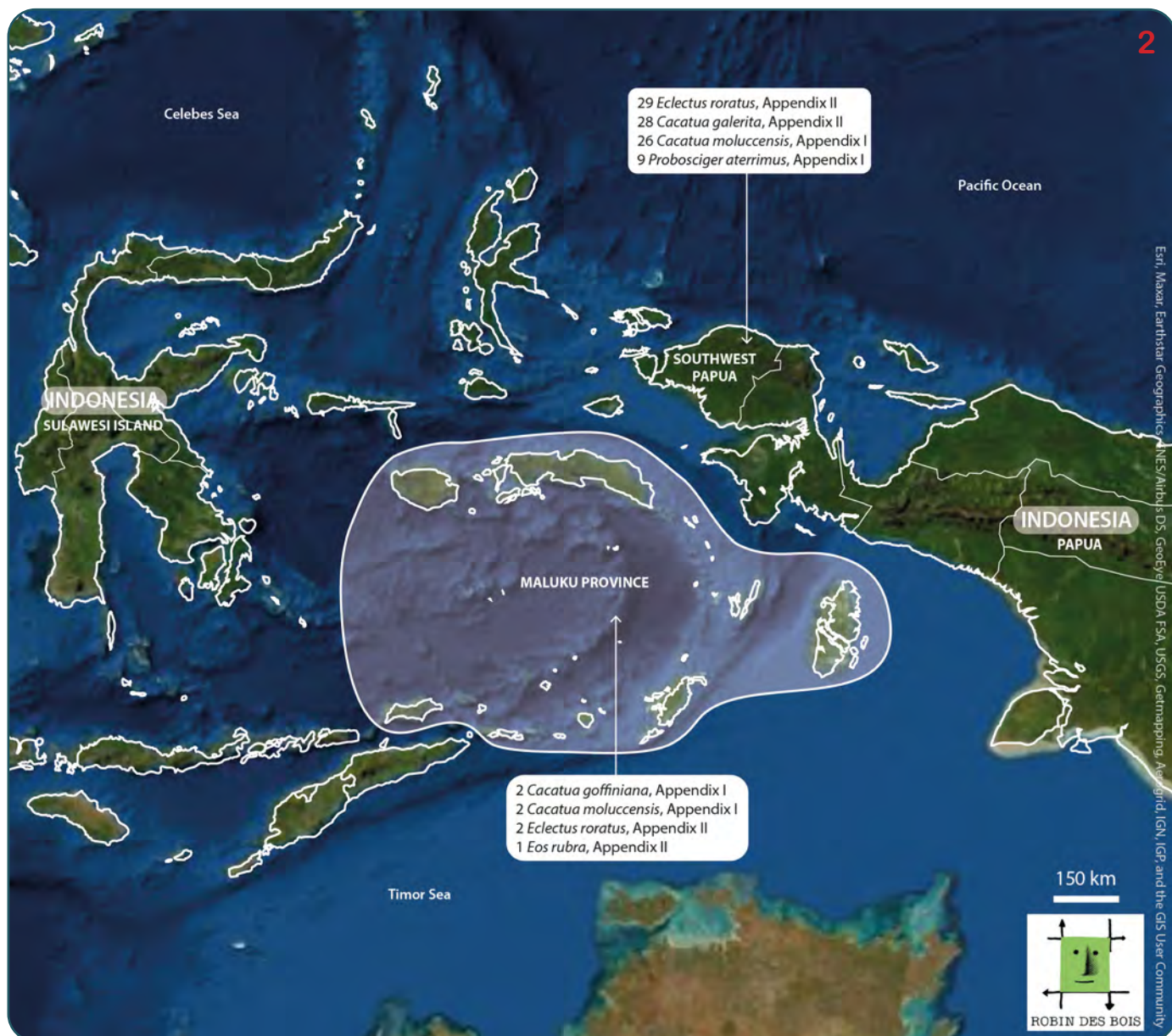
The Phnom Penh Post, February 28 and March 1st, 2023.⁵³

INDONESIA

Seizure of 7,265 birds between January 1 and February 28, 2023



Sources, see page 190, details page 101.



Map details

490 bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*)
 350 black-naped orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*)
 200 long-tailed shrikes (*Lanius schach*)
 220 Sunda zebra finches (*Taeniopygia guttata*) including 150 of the *Taeniopygia guttata castanotis* subspecies
 150 Horsfield's bush larks (*Mirafrja javanica*)
 150 cinereous tits (*Parus cinereus*)
 150 pied bush chats (*Saxicola caprata*)
 150 lemon-bellied white-eyes (*Zosterops chloris maxi*)
 147 yellow-vented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus goiavier*)
 145 olive-backed sunbirds (*Cinnyris jugularis*)
 98 flame-breasted sunbirds (*Cinnyris solaris*)
 90 Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*)
 90 drongos (family Dicruridae) including 70 of the *Dicrurus* genus
 88 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*)
 80 ornate lorikeets (*Trichoglossus ornatus*, Appendix II)
 72 chestnut-capped thrushes (*Geokichla interpres*)
 70 brown honeyeaters (*Lichmera indistincta limbata*)
 70 helmeted friarbirds (*Philemon buceroides*)
 70 hill prinias (*Prinia superciliaris*)

70 yellow-ringed white-eyes (*Zosterops wallacei*)
 69 olive-backed tailorbirds (*Orthotomus sepium*)
 60 blue-masked leafbirds (*Chloropsis venusta*)
 47 Asian golden weavers (*Ploceus hypoxanthus*)
 42 blue-rumped parrots (*Psittinus cyanurus*, Appendix II)
 40 blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*)
 38 Asian fairy-bluebirds (*Irena puella*)
 31 eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II)
 28 sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, A. II)
 28 salmon-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, A. I)
 23 lesser green leafbirds (*Chloropsis cyanopogon*)
 20 warblers (genus *Acrocephalus*)
 20 Javan green magpies (*Cissa thalassina*)
 9 palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I)
 8 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*, A. II)
 5 sooty-headed bulbuls (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*)
 2 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II)
 2 rufous-browed flycatchers (*Anthipes solitaris*)
 2 Tanimbar corellas (*Cacatua goffiniana*, Appendix I)
 2 black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II)
 2 Oriental dollarbirds (*Eurystomus orientalis*)
 1 red lory (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II)
 1 Asian koel (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*)
 1 owl (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II)
 3,834 unidentified birds



8 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*, Appendix II with reservation from Indonesia) and 1 Asian koel (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*). January 26, 2023. Juanda International Airport, Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island



70 yellow-ringed white-eyes (*Zosterops wallacei*, 60 olive-backed sunbirds (*Cinnyris jugularis*), 98 flame-breasted sunbirds (*Cinnyris solaris*), 47 Asian golden weavers (*Ploceus hypoxanthus*) and 60 unidentified birds. February 28, 2023. Port of Ketapang, Kabupaten de Banyuwangi, Province of East Java, Island of Java



1 black-winged kite (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II). January 4, 2023. Dagang Krawan, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island



1 red lory (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II). January 27, 2023. Port of Yos Sudarso, Ambon, Maluku Province, Maluku Archipelago



2 Tanimbar corellas (*Cacatua goffiniana*, A.I). February 8, 2023. Bomaki, Tanimbar Islands Regency, Maluku Province, Maluku Archipelago

January 16, 2023

Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia



Two traffickers were sentenced to 7 months in prison, a 50 million rupiah (3,190 US\$) fine, an additional month in prison in the event of non-payment, and to pay 2,000 rupiah (0.13 US\$) in legal costs. An accomplice was fined 50 million rupiah, a month in prison in the event of non-payment and 2,000 rupiah in legal costs. This was for attempting to fraudulently import 12 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II), 2 of which died in Surabaya, Java as the car ferry, *Dharma Kencana 7*, arrived from Makassar, Sulawesi. The *Dharma Kencana 7* is advertised as a luxury ferry by Dharma Lautan Utama PT. She was built in Japan in 1993, operated in Japan and sold to the Indonesian company in 2019.

Kerjha, October 23, 2022; FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, October 24, 2022; Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, January 16, 2023.⁵⁴



KM Dharma Kencana VII at Tanjung Perak, January 9, 2022

January 19, 2023

Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia



Sheta Danu Saputro was sentenced to 6 months in prison, fined 2 million rupiah (128 US\$) and ordered to pay court costs of 2,000 rupiah (0.13 US\$) for attempting to disembark a car ferry from the province of East Kalimantan, Borneo with 13 blue-crowned hanging parrots (*Loriculus galgulus*, Appendix II) and 9 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*).

Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, January 19, 2023; FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, January 29, 2023.⁵⁵

January 19, 2023

Kalianda, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Sentence of Sani Budiarto Bin Mijan and Beno Rizkianto Bin Subagio to one year and 9 months in prison and a fine of 5 million rupiah (320 US\$) each, with an additional sentence of 2 months if the fines are not paid. They must also pay court fees of 5,000 rupiah (0.3 US\$) each. The months spent in pre-trial detention are deducted from the criminal penalty.

On August 25, 2022, they were stopped in the port area of Bakauheni. They had come from Lampung and were trying to board a car ferry bound for the island of Java. Under the rear chassis of their Isuzu Giga Box, 872 chicks were hidden in 20 plastic and 44 cardboard boxes. Inventory of the aviary: 38 hanging parrots (*Loriculus* spp, Appendix II), 71 blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*), 48 Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*), 46 purple-throated sunbirds (*Leptocoma sperata*), 36 brown-cheeked bulbuls (*Alophoixus bres*), 36 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), 35 blue-masked leafbirds (*Chloropsis venusta*), 35 lesser green leafbirds (*Chloropsis cyanopogon*), 25 Sunda bulbuls (*Ixos virescens*), 13 olive-winged bulbuls (*Pycnonotus plumosus*), 9 Asian fairy-bluebirds (*Irena puella*), 8 Javan scimitar babblers (*Pomatorhinus montanus*), 4 crested jays (*Platylophus galericulatus*), a black-naped oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*) and 465 white-eyes (family Zosteropidae) whose species have not been determined. According to the minutes of the trial, they were handed over to the BKSDA with a view to their release.

Kupastuntas.co, August 26, 2022; FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, August 27, 2022; Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, January 19, 2023; FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, March 6, 2023.⁵⁶

MALAYSIA

Sunday, January 15, 2023

**Kota Bharu District, State of Kelantan, Malaysia.
Border with Thailand.**



The surprise inspection of 2 trucks from Thailand enabled members of the 7th and 8th battalions of the PGA (Pasukan Gerakan Am, General Operations Force) and Perhilitan (Department of Wildlife Protection and National Parks) to seize white-bellied parrots (*Pionites leucogaster*, Appendix II), black-headed parrots (*Pionites melanocephalus*, Appendix II), green-cheeked conures (*Pyrrhura molinae*, Appendix II) and rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*). Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, January 20, 2023; Kosmo!, January 21, 2023.⁵⁷

January 16, 2023

Kuala Rompin, State of Pahang, Malaysia

Members of the PGA, the Southeast Brigade of the Royal Malaysia Police's 9th Armoured Squadron and the Pahang State Forestry Department seized 7 birds – long-tailed parakeets (*Psittacula longicauda*, Appendix II), hanging parrots (*Loriculus* spp., Appendix II) and blue-rumped parrots (*Psittinus cyanurus*, Appendix II) – from a private home at 2.30 a.m. The birds were found in toilets, and the tenant was a 45-year-old man engaged in wildlife capture and market sales.

Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, January 19, 2023; Sinar Harian, January 20, 2023.⁵⁸

OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

From January 1st to February 16, 2023

State of Selangor, Malaysia

Results of 8 checks: 11 arrests, including one foreign citizen, and seizures of wildlife contraband valued at 4.69 million ringgits (around 1 million US\$), including a stuffed grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), live eagles (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), live parrots including a hyacinth macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I), a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), live falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) and an iguana (family Iguanidae), also alive. The largest seizure was made from a man who was holding 69 animals or parts of animals.

Bernama, February 19, 2023; The Sun Daily, February 19, 2023.⁵⁹

February 8-9, 2023

Tanjung Manis District, State of Sarawak, Malaysia



Seizure of 324 swiftlet (*Aerodramus fuciphagus*) nests worth 11,000 US\$, or 34 US\$ per nest, on the local market. Arrest of 27 people aged between 20 and 81, including 5 women. In Indonesia and Malaysia, a kind of nest "breeding" has been set up. Swiftlets are attracted by acoustic callers on the roofs of huts or abandoned houses. These "tweeter houses" have also been installed in towns. In France, swiftlet nests are commonly referred to as "swallow nests", even though swallows look like swiftlets but are not members of the same family. Swiftlets are in the same family as swifts.

Range of the edible-nest swiftlet: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam. Edible-nest swiftlets are 14 cm long. They build their nests with saliva. The nests are around 6 cm wide and 1.5 cm high, weighing an average of 10-14 grams. The collection of nests is the subject of heavy international trafficking. Nest soups are prized for their taste and supposed health benefits. They are said to be an aphrodisiac and a cure for liver disease.

Bird's nests, see *Adventures of a younger son* (1831) by Edward-John Trelawny, "On the Trail" n°29 p.117. The Star (Malaysia), February 11, 2023.⁶⁰

PHILIPPINES

January 2023

Quezon, National Capital Region, Philippines

Officials seized a red-shouldered macaw (*Diopsittaca nobilis*, Appendix II) from a student and made 2 arrests. The student said he wanted to pay for his studies with the sale. "I didn't know it was illegal."

GMA Network, January 17, 2023.⁶¹



© Eden Fontes

Red-shouldered macaw (*Diopsittaca nobilis*)

February 1 to 3, 2023

Tampakan, South Cotabato Province, Mindanao Island, Philippines

Seizure of 21 birds, including a crested goshawk (*Accipiter trivirgatus*, Appendix II) and white-eared brown dove (*Phapitreron leucotis*) being sold on the Internet. The blogger fled the scene. On the local market, the fledglings sell for between 2,000 and 5,000 pesos (36 US\$ to 91US\$), and 3 times more when they are adults. They are used as pets or demonstrators at bird markets or in social media tutorials dedicated to teaching how to capture them or making traps and cages. They are captured in the mountains around Tampakan, where the largest untapped copper and gold minefields in Southeast Asia are believed to lie.

Inquirer.net, February 11, 2023.⁶²

VIET NAM

February 2023

Viet Nam

Seizure of 52 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*). ENV had spotted the trafficker. He was offering birds for sale on Facebook. Total fine of 180 US\$ for keeping and offering for sale wildlife. ENV, February 24, 2023.⁶³

facebook



February 2023

Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 6 sooty babblers (*Stachyris herberti*), a black-throated laughingthrush (*Garrulax chinensis*), 6 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) and a Chinese francolin (*Francolinus pintadeanus*). Administrative fine of 3 million dong (128 US\$). The 14 birds were released. Joint operation of ENV and the forest services. ENV, February 28, 2023.⁶⁴

facebook



© Bao Lao Cai

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

January 18, 2023

Aramghar, Rangareddy District, State of Telangana, India

Seizure of 10 Alexandrine parakeet chicks (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II).

Telangana Today, January 18, 2023.⁶⁵



© Telangana Today

For sale for 25,000 rupees (302 US\$)

January 23, 2023

Bengaluru, Bengaluru Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

A VTC driver, aged 40, a student, aged 20, a farmer, aged 24, and a quality test rider in a tyre factory, aged 27, had another string to their bow. They bought Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) from a certain Sameer, a wild bird wholesaler in Tamil Nadu, and sold them in Chennai and Bangalore. Informed of their arrival in Bangalore, the Forest Unit of the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) was waiting for them outside a pet shop. Four arrests, seizure of 16 Alexandrine parakeets.

Deccan Herald, January 23, 2023; Country and Politics, January 25, 2023.⁶⁶

January 29, 2023

Mahala, Kendrapara District, State of Odisha, India



Arrest of 2 poachers, one of them a 38-year-old widow. They were in possession of 4 dead ruddy shelducks (*Tadorna ferruginea*) and 10 dead lesser whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica*). The carcasses were intended for sale as meat. They used poisoned bait to lure them into the ambush.

United News of India, January 30, 2023.⁶⁷

February 9, 2023

Nelamangala, Bengaluru Rural District, State of Karnataka, India

The black market in Alexandrine parakeets attracts young people. Rakesh Nagraj and Raghunandan Ramachandra, aged 19 and 22, were caught red-handed by the CID Forest Unit. On their motorbike, they were waiting for a customer on a motorway bypass road with 11 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II).

Deccan Herald, February 9, 2023; The Hindu, February 9, 2023.⁶⁸

February 15, 2023

Chennai, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) attract artists. Two of them were seized from the home of comedian "Robo" Shankar. Pro-bird activists had spotted on a video Robo and his family feeding 2 captive parakeets and alerted the police. Robo was reportedly fined 500,000 rupees (6,133 US\$).

The Times of India, February 16, 2023.⁶⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 25, 2023

Khargram Community Development Block, Murshidabad District, State of West Bengal, India



The father, Manjur Sheikh, and son, Minarul, have a seasonal job. For them, business is done in winter, when the greater short-toed larks (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) and the oriental larks (*Alauda gulgula*) come from Tibet and Mongolia and land in flocks near wetlands. At night, poachers get busy and set out mist nets. For good measure, they surround them with diffuse light sources to gather mosquitoes and other insects and attract exotic larks and Bengal bush larks (*Mirafra assamica*), which come to feast and are then blinded by bright torches. Caught forever, they end up on skewers after being sold alive for 20 to 30 rupees each in restaurants and markets. Seizure in a henhouse of 17 greater short-toed larks, 6 oriental larks and a Bengal bush lark. This type of poaching has been documented by the NGO HEAL (Human and Environment Alliance League).

The Telegraph India, February 27, 2023.⁷⁰



February 27, 2023

Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

Tipped off and assisted by WCCB investigators, West Bengal Forest Department officers seize a hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) and 2 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) under unknown circumstances.

WCCB, March 6, 2023.⁷¹

February 2023
Ikop Pat Lake, near Khangabok, Thoubal District,
State of Manipur, India



Proliferation of bird-trapping nets around the lake and its riverine forests. Lake Ikop Pat is a 13.5 km² wetland. It is a stopover for greylag geese (*Anser anser*), whistling ducks (genus *Dendrocygna*), shelducks (genus *Tadorna*) and pochards (genus *Aythya*), bar-headed geese (*Anser indicus*) and wild ducks. In December 2022, 5 hunters were fined 25,000 rupees (300 US\$) for killing 2 migratory birds. Their luxury cars and firearms were seized. This was the first time that poachers had used firearms around the lake. Their usual weapon is rather nets. In 2 tracking and dismantling campaigns in February, volunteers assisted by police and forest officers dismantled and destroyed 62 nets. The cumulative length exceeded 500 metres. They also found 19 dead migratory birds. These campaigns are credited to the Unique Wildlife Protection Committee, the Environmental Social Reformation and Sangai Protection Forum and the Joint Coordination Committee on Wildlife and Biodiversity Manipur. Poaching of migratory birds in Indian wetlands, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.35 et p.37, n°7 p.26, n°8 p.25, n°16 p.34, n°19 p.41-43, n°22 p.44-45, n°23 p.47-49, n°24 p.42, n°27 p.49, n°28 p.48, n°31 p.128, n°32 p.172 et p.174, n°33 p.169, n°34 p.156, n°35 p.128 and n°38 p.148. The Hindu, December 10, 2022; Imphal Free Press, February 3 and 19, 2023.⁷²

IRAN

January 2023
Meshgin Shahr, Germe and Bileh Savar, Ardabil
Province, Iran

Seven arrests.

- Seizure of 4 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 2 cages and nets.
- Seizure of 5 European goldfinches, 3 European turtle doves (*Streptopelia turtur*) and a shotgun.
- Seizure of 2 European turtle doves (*Streptopelia turtur*), 6 wild pigeons and 2 shotguns.

Irib News Agency, January 24, 2023.⁷³

January 21, 2023
Chang Almas and Chargar, Zanjan Province, Iran



At 3 o'clock in the morning, a patrol stopped 3 poachers and seized 2 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) as well as a cage, a net, 5 cartridges, a weapon, binoculars, a flashlight, a cell phone and a car. Irib News Agency, January 26, 2023.⁷⁴

February 2023
Firuzabad, Fars Province, Iran

Police Commander Jokar announced that a falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) had been seized in a village near Firuzabad and that one person had been handed over to the judicial authority. Irib News Agency, February 14, 2023.⁷⁵

NEPAL

February 28 and March 4, 2023
Neelakantha Municipality, Dhading District,
Bagmati Province, Nepal

The owl (*Tytonidae* or *Strigidae*, Appendix I or II) was released under the proud and solemn eye of 11 soldiers, elected representatives and bird lovers in the Neelakantha community forest. On February 28, it had been seized from Ramesh Syangtan and Binod Lama by elements of the Nepal Police and the local police. They were trying to sell it. Nepal News, March 5, 2023.⁷⁶

PAKISTAN

January 11, 2023
Dalbandin Airport, Province of Balochistan,
Pakistan

Prince Fahad bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, Governor of Tabuk Province, Saudi Arabia, arrived with a delegation of 22 hunters and their falcons to hunt houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I). He was welcomed with great pomp by the Minister of State for Energy, 4 senior Balochistan officials, high-ranking military officers and prominent tribal leaders. The Sultan and his entourage then set off for Nokchah camp, 50 km away, under close escort. Dawn, January 12, 2023.⁷⁷

January 12, 2023

Karachi, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

The scandal of the death by torture in November 2021 of Nazim Jokhio, who openly criticised a houbara bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) hunt organised by MP Jam Awais and notables from the Persian Gulf, is gradually dying down. Jam Awais has just been acquitted by the Supreme Court. The Court considered that the payment of "diyat" (blood money) to Nazim Jokhio's widow and mother of 4 orphans, who had pardoned him in 2022, was both an admission of responsibility and a penalty under the Pakistan Penal Code.

As a reminder, Jokhio had refused to hand over his video of the bustard hunt to Jam Awais' henchmen and bodyguards. That's why he was brutally killed. Dawn, January 13 and March 14, 2023.⁷⁸



February 18, 2023

Tehsil of Kharian, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

Twenty parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II except 4 species) seized during the night from a seller via the Internet. They were probably Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II). The operation was carried out by the Province's Special Wildlife Squad in cooperation with the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, WWF and the Himalayan Wildlife Foundation.

Veterinary News and Views, February 19, 2023.⁷⁹

WESTERN ASIA

ARMENIA

January 2, 2023

Dzoraghbyur, Kotayk Province, Armenia

An eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos* or *Aquila heliaca*, Appendix II) unable to fly was spotted next to a house. A team of vets and volunteers from an Armenian NGO (Protection of Endemic and Endangered Species) went to the site and managed to catch it. It suffered a gunshot wound to the wing and has survived for at least 2 weeks. It was given an emergency operation and then transferred to the NGO's refuge. The prognosis is favourable.

Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia, January 3, 2023; Protection of Endemic and Endangered Species, January 3, 2023; Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia, January 19, 2023.⁸⁰

February 10, 2023

Armavir Province, Armenia

Arrest of 2 poachers during a preventive control operation. Seizure of 15 calandra larks (*Melanocorypha calandra*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and 2 rifles.

Environmental Protection and Mining Inspection Body of the Republic of Armenia, February 11, 2023.⁸¹



Calandra lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*)

Mid-February 2023

Vanand, Armavir Province, Armenia

Police intercept a 36-year-old man in possession of an undeclared rifle and 29 remains of passerines (Passeriformes order) banned from hunting.

Police of the Republic of Armenia, February 14, 2023.⁸²



CYPRUS

January 2023

Famagusta District and Oroklini, Larnaca District, Cyprus

- A poacher used an electronic caller to attract meadow pipits (*Anthus pratensis*). He killed 4 and was caught red-handed.

- Using electronic decoys, a poacher killed a serin (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and a meadow pipit.

- Since the beginning of 2023, the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) has recorded some 20 poaching attempts made using electronic decoys. An increasing number of residents are protesting against both bird poaching and the acoustic nuisance caused by these electronic devices. As a reminder, the reason for this hunt for small birds is culinary. Cyprus gastronomy is based on ambelopoulia, spit-roasted sparrows (see "On the Trail" n°10 p. 27, n°16 p. 35, n°21 p. 39, n°34 p. 158, n°36 p.140.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, January 10, 2023.⁸³

January 22, 2023

Near Paralimni, Famagusta District, Cyprus

As GFS (Game and Fauna Service) officers approached, 2 poachers tried to hide 15 dead birds in the thicket, including meadow pipits (*Anthus pratensis*), white wagtails (*Motacilla alba*), a corn bunting (*Emberiza calandra*) and a European greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*).

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, January 23, 2023.⁸⁴

January 2023

Republic of Cyprus

The raptor serial killer who struck 2 Bonelli's eagles (*Hieraetus fasciatus*, Appendix II) and a northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) with carbofuran in the Limassol district in December 2021 was sentenced to a fine of 20,000 € (22,360 US\$). If he fails to pay, he will be put on trial and risk 3 years in prison and a fine 3 times higher (20,000 € per poisoned bird of prey). Since 2005, agricultural poison and a general disdain towards birds of prey have taken the lives of 31 griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) as well. It is likely that other unknown victims have escaped these official statistics. The poacher was identified thanks to police and the GFS, whose canine brigades played a particularly big role in solving the mystery.

BalkanDetox LIFE project, January 23, 2023.⁸⁵



ISRAEL/PALESTINE

January 17, 2023

Hébron, West Bank, Israel/Palestine



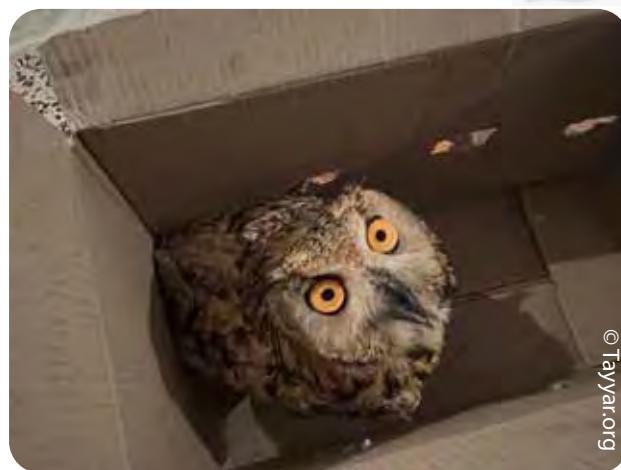
Tsahal and members of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority recovered the following from a private home: 134 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 3 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 3 serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 6 European goldfinch and Atlantic canary (*Serinus canaria*) hybrids, 2 Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 2 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 2 Syrian serins (*Serinus syriacus*), 7 Asian crimson-winged finches (*Rhodopechys sanguineus*) and a chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*).

Israel Nature and Parks Authority, January 17, 2023.⁸⁸

LEBANON

January 2, 2023

Sidon, South Governorate, Lebanon



A 35-year-old Palestinian refugee was arrested in the Ain al-Hilweh camp for trying to sell a Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II). He was reminded of the law and the bird was taken to a competent organisation.

Elnashra.com, January 10, 2023; Tayyar.org, January 10, 2023.⁸⁹

CYPRUS/UNITED KINGDOM

January 15, 2023

Sovereign Base Area of Dhekelia, Cyprus Island, United Kingdom

British police, in cooperation with a CABS team, caught the poacher of 39 meadow pipits (*Anthus pratensis*) red-handed. He faces a fine of 4,000 € (4,260 US\$).

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, January 16, 2023.⁸⁶

ISRAEL

February 28, 2023

Shefa-Amr, Northern District, Israel

Seizure from an illegal breeder of golden parakeets (*Guarouba guarouba*, Appendix I) and yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) by officers from the Nature and Parks Authority and the Border Police.

Israel Nature and Parks Authority, February 28, 2023.⁸⁷



TURKIYE

January 2023

Erzurum, Erzurum Province, Türkiye



Authorities seized a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) from a private home. The "jacko" is under observation and the protection of Selçuk Albayrak and Burak Çiftçi, partners of the DKMP (Doğa Koruma ve Milli Parklar, Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks). He was placed on a strict diet of nuts, seeds and apples, and will be transferred to a zoo as soon as possible. He was poorly fed and neglected, and his owner did not have a CITES permit.

Anadolu Agency, January 20, 2023.⁹⁰

NORTHERN EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

OPERATION EASTER

January 6, 2023

Halesworth, Suffolk County, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of a large collection of bird eggs, including ones of northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II) and osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II). Thousands of birds have never had "a chance" to exist, says the police on its website. Decidedly spirited, the police described the seizure as "eggcellent", without however giving any details of the conditions or location of the seizure. All that is known is that Suff



Suffolk Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Policing Team played a decisive role in the seizure. Halesworth Police, January 8, 2023.⁹¹

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Angus Council, Scotland, United Kingdom



The triangle of death for raptors in Angus Council still strikes. A crow trap that was still active, with a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) dead inside, was found on a moor where grouse hunters are active. The trap was tagged by its operator. Normally, traps must be checked at least once every 24 hours and all non-target birds must be released (alive).

Raptor Persecution UK, January 16, 2023; The Courier, January 17, 2023.⁹²

January 11 and 31st, 2023

Colchester, Essex County, England, United Kingdom

Still alive even if badly damaged by 3 shotgun pellets, the common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) may yet recover. "It's going to be a long road," said Katrina Myers, manager of Colchester Owl Rescue. In fact, it was a short road. The buzzard died on January 31st.

Raptor Persecution UK, January 23 and 31st, 2023; Daily Gazette, January 26, 2023.⁹³

January 16 and June 29, 2023

King's Forest, Brandon and Norwich, Suffolk County, England, United Kingdom



Sentence of Francis Addison to 12 weeks in prison, suspended. He pleaded guilty to illegally shooting 5 northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), unlawfully possessing firearms and using a trap in unauthorised circumstances. He was also ordered to pay 1,339 £ (1,165 US\$) in compensation, legal costs and victim surcharge. Eastern Daily Press, January 17, 2023; Suffolk Constabulary, January 18, March 27, June 7 and 29, 2023.⁹⁴

February 3, 2023

Otham, Kent County, England, United Kingdom

A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) collapsed in a garden. It was rushed to a specialist vet. There was no other option than to finish it off. Kent Police, February 6, 2023.⁹⁵

Saturday, February 11, 2023

London, England, United Kingdom

A red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) hit by gunfire crashed into a group of tourists photographing Greenwich Observatory. Lying on the ground, breathing with difficulty after the crash, it was examined at the scene by a member of the RSPCA and then transferred to a veterinary clinic. Favourable prognosis.

Raptor Persecution UK, February 12, 2023; Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, March 6, 2023.⁹⁶

February 16, 2023

Weymouth, Dorset County, England, United Kingdom

Paul Allen, a gamekeeper, was fined 2,906 £ (3,600 US\$) and given a 15-week suspended prison sentence for possessing 6 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) riddled with lead pellets, 3 batches of pesticides banned from use and storage: strychnine, Ficam W, a bendiocarb insecticide banned since December 2020 after being used to poison dogs, and Cymag, a brodifacoum fumigant used to eliminate rabbits and rats and banned from storage and use since 2004. Allen is also accused of possessing a firearm and ammunition under conditions that did not comply with regulations and were dangerous to public safety. The facts date back to March 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.181).



The remains of a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.133) and a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.135) poisoned with brodifacoum and the remains of 3 other common buzzards in the middle of a pile of ashes were found within the perimeter of the hunting club of which Allen was the warden. However, to the astonishment of the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) inspectors, Allen was not held responsible for the deaths of these 6 birds of prey.

DorsetLive, February 16, 2023; Raptor Persecution UK, February 16 and March 16, 2023; The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, February 17, 2023.⁹⁷

SWEDEN

**Beginning of January 2023
Uppsala County, Sweden**

A man was sentenced to 40 daily fines of 90 crowns (345 US\$) for trying to resell a parrot (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except for 4 species) that he had bought on Blocket. Uppsala Nya Tidning, January 10, 2023.⁹⁸



WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

**Beginning of January 2023
Essing and Mainburg, Bavaria State, Germany**



Two Eurasian eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) and a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) died from carbofuran poisoning.

Tatort Natur, February 9, 2023.⁹⁹

**Beginning of January 2023
Haste, Lower Saxony State, Germany**



Officials confiscate from a 69-year-old man frozen or stuffed birds of prey – owls (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II), an eagle (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), a black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II) and northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) – and live birds – bluethroats (*Luscinia svecica*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasia wrens (*Troglodytes troglodytes*, Appendix III in Ukraine), black redstarts (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) and grey wagtails (*Motacilla cinerea*), trap cages and nets. He used to sell birds on Tierflohmarkt.de. Norddeutscher Rundfunk, January 23, 2023.¹⁰⁰

**January 10, 2023
Münster, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany**



A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) whose left leg was crushed in a leg-hold trap and which suffered from fractures was put to rest. It had been baited by a dead hen from an ornamental gallinaceous farm. These traps have been banned in the European Union since 1995.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, January 11, 2023.¹⁰¹

REPEATED OFFENCE

Beginning of February 2023

Kleve, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

A fine of 4,000 € (4,360 US\$) for poisoning a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) in front of his dovecote in April 2021 with bait impregnated with parathion.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, February 8, 2023; Registration and Documentation Centre for Raptor Persecution and Wildlife Crime.¹⁰²



AUSTRIA

February 10, 2023

Tulln an der Donau, Lower Austria State, Austria

An imperial eaglet (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix I) was found in very poor condition at the foot of an oak tree. A veterinary examination and X-ray revealed the presence of 3 lead pellets in the body and a fractured wing. The shot had been fired a few days earlier. The eaglet is exhausted. It was born in 2022 in the Czech Republic. The prognosis is guarded. Complete release is unlikely. BirdLife Österreich is seeing red. This is the 2nd injured imperial eagle to crash-land in Tulln an der Donau.

BirdLife Österreich, February 23, 2023.¹⁰³

FRANCE

Beginning of January 2023

Nogent-Le-Phaye, Department of Eure-et-Loir, France

Refuge de la Tanière: rapid release of 2 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and a red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) seized from a private home.

La Tanière, January 8, 2023.¹⁰⁴

Beginning of January 2023

L'Etoile, Department of Jura, France

Release of 7 European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) after a month's care. Caught with limesticks, they had been seized from a poacher and entrusted to the Athénas care and rehabilitation center for wild animals.

Centre Athénas, January 9, 2023.¹⁰⁵



REPEATED OFFENCE

January 8, 2023

Argenteuil, Department of Val-d'Oise, France

At the Héloïse market, officials intercepted a kakariki parakeet (*Cyanoramphus* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*), 44 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), 2 cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*) and an Atlantic canary (*Serinus canaria*). By his own account, the bird seller operated illegally for 40 years. The APA (Action Protection Animale) association ended this scandal by mobilizing the town's gendarmerie. APA director Arnaud Lhomme says he observed several hundred birds in the shop and in the van, including society finches, a domesticated population of white-rumped munias (*Lonchura striata*), and canaries, a domesticated population of Atlantic canaries (*Serinus canaria*). After the confiscation, Khaled boasted that he already sold 40 birds and 30 goldfish that morning. The Héloïse market is one of the biggest in Ile-de-France. An agent in charge of the population's protection spotted Khaled in June 2022 and recalled him it's forbidden to sell live animals in a food market. "I'm not in the market, I'm outside", he replied, before adding "there's only the Châtelet left". He was referring to the Sunday bird market on the Ile Saint-Louis in the heart of Paris. It was definitively closed on December 31, 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.159).

Le Parisien, June 3, 2022 and January 8, 2023.¹⁰⁶

January 18, 2023

Department of Hérault, Southern France

After being found on the ground with several bullets under its plumage in September, an adult female Bonelli's eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*, Appendix II) was released by the caretakers of the Centre Régional de Sauvegarde de la Faune Sauvage de Villeveyrac in good health after 3 months of care. Only 8 pairs of Bonelli's eagles remain in the Hérault region.

France Bleu Hérault, January 19 2023; Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux Hérault, February 3 2023.¹⁰⁷

January 18, 2023

Nevers, Department of Nièvre, France

Pierre Boisselle fined 435 € (465 US\$) and ordered to pay 200 € (215 US\$) in damages to ASPAS for capturing a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) with a net trap.

ASPAS, autumn 2023.¹⁰⁸



January 31, 2023

Foix, Department of Ariège, France

A sheep breeder was sentenced to a suspended fine of 3,000 € (3,200 US\$) for killing 2 griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) with a rifle that authorities seized raiding his home, even though he claimed not to possess a firearm. For the IUCN, which is often a couple steps behind, the fate of griffon vultures in France is now of minor concern.

France 3 Occitanie, February 9, 2023.¹⁰⁹



February 2023

Department of Nièvre, France

Alert from the Nièvre OFB. Raptors are being subjected to all kinds of brutality: direct shooting, poisoning and capture.

- A tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) caught in a trap was freed by OFB officers. For several hours, it hung upside down from the top of a post. It was handed over to a vet on the instructions of the Nevers public prosecutor's office. The utmost emergency was to finish it off. A judicial enquiry has been opened. The OFB insists that owls are useful. They eat small rodents that are considered pests by farmers.

- A kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) that had been shot was rescued and released after several days in a wildlife care centre.

Le Journal du Centre, February 12, 2023.¹¹⁰



Beginning of February 2023

Department of Nord, France

An 18-year-old female peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) landed in a garden and did not move. It was taken to the vet, who did not find any open wounds or pathology on initial examination. However, X-rays revealed 7 lead pellets of different calibres in the head, near the beak, in the legs, wings and back. The lead injuries had all healed. The shots are old. The average lifespan of peregrine falcons is 13 years in real life, and 18 to 25 years in captivity. Perhaps the peregrine falcon escaped from falconry?

La Voix du Nord, February 17, 2023.¹¹¹

February 23, 2023

Limoges, Department of Haute-Vienne, France

Sentence of Joseph Bermudez to a fine of 2,000 € (2,180 US\$) in absentia and to pay 3,000 € (3,270 US\$) in damages to the LPO (Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, Bird Protection League) and SOS Faune Sauvage for having, between February 1st and February 8, 2021 in Nantiat, in his home, detained 58 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), a serin (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and a European greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*), caught them between the same dates and used European goldfinches as live decoys in Nantiat and Saint-Jouvent. In court, the head of the OFB's department in the department stated that he had observed birds at Bermudez's in great suffering, and even in terminal illness, as a result of the treatment they had received during capture and detention.

France 3 Nouvelle-Aquitaine, February 22, 2023; Limoges Court, February 23, 2023.¹¹²



REPEATED OFFENCE

February 27, 2023

Toulon, Department of Var, France

A six-month suspended prison sentence and a total of 16,000 € (17,450 US\$) in damages for 8 associations. From November 2017 to October 2020, he had poached around 270 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine). They were found plucked, frozen, ready to be sold and roasted in the freezer of the retired farmer but still a hyperactive poacher at the age of 80. Skewers of 6 small birds sell for between 40 and 50 €, or between 43 and 55 US\$. Caught poaching in the forest by OFB officers, he had offered each of them 150 € to turn a blind eye. He had already been convicted in November 2017 for a similar case.

France 3 Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, February 27, 2023; BFM Toulon Var, February 28, 2023; One Voice, February 28, 2023; ASPAS, autumn 2023.¹¹³



End of February 2023

Pertuis, Department of Vaucluse, France

Seizure of a European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) in a cage during a search for drug trafficking.

France Bleu Vaucluse, February 24, 2023.¹¹⁴

THE NETHERLANDS

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENCE

January 12, 2023

Zwolle, Province of Overijssel, The Netherlands



Between July 8, 2018 and March 28, 2021, 2 parents captured at least one hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), 2 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and 26 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) at Twenterand, Overijssel province. The father was sentenced to 8 months in prison and a suspended year of community service, and the mom to 3 years' probation. The couple also sold a hawfinch for 75 € (87 US\$), 2 Eurasian blackcaps for 125 € (138 US\$) (one of which died immediately after the sale and the couple then sold the buyer another), 5 European goldfinches for 215 € (260 US\$) and 4 European goldfinches for 180 € (220 US\$) on Marktplaats, a site for classified ads. All the birds wore counterfeit leg bands. In addition, their 31-year-old son was also sentenced to 120 hours of community service for contributing (in cooperation with his father) to the clandestine breeding of puppies and dogs between 2016 and 2021. The 3 family members long profited from fraudulently selling wild and domestic animals. The father was already convicted on numerous occasions for the same offences. Officials suspected but could not prove the deaths of several animals. On March 30, 2021, authorities searched the couple's home and recovered 17 European goldfinches, hundreds of counterfeit bird rings, 7,815 € in cash, and accounting records confirming their profitable, clandestine trade.

Overijssel District Court, January 12, 2023.¹¹⁵

January 24, 2023

The Netherlands

Seizure in a private home of 4 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 3 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 2 serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), a Eurasian siskin (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), a brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*) and a chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) with tampered rings. The NVWA (Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority) provides no further information.

Inspecteur Natuur, January 24, 2023.¹¹⁶

Saturday, February 18, 2023

Provinces of Utrecht and Flevoland, The Netherlands



The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) inspected 30 registered bird farms and found around 20 infractions: some birds were not wearing identification rings, while others had had their rings sawn off. A trap cage and European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) were seized.

de Gelderlander, February 21, 2023; Inspecteur Natuur, February 21 and March 9, 2023.¹¹⁷

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

End of January 2023

Mutxamel, Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain



When you're 78 years old and have spent decades poaching thousands of birds, you can't get rid of your addiction. That's what happened to the owner of a private estate in the Valencian Community, along the Mediterranean coast. This area is decidedly inhospitable to small migratory songbirds such as European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonym of *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*). Yet the man would set up a camouflaged hut surrounded by netting in the thicket, with a water trough inside, open to all passing birds. He was old school and did not use fancy electronic decoys. A few meters from this warlike device, the hidden poacher would pull on the ropes when the birds tried to venture out, the nets falling, trapping them. The motivation behind poaching was "silvestrismo", a tradition of capturing, domesticating and training birds to become trilling virtuosos, if possible. Those which have no gift for singing end up on skewers or on the market. A team from Seprona (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) rescued the man's birds from captivity or freezers and handed them over to a refuge near Alicante.

Cadena SER, January 26, 2023.¹¹⁸



The trap-hut

GREECE

Mid-January 2023

Eleofito, Region of Peloponnese, Greece

The common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), a male around 4 years old, was found in an olive grove. His left wing was damaged by an old, badly-healed fracture, and it had recently gone blind. Transferred to the Wild Life Protection & Rehabilitation Center in Pyrgos, it was placed in intensive care and x-rayed. It had 17 pellets in its body, including 4 in its head, responsible for its gradual loss of sight. Its condition rapidly deteriorated. Caregivers put it out of its misery on February 3.

Wild Life Protection & Rehabilitation Center, January 21 et February 4, 2023.¹¹⁹

End of January 2023

Island of Zakynthos, Region of Ionian Islands, Greece

Transfer to the veterinary clinic of the NGO Anima of a young black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II) wounded by 5 bullets. Favourable prognosis.

Anima, January 28, 2023.¹²⁰



Mid-February 2023

Thessaloniki, Region of Central Macedonia, Greece

Discovery of a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) with a bullet wound inside the Papageorgiou hospital. The bullet was extracted, but the prognosis is guarded.

Action for wildlife, February 13, 2023.¹²¹

ITALY

Beginning of February 2023

Brescia, Province of Brescia, Region of Lombardy, Italy



The man exhausted all his means to escape prison, but none worked. The poacher was arrested in Rezzato back in June 2019 with 320 fledglings, mostly thrushes (family Turdidae) including fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*) he plundered from nests. The Court of Cassation sentenced him to 4 months in prison and to reimburse the civil party (Lega Anti Vivisezione) for their legal costs. He had already been given this exact sentence in November 2019 and on appeal in April 2022.

La Stampa, November 22, 2019; Lega Anti Vivisezione, April 11, 2022 and February 10, 2023.¹²²

Birds poached or seized Map details (see next page)

165 song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
116 common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
70 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
51 finches (family Fringillidae)
50 Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
19 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
15 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*)
11 bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*)
10 fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*)
6 garden warblers (*Sylvia borin*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
4 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
4 Atlantic canaries (*Serinus canaria*)
3 hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)
2 hermit ibises (*Geronticus eremita*, Appendix I)
1 golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II)
1 long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II)
1 common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II)
1 Eurasian siskin (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
1 yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
1 serin (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
1 Eurasian blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
1 European greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*)
1 rock bunting (*Emberiza cia*)
1 common reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)
1 European pied flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)
1 tit (family Paridae)
1 thrush (family Turdidae)
18 unidentified birds

ITALY

Poaching and seizures of birds (557) between January 1 and February 28, 2023



Sources, see page 190, details page 115.



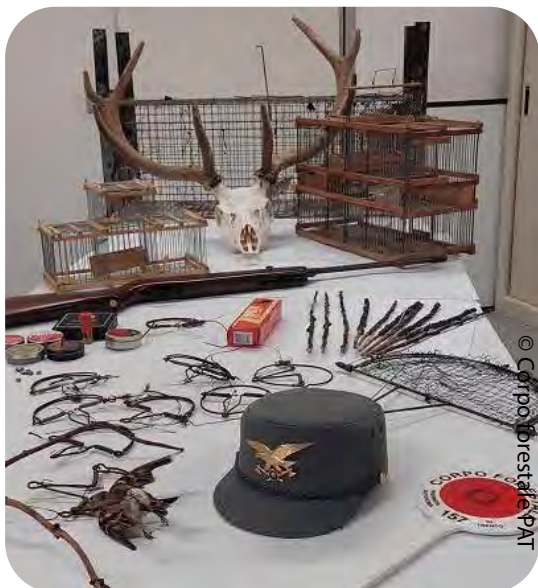
1 common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II).
January 5, 2023. Between Maiori and Minori, Province of Salerno, Region of Campania.



14 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine).
Mid-February 2023.
Region of Emilia-Romagna.



1 golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II).
January 6, 2023. San Polo d'Enza, Region of Emilia-Romagna.



European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), tits (family Paridae)...
Beginning of January 2023.
Trento, Autonomous Province of Trento, Region of Trentino-Alto Adige.



73 passerines (family Fringillidae) including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and 1 common blackbird (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine).
Beginning of February 2023. Corigliano-Rossano, San Pietro in Guarano, Castrovillari, Luzzi, Trebisacce and Roggiano Gravina, Province of Cosenza, Region of Calabria.

MALTA

January 20, 2023

Malta

The European Commission is taking Malta to the European Court of Justice. The plaintiff argues Malta has failed to comply with the 2009 Birds Directive by permitting the capture of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) and chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) in the name of so-called "scientific research". The Commission asserts that the derogation in question violates criteria set forth in Article 9 of the Directive.

1. Malta fails to prove that this derogation corresponds to genuine scientific objectives.

2. Malta fails to explain why there is no alternative solution.

3. Malta fails to prove that there is no alternative solution.

As a reminder, Malta claimed the reason for its scientific research was to better understand the migratory routes of these 7 species.

For winter 2023, France followed Malta's lead, authorizing the capture of Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European golden plovers (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and northern lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*) in nets and traps, by way of derogation from the Birds Directive. The aim of this "scientific research" is to better understand the selectivity of traditional hunting gear.

Malta's disputes with the European Commission, see "On the Trail" n°21 p.42-43, n°31 p.141 and n°33 p.182.

European Commission, January 20, 2023; MaltaToday, January 27, 2023.¹²³

End of January 2023

Near Malta International Airport, South Eastern Region, Malta

Police seized several European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine) from a private owner. They were released.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, January 22, 2023.¹²⁴

February 22, 2023

Valletta, South Eastern Region, Malta

Four poachers caught in the act at an illegal trapping site in March 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.142) were fined between 1,000 and 1,800 € (1,090 US\$ and 1,960 US\$) and banned from trap hunting for 2 years. They had been caught with over 30 live birds, including Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*). Committee Against Bird Slaughter, February 24, 2023.¹²⁵



SERBIA

February 6, 2023

Subotica, North Backa District, Serbia. Border with Hungary.

Seizure of 11 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) from the laundry room of a private home, and of nets and traps to capture the birds. Five European goldfinches were released and 6 were transferred to the district bird shelter in the hope that they would regain agility compatible with freedom. A 63-year-old man is being prosecuted. He is suspected of having been involved in the capture and trade of wild birds for many years.

Institute for Nature Conservation of Voivodina Province, February 10, 2023; Kurir, February 13, 2023.¹²⁶



EASTERN EUROPE

HUNGARY

Beginning of January 2023

Békéscsaba, Békés County, Hungary

Imre J. László, 57, a hunter who was more or less a forest ranger, knew the Széchenyi Zsigmond hunting reserve in Gerendás by heart. He was, however, unaware that it was filled with trap cameras that would one day take him to court. He operated several trap cages that were authorized to capture animals classified as pests such as badgers, foxes, weasels and ferrets. His real targets were birds of prey, which have long been bitterly viewed as competitors to meadow and forest hunters. When he would trap baited common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), he took them by the neck, with a noose at the end of a specially fitted stick, and walk away to an unknown fate... likely not freedom. The district prosecutor initiated proceedings against him. .../...



The evidence was gathered by police in cooperation with the Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society, MME (Magyar Madártani és Természetvédelmi Egyesület). In December 2020, MME found 4 barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) in another private game reserve, frozen to death in a crow trap that had not been checked every day, as required by regulations, and forgotten by those who set it.

PannonEagle LIFE Project, August 22, 2022 and January 12, 2023; Hungarian Police, January 12, 2023.¹²⁷

February 2023

Kisvárd, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, Hungary



Sentence of a poacher to 18 months in prison. He had killed a cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) and buried its burnt out remains near the river Tisza. (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.193 and n°38 p.166).

Három Határ Hírei, February 27, 2023.¹²⁸

POLAND

End of December 2022 and January 6, 2023

Gmina Wisznice and Gmina Sosnówka, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland



A massacre in the snow. 10 km away, 3 white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I), 2 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), common ravens (*Corvus corax*) and a red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) were poisoned with carbofuran. This pesticide was widely used in tobacco plantations near the nearby Biłgoraj forest.

Fundacja Dzika Polska, January 12, 2023; Dziennik Wschodni, April 12, 2023.¹²⁹

Beginning of January 2023

Medyka Border Post, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

"The birds were transported in inhumane conditions, inside luggage, with their wings, talons and beaks attached. To not attract vehicle inspection, they were probably drugged with sleeping pills," said Yustyna Pasiechynska, spokeswoman for the National Tax Administration. Officials intercepted 5 tundra peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus calidus*, Appendix I) – a 2-year-old male and 4 females around one year old – from a Ukrainian citizen's car. They were recently captured and showed no signs of domestication. In winter, peregrine falcons migrate south from Finland, Norway and Siberia to the Odessa area. A tundra peregrine falcon sells for between 2,500-10,000 US\$ on the domestic market. National Revenue Administration, January 3, 2023; in Poland - Ukrainian information portal in Poland, January 3, 2023.¹³⁰

January 12 and 18, 2023

Wola Gródecka, Lublin Voivodeship, and Przemyśl, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland



© Dariusz Gólik, Nadleśnictwo Tomaszów Lubelski

On January 12, forest rangers found a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) on the ground, unable to fly away as they approached. Its fate was uncertain and condition alarming, showing symptoms of poisoning. Veterinarians at a clinic in Przemyśl, 125 km away, confirmed the pre-diagnosis; carbofuran struck again in the Lublin Voivodeship. However, the large bird of prey was not euthanized. The vets decided to perform several perfusions, which the eagle withstood and was soon able to feed again. On the 18th, the eagle was released.

Dziennik Wschodni, January 17 and 20, 2023.¹³¹

End of January 2023

Medyka Border Post, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

While searching the luggage hold of a bus coming from Ukraine, customs officers spotted a suspicious box. They opened it and discovered a cage containing 2 undocumented juvenile red-winged parrots (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*, Appendix II). A passenger, a 55-year-old Ukrainian, admits to being their "owner". The parakeets were entrusted to the Zamość Zoological Garden.

Wild red-winged parrots live in Australia and New Guinea. They can be recognized by their green plumage with red spots on the wings and blue and black spots on the back.

Tax Administration Chamber in Rzeszów, January 23, 2023.¹³²



© Jim Bendon

February 3, 2023
Korczowa, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland.
Border with Ukraine.



The cage was covered by a blanket but did not escape the vigilance of the border guards. It contained a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). The 59-year-old Ukrainian national, who was about to enter the country, said it had been given to her by her son. It was handed over to the Zamość zoological park.

Tax Administration Chamber in Rzeszów, February 3, 2023; Border Guard Headquarters, February 3, 2023; Bieszczady Border Guard Unit, February 3, 2023.¹³³

Beginning of February 2023
Dołhobyczów Border Post, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

When confronted by customs officials, a Ukrainian national entering the country with a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) declared that she had "forgotten" the bird's papers. It was entrusted to the Zamość zoological park.

Tax Administration Chamber in Lublin, February 13, 2023.¹³⁴

ROMANIA

January 8, 2023
Stancuta, Braila County, Romania

The Braila Arms, Explosives and Dangerous Substances Bureau, the Economic Crime Investigation Service and the Special Police Unit conducted a raid.
 - 141 frozen birds seized from the suspect's home and weaponry: thrushes (genus *Turdus*, *Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), larks (family Alaudidae, 4 species in Appendix III in Ukraine), ducks including mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), snipes (genus *Gallinago*), white-fronted geese (*Anser albifrons*), 8 hunting weapons, and 1,598 rounds of ammunition. The weaponry is under administrative investigation and the building has been placed under seal in the meantime.

- 4 kg of poached bird feathers and viscera confiscated from a woman's home.

- 19 freshly killed wild ducks and geese (family Anatidae) seized from a private estate. Police questioned the owner and the Italian hunters had their temporary hunting licences revoked.

Obiectiv Vocea Brailei, January 9, 2023; Romanian Police, January 9, 2023.¹³⁵

RUSSIA

January 18, 2023
Moscow Federal City, Russia



Seizure of a long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) in the hands of photographers on Kosmodamianskaya quay in Moscow's historic center, near the International House of Music. It was handed over to a wildlife rehabilitation center.

Moscow Municipal Economic Complex, January 18, 2023.¹³⁶

January 23, 2023
Moscow Federal City, Russia

Seizure of a long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) in the hands of photographers on Tverskoy Boulevard. It too was handed over to a wildlife rehabilitation center.

Moscow Municipal Economic Complex, January 23, 2023.¹³⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENCE

January 24, 2023

Irkutsk, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

The 7 thieves and traffickers of peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) that were arrested in November 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.177) were just sentenced to 5 to 8 years in a general-regime penal colony. The State endured a loss of approximately 2.6 million roubles (38,125 US\$). The falcon plot organiser had already been convicted of the same offence in the Republic of Buryatia. He dragged along 3 family members and 2 Syrian men. When the gang was stopped, police also discovered a vehicle used to export their catch. In the trunk, there was already a cage cleverly concealed in an instrument case. Irkutsk Oblast Prosecutor's Office, January 24, 2023; Ircity.ru, January 24, 2023; IrkSib, January 24, 2023.¹³⁸



January 25, 2023

Rostov-on-Don, Rostov Oblast, Russia

Another street photographer! He fooled passersby into taking charged photos with a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) and a black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II). The poor eagle was stripped of its mountains and the black kite removed from the lakes and ponds it likes to rid of dead fish. He was fined 2,500 roubles (37 US\$). Don24, January 25, 2023.¹³⁹



January 30, 2023

Moscow Federal City, Russia

Capture of a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) in the hands of a street photographer near the Teresa Durova Theater in the south of the city. Moscow Municipal Economic Complex, January 30, 2023.¹⁴⁰

January 31, 2023

Krasnyi Kamen Border Post, Bryansk Oblast, Russia. Border with Belarus.

Seizure of 3 albino Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the boot of a car driven by a Belarusian national returning to his country. He had no supporting documents and had sealed them in bags "in flagrant violation of transport regulations". The birds were handed over to the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance. Izvestia, January 31, 2023.¹⁴¹



End of January 2023

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Kamchatka Krai, Russia



Four men acting in conspiracy captured 6 gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I) in the Sobolevsky district. They transferred them to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, 300 km away, and stored them in a garage between pallets and tires. They intended to sell them for 30,000 US\$ in Qatar or Saudi Arabia. Three falcons died of starvation and stress, while the other 3 were released after treatment. Weapons and ammunition were seized from the gang leader. They are all under house arrest pending trial. The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Kamchatka Krai, January 27 and February 8, 2023; Kamchatka Krai - United Kamchatka, January 27, 2023.¹⁴²

February 8, 2023

Moscow Federal City, Russia

Another seizure at the hands of a clandestine photographer. This time, it was on Triumfalnaya Square, and the tourist attraction was a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) in very poor health. Barn owls don't live in the wild around Moscow, unlike long-eared owls (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) and tawny owls (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II). Moscow Department of Nature Management and Environmental Protection, February 8, 2023.¹⁴³

February 13, 2023

Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.

According to the press release, Chelyabinsk customs officers prevented a stuffed snowy owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*, Appendix II) and a stuffed great grey owl (*Strix nebulosa*, Appendix II) from "flying away" to Kazakhstan. The lorry was carrying "various products" between Kirov and Almaty, a distance of more than 3,000 km.

Federal Customs Service, February 13, 2023.¹⁴⁴



CZECHIA

January 26, 2023

Capital City of Prague, Czechia

Two travel photographers exploited 2 barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) to lure passers-by and offer photos with them for money. According to a police statement, these abuses are frequent, carried out by a conspiracy of foreign citizens and bring in a lot of money. On the black market, a barn owl sells for around 1,000 crowns (45 US\$).

Municipal Police of the capital city Prague, February 2, 2023.¹⁴⁵

Sunday January 29, 2023

Lednice, South Moravian Region, Czechia



A poisoned white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) was found lying in the forest, wings spread and talons clenched, a typical posture for carbofuran poisoning.

Raptor poisonings in Czechia, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.105, n°29 p.131, n°32 p.194 and p.195, n°35 p.145, n°37 p.147 and n°38 p.169.

Břeclavský deník, January 29, 2023; Ekolist.cz, January 29, 2023.¹⁴⁶



Snowy owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*). Photo Rebecca Brown

VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES



Giant dragon lizard (*Smaug giganteus*). Photo Totes Scelotes

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 8, 2023

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A suspicious package bound for KwaZulu-Natal was opened at a postal sorting centre on February 8. It contained giant dragon lizards (*Smaug giganteus*, Appendix II), Van Dam's girdled lizards (*Smaug vandami*, Appendix II), and a skink (family Scincidae). At the senders' homes, the Green Scorpions and the police dog brigade discovered 19 reptiles and amphibians, including a Southern African python (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II) and African bullfrogs (*Pyxicephalus adspersus*). Aged 19 and 28, Barend (Johan) Coetzee and Xander Aylward were released on bail on February 10. The recipient of the package does not appear to have been questioned by police at this stage. Giant dragon lizards are legally exported as pets (1,194 specimens between

1985 and 2014, an average of 40 per year). The main importing countries are the United States of America, Japan, and Germany. Poaching, the global black market, and the expansion of corn and sunflower cultivation are the main threats to the species' bleak future. Giant dragon lizards live mainly and naturally in the Highveld grasslands of the Free State and Mpumalanga, protecting themselves from predators in buried shelters. The range of Van Dam's spiny lizards covers the provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga. They are also under pressure from poaching for the international pet market and the encroachment of industrial crops on their habitats.

Independent Online, February 9, 2023; East Coast Radio, February 10, 2023; Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (South Africa), February 16, 2023.¹



SENEGAL

Mid-February 2023

Dakar, Dakar Region, Senegal

A Swedish national had started smuggling reptiles after returning from a trip to China in 2011. He was spotted by the police. His home was searched in 2018, and during the search nearly 800 reptiles were seized (for details of species, see "On the Trail" n°33 p.187). He had set up an international network with suppliers in Egypt, Morocco, Thailand, and Viet Nam. He had at least one middleman in France through whom he bought 1,300 helmethead geckos (*Tarentola chazaliae*) in March 2018, and an accomplice in Sweden helped him to maintain the animals and transport the helmeted geckos. He also had contacts in Australia. Shortly before his arrest, he had ordered 50 lace monitors (*Varanus varius*, Appendix II), a species endemic to Australia. The Courts of Sweden noted that "if the order had been issued, one of the few populations of this species would be in danger of extinction."

In August 2021, he was sentenced to 2 years in prison for cruelty to animals and trafficking in protected species (see also "On the Trail" n°33 p.187). He then disappeared into thin air. A year and a half later, he was found in Senegal and taken into custody in Dakar. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that it has "taken note of this information and is conducting an investigation," without giving further details.

Expressen, August 30, 2021 and February 16, 2023; Swedish Courts, August 30, 2021.²

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 10, 2023

State of New York, United States of America. Border with Canada.

Handmade riding boots from Der Dau in Brooklyn are exhibited at the most famous shows, such as the National Horse Show in Madison Square Garden. The catch is that they are made from the skins of elephants, pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), and other animals whose by-products are restricted or banned from being sold. Jose A. Der Junior was eventually caught by the patrol. He was fined 10,000 US\$ and placed on probation for 2 years. In November 2016, Der's Canadian customers had sent 9 pairs to be repaired and restyled. This after-sales service was outside the legal framework, without the import-export declarations required by CITES and in violation



of national regulations in Canada and the USA. The 9 pairs of used boots were seized and valued at over 20,000 US\$. Between 2015 and 2020, Der Dau shipped 48 pairs of boots to Canada without any administrative or customs formalities, with an estimated value of 130,000 US\$. Some of these boots were also made from the leather of monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and stingrays (order Myliobatiformes).

U.S. Attorney's Office - Western District of New York, January 10, 2023; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, February 2023.³

January 30, 2023

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America



Sentencing of Ka Yeung Marvin Chan, a Canadian national, to 14 months' in prison followed by 2 years of probation. Along with Daisuke Miyauchi and Chun Ku, he was involved in a network smuggling royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), blood pythons (*Python brongersmai*, Appendix II), green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), black-and-white tegus (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II), common tegus (*Tupinambis teguixin*, Appendix II), and geckos (genus *Nephurus*). The market value of the trafficking is estimated to be worth over 5 million US\$.

Daisuke Miyauchi was sentenced to 13 months in prison and fined 10,000 US\$ in February 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.147). Chun Ku was sentenced to one year and one day in prison and fined 20,000 US\$ in November 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.170).

U.S. Department of Justice - Office of Public Affairs, January 30, 2023; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, February 2023.⁴

MEXICO

February 28, 2023

El Marqués, State of Querétaro, Mexico



A crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) and an iguana (family Iguanidae) are recovered at a city market.

Profepa, February 28, 2023.⁵

ASIA

ISRAEL

Beginning of January 2023

Ben Gurion International Airport, Central District, Israel

A young man in his twenties with an Israeli passport attempted to smuggle 3 lizards and 2 snakes in plastic boxes, aluminium foil, and socks. He came from Hungary. He was unmasked by customs officers.

Israel Nature and Parks Authority, January 9, 2023; The Times of Israel, January 9, 2023.⁶

THAILAND

February 28, 2023

Ban Kong, Suphan Buri Province, Thailand

After receiving an alert, the police and veterinary services raided the house and garden of 73-year-old Mon Nerajatee and came across a reptile slaughterhouse. 20 Mekong snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys subtrijuga*, Appendix II), 2 South Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), 6 black marsh turtles (*Siebenrockiella crassicollis*, Appendix II) and 59 two-banded monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II) are dead. 32 two-banded monitors are still alive. Mon, the owner of the premises and poacher, and Prasert Lekphet, who sold the meat to restaurants in Trat province, are arrested. They were charged with possession of protected wild animals in conspiracy and trade in violation of the law on the protection of wildlife. The 5 employees earned 300 baht (9 US\$) a day. They were let free. The surviving monitors were transferred to the wildlife rescue centre in Khao-son, Ratchaburi province. Varan meat experienced a resurgence of success during the Covid-19 pandemic. Professor Jitkamon Thanasak of Mahidol University claims that the two-banded monitor blood can fight the proliferation of cancer cells and has studied its effects against Covid-19. Monitor blood has the same reputation in India.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, February 28, 2023; Thai Public Broadcasting Service, March 1st, 2023; The Thaiger, March 1st, 2023.⁷

VIET NAM

January 15, 2023

Hoa Thanh District, Tay Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Phan Quoc Hung, age 21, was on his way to deliver a 3 kg king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) by motorcycle. Police then seized a crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) at Hung's home.

Ho Chi Minh City Law Journal, January 19, 2023.⁸

EUROPE

GERMANY

Beginning of January 2023

Wunsiedel District, Bavaria State, Germany. Border with Czechia.

The district was infiltrated by snake, crocodile, and saurian traffickers. Seizures in 3 municipalities of several pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), a yacare caiman (*Caiman crocodilus yacare*, Appendix II), and a leopard gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*). They were transferred to an approved accommodation facility in Munich, 260 km from the seizure site.

Wunsiedel District Office, January 13, 2023.⁹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIE

REPEATED OFFENCE

End of February, 2023

Perth, State of Western Australia, Australia



It's another double-cross: on one side, a media host denouncing the abuses and mega-revenues of wildlife trafficking; on the other, a holder of endangered or threatened species. In 2018, Niall Cooke, already convicted



despite his age (25 years) of 40 wildlife trafficking offences, declared on ABC News, Australia's leading TV channel, that he was turning over a new leaf and would now devote himself to documenting and denouncing international trafficking. A year later, Cooke and 2 others were intercepted on a freeway by police and a DCBA (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions) officer with a black-headed python (*Aspidites melanocephalus*, Appendix II), 4 spiny-tailed skinks (*Egernia* spp., Appendix III in Australia), and finally a Pilbara death adder (*Acanthophis wellsi*) in the trunk. Through his lawyers, Cooke defended himself by saying that he had only intended to photograph the animals he had "found" in Nanutarra, 1,250 km north of Perth. Of course, after the shoot, he would have set them free, he said. In September 2022, he was fined 45,000 AUD (31,200 US\$) in the first instance. With Judge Gavin MacLean having thrown out his romance, Cooke appealed and Judge Amanda Forrester reduced the fine to 17,000 AUD (12,045 US\$), ruling that the animals had not been mistreated and that their momentary detention was not a premeditated, speculative action. ABC News, March 1, 2023.¹⁰

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES

Most important seizures :

426 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II)
377 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I)
343 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I)



Asian giant tortoise (*Manouria emys*). Photo Arpitadutta

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 6, 2023

Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa

Someone was hawking Cape leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) in the Showgrounds for 200 rand apiece (10 US\$). And someone else was hawking steenbok antelopes (*Raphicerus campestris*) in the south of the city. Independent Online, February 7, 2023.¹

February 14, 2023

Roodepoort, Gauteng Province, South Africa

It's not Valentine's Day for the carers at the veterinary clinic. They receive animals that should have been gifts. The leopard tortoise (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) and the marsh terrapin (*Pelomedusa subrufa*) seized from the hands of a crossroads vendor are thirsty and not agile. Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, February 15, 2023.²

MADAGASCAR

January 29, 2023

Fianarantsoa, Haute Matsiatra Region, Madagascar

The sokakés make the rain fall, and if it doesn't rain anymore on the island, it's because there are fewer and fewer sokakés. The Mahafaly and Antandroy elders are believing it more and more. The State has launched the "Dinabe" of Mahafaly and the "Lilintane i Androy," community rules for the protection of sokakés, but these endemic tortoises of Madagascar remain threatened by trafficking. A further 20 sokakés, officially known as radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), were seized from a truck on its way from Ambovombe. Midi Madagasikara, March 4, 2023; L'express de Madagascar, March 6, 2023; Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (Madagascar), March 6, 2023.³

NAMIBIA

February 2022

litatu, Omusati Region, Namibia

Arrest of a 69-year-old man. He was illegally holding 2 tortoises (Testudinidae, Appendix I or II) that he had caught in the wild. The tortoise species present in Namibia are tent tortoises (*Psammobates tentorius*, Appendix II), leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II), angulate tortoises (*Chersina angulata*, Appendix II) and Nama tortoises (*Chersobius solus*, Appendix II). New Era, February 21, 2023; Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), February 24, 2023.⁴

AMERICA

BOLIVIA

February 27, 2023

La Paz, Province of Pedro Domingo Murillo, Department of La Paz, Bolivia

In September 2022, the "female person" was selling beauty creams rich in vitamins E and A made from coconut oil and yellow-headed sideneck (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) in Plaza Abaroa. She has just been sentenced to 3 years in prison.

La Voz de la Naturaleza, February 27 and March 7 2023; eju.tv, February 28 2023.⁵



COLOMBIA

February 7, 2023

Department of Sucre, Colombia



Seizure of 54 Meso-American sliders (*Trachemys venusta*) abandoned in 3 bags along the Los Palmitos-El Bongo road. The carriers fled when approached by a patrol. Trafficking is on the increase during religious holidays and their festivities. The value of the Meso-American sliders is estimated at 313 million pesos (69,000 US\$ or 1,275 US\$ per specimen).

Caracol Radio, February 7, 2023.⁶

Mid-February 2023

Concordia, Department of Magdalena, Colombia

Seizure by police and departmental conservation officers on the Concordia-El Bálsamo road of 21 Meso-American sliders (*Trachemys callirostris*) for which this is really the wrong time of year. They're in the middle of their breeding season, and at the same time a lot of people want to eat them or give them as gifts during Holy Week.

Opinión Caribe, February 18, 2023.⁷

February 23, 2023

Albán, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia



The National Police would like to thank the people who, following an information campaign, voluntarily handed over 13 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II). They have been transferred to the CAV (Centro de atención y valoración de fauna silvestre) for health checks. They may be released. "We are grateful for this gesture of love for nature and the lives of animals." Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cundinamarca, February 23, 2023.⁸

ECUADOR

January 23, 2023

Guayaquil, Guayas Province, Ecuador

Sentencing to 3 years' imprisonment of a fishing boat skipper who, between 2017 and 2018 and thanks to complicities that were not uncovered, had transported in his holds 123 Galapagos giant tortoises (*Chelonoidis niger*, Appendix I) stolen from the hatchery on Isabela Island, Galapagos National Park, and had attempted to deliver them to Guayaquil to a Chinese sponsor (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 17, n°21 p. 20, n°22 p. 21 and n°25 p. 25).

Galapagos giant tortoises, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.18, n°17 p.17, n°21 p.20, n°22 p.21, n°25 p.25, n°30 p.130, n°32 p.202 and p.238, n°33 p.189, n°34 p.187, n°36 p.160 and p.165, n°37 p.148 and n°38 p.174. El Universo, January 31, 2023.⁹



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Beginning of January 2023

Palm Beach County, State of Florida, United States of America

On patrol near Twenty Mile Bend, an area popular with fishermen, Constable Harris caught a man and a woman in the act of capturing softshell turtles (*Apalone* spp., Appendix II from February 23, 2023), 27 specimens in all. They are now being prosecuted. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, January 12, 2023.¹⁰

Beginning January 2023

Santa Rosa County, State of Florida, United States of America

Seizure by agents Roberson and Bower of an alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix II since February 23, 2023) in a private garden pond and a second one in an aquarium. The man says he caught them in a stream near his home. At the entrance to the house, there was also a juvenile banded water snake (*Nerodia fasciata*) in a very small aquarium, which he admits he doesn't feed. The 3 animals were seized and returned to safe hands.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, January 5, 2023.¹¹

ASIA

INDIA

January 1 and 4, 2023

Kosma Musalmeen, Mainpuri District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



298 ! Live Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) and Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) were in 10 bags in the middle of the mustard field. They had been put there by collectors waiting to be loaded onto a truck which would have transported them far away. After examination by the veterinarian from the NGO Wildlife SOS, they were released back into the water at the Soor Sarovar bird sanctuary. India Narrative, January 5, 2023; The Shillong Times, January 5, 2023; The Times of India, January 5, 2023.¹²

OPERATION WILEP

January 4, 2023

Chhapra Railway Junction Station, Saran District, State of Bihar, India



Seizure by the local Railway Protection Force brigade of 161 juvenile freshwater turtles, Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II), and Indian black turtles (*Melanochelys trijuga*, Appendix II) on the Purvanchal Express bound for Kolkata, platform n°3. Arrest of Suraj Kumar, resident of Pakdi, Sultanpur District, Uttar Pradesh State.

Abhi Bharat, January 4, 2023; Railway Protection Force, January 5, 2023.¹³

REPEATED OFFENCE

Night of January 9 to 10, 2023

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 171 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) bound for Thailand. Arrest of the carrier and 2 suppliers who were outside the airport. They run a pet store. One of the 2 had been caught a few years ago coming from Thailand with exotic animals in his luggage. The turtles' claws are not worn, so they are thought to have been illegally bred.

The Times of India, January 11, 2023.¹⁴

OPERATION WILEP

January 13, 2023

Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

126 freshwater turtles, apparently Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II), discovered in burlap bags at Sealdah station. They were destined for gourmets in the megalopolis or for export to Bangladesh. The Forest Department took charge of them.

Railway Protection Force - Crime Intelligence Branch, January 13, 2023.¹⁵

January 17, 2023

Brahmapur, Ganjam District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest of a man in possession of a tortoise (species unspecified) aboard the Coromandel Express train from Chennai (Tamil Nadu) to Howrah (West Bengal), in the Kolkata conurbation.

Railway Protection Force East Coast Railway – Bhubaneswar, January 20, 2023.¹⁶

OPERATION WILEP

January 28, 2023

Talit and Bardhaman Railway Stations, Purba Bardhaman District, State of West Bengal, India

To counter Operation Wilep, turtle traffickers have adopted a new strategy. Bags are thrown out of windows before arriving at the station, and then picked up by accomplices in trucks. Seizure of 568 turtles in 22 bags above Talit station and 184 in 7 bags above Bardhaman station. The train was bound for Kolkata.

PiPa News, January 28, 2023; Ei Samay, January 29, 2023; Railway Protection Force Eastern Railway, January 29, 2023.¹⁷

January 31, 2023

Akbarpur, Ambedkar Nagar District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure by 2 forestry officers of an endemic Indian roofed turtle (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I), Indian eyed turtle (*Morenia petersi*, Appendix II), and 2 exotic and invasive red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) in the aquarium showroom run by Mohd Farhan.

Hindustan Times, February 1, 2023.¹⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 1, 2023

Motihari, East Champaran District, State of Bihar, India

Seizure of 36 live Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) from Mantu Das, Guddu Das, and Bhavatosh, members of the Bengali colony based in Motihari.

Raftaar, February 2, 2023; WCCB, February 3, 2023.¹⁹

February 5, 2023

State of West Bengal, India

Two men in possession of 28 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) ! The WCCB was aware of this, and the joint operation with the Forestry Department led to their arrest.

WCCB, February 13, 2023.²⁰

OPERATION WILEP

February 13, 2023

Prayagraj District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure by the Railway Protection Force of 157 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), juveniles and adults, weighing a total of 440 kg, on board the North East Express from Kamakhya (Assam State) to Delhi (National Capital Territory). Nine male and female couriers were arrested.

Railway Protection Force - Prayagraj Division, February 14, 2023.²¹

OPERATION WILEP

February 16, 2023

Howrah, Howrah District, State of West Bengal, India



Arrest at Central Station of a trafficker carrying 50 turtles, either Indian softshell turtle (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) or Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). Consumer demand is insatiable in the Kolkata conurbation.

Railway Protection Force Eastern Railway, February 16, 2023.²²

OPERATION WILEP

February 25, 2023

Dhanbad, Dhanbad District, State of Jharkhand, India

Seizure of 42 live Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) on the Jammu-Tawi-Kolkata Express. They were hidden in bags under the seats of a coach. The smugglers abandoned them as an RPF brigade approached.

Railway Protection Force, February 27, 2023; The Times of India, February 27, 2023.²³

INDONESIA

February 9, 2023

Damai, Binjai City and Pantai Labu, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

facebook

- A woman said that the tortoise had been given to her by a friend of her husband and that she did not know that the species is protected by law and that it is forbidden to catch and host them.

- In another house, the man said that his younger brother had "found" it on the edge of the Takengon forest without knowing that it was forbidden to transport and keep them.

The 2 Asian giant tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II) were therefore handed over to BKSDA officers. The case ended with a simple reminder of the law and an educational speech on the usefulness of wildlife.

Description of the Asian giant tortoise: between 40 and 60 cm long. Dark brown to blackish. They feed on bamboo shoots, tubers, invertebrates and frogs. They live in areas of around half a hectare in the mountains at altitudes of between 600 and 1,500 metres. They live near water and often bury themselves in damp soil. They are losing habitat as a result of forest fires, hydroelectric dams and land clearance for agriculture. They are killed and butchered for their meat or caught in the pet market. In their original range (Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand), their presence has become exceptional.

Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, February 13, 2023.²⁴

PHILIPPINES

January 2023

Quezon, National Capital Region, Philippines

- Seizure of a snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix II) by the marine police. "Our snapping turtles when transported must be accompanied by a permit" says Gutierrez, one of those involved in the operation.

- Seizure of a red piranha (*Pygocentrus nattereri*). "Piranhas are exotic. They harm our aquatic resources and it's forbidden to sell them," says Gutierrez.

Official statements of offence were issued against the 2 sellers.

GMA Network, January 17, 2023.²⁵

SRI LANKA

February 11, 2023

Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake, Western Province, Sri Lanka



Seizure in the cargo terminal of 206 live Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) crammed into 6 polystyrene boxes and labelled as "dried seafood." They were on their way to Malaysia. An investigation has been launched to identify the source.

Daily Mirror, February 12, 2023.²⁶

VIET NAM

Beginning of January 2023

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

- Seizure of 3 turtles, including a South Asian box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II) in an aquarium store.

- Seizure of 2 giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II) offered for sale on the street. ENV, January 12, 2023.²⁷

January 12, 2023

Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora galbinifrons*, Appendix I) and 2 giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II) in a restaurant. It is not specified whether they were on the menu or as decoration. They returned to Cuc Phuong National Park.

ENV, January 12, 2023.²⁸

January 21, 2023

Quang Ngai Province, Viet Nam

Handing over of a yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) that the man had bought 3 months earlier for his sick son.

ENV, January 21, 2023.²⁹

February 3, 2023

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Five Mekong snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys subtrijuga*, Appendix II) were seized from the stall of a street vendor operating near a Buddhist temple.

ENV, February 3, 2023.³⁰

Beginning of February 2023

Long Dien District, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

The Forest Protection Department intervened in a local store. Seizure of 9 Chinese stripe-necked turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China) and 4 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). The store had been in the sights of the NGO ENV since 2019.

ENV, February 10, 2023.³¹



February 2023

Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure of 104 Chinese stripe-necked turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China) and an Eastern black-bridged leaf turtle (*Cyclemys pulchristriata*, Appendix II) sold on the street at a fish stall in the Hoa Cuong Nam district.

ENV, February 13, 2023.³²

EUROPE

GERMANY

January 2023

Peine, Lower Saxony State, Germany

"We turn a fly into an elephant." The lawyer of a 79-year-old man has obtained from the Peine court the dismissal of a complaint for keeping and breeding Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II). His client, who has no Internet access, e-mail, or knowledge of the regulations governing endangered animals, was naively trafficking Moorish tortoises resulting from the mating of a certain Max, a male breeder in his twenties, with 2 females purchased a few years ago for 250 €. "Max needed company and my client didn't realize that he was going to have to deal with a large family," explained the lawyer. However, the Moorish turtle breeder is required to donate 400 € (425 US\$) to a wildlife sanctuary.

Braunschweiger Zeitung, January 26, 2023.³³



BULGARIA

February 28, 2023

Malko Tarnovo, Burgas Province, Bulgaria. Border with Türkiye.

Arrest of Orga Kryshstopa, Ukrainian national. She was the subject of an Interpol Red Notice after attempting to smuggle 116 CITES Appendix I and Appendix II turtles into Thailand from Tanzania. She had fled Thailand (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.158). The Burgas court had ordered her detention pending a court decision on her possible extradition to Tanzania. She was extradited on June 17, 2023 and charged on June 21 with the purchase, transport, and attempted sale of 116 turtles, including 14 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). According to Interpol, Ms. Kryshstopa is a leading member of an international wildlife smuggling network. She has direct links with correspondents in Egypt and Tanzania. It should be noted that in Tanzania, the value of the 116 turtles is estimated at 18.9 million shillings (8,020 US\$), while in Thailand they were valued at 900,000 baht (25,634 US\$), i.e. 3 times more. Yet another example of how prices escalate when wild animals from Africa reach Asia's black markets.

Burgasnews, March 10, 2023; The Citizen (Tanzania), June 21, 2023; Interpol, June 29, 2023.³⁴

SPAIN

January 24, 2023

Valencia, Province of Valencia, Valencian Community, Spain

Seizure by the Guardia Civil of 25 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) and 2 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II). The "owner" is unable to provide any documentation as to their origin. They were handed over to the wildlife refuge in the village of El Saler.

Guardia Civil, January 24, 2023.³⁵



February 21, 2023
Arganda del Rey, Madrid Community, Spain



Seizure of 30 turtles at a courier company: 14 Mediterranean turtles (*Mauremys leprosa*), 7 Chinese stripe-necked turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China), 5 turtles of the genus *Graptemys*, 2 *Pseudemys peninsularis*, one *Pseudemys nelsoni*, and one Meso-American slider (*Trachemys venusta*). One of the 7 Chinese stripe-necked turtles was dead. They were crammed into a plastic box and bound with adhesive tape. The shells of the juveniles were soft due to a lack of exposure to natural light and malnutrition. Some turtles suffered from neck bites and mutilated tails. They were placed under treatment at the CRAS (Centro de Recuperación de Animales Silvestres) in the Madrid community. Employees of the courier company are suspected of wildlife trafficking aggravated by cruelty.

Diario de Arganda, February 22, 2023.³⁶

FRANCE

January 23, 2023
Aix-en-Provence, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France



The Court of Appeal confirms the judgments of the Draguignan Court of First Instance dated September and November 2021. The 2 wine-growing castles of Berne and Les Launes have been definitively sentenced to heavy fines (155,000 € or 165,000 US\$ for both) and more than 400,000 € (426,000 US\$) for ecological damage and destroying Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) habitats in order to extend their vines and increase their profits. At least 2 of the turtles had died in the clearing burns.

Wine estate and destruction of Hermann's tortoise habitat, see "On the Trail" n°34 p.192, and n°29 p.137.

Actu-Environnement, January 25, 2023; La Provence, January 25, 2023.³⁷

January 24, 2023
Ajaccio, Department of Corse-du-Sud, France



Patrick Rocca, a public works contractor and property developer managing Fortimmo, a subsidiary specializing in housing construction, was fined 150,000 € (159,740 US\$) and given a 6-month suspended prison sentence. He was prosecuted for the unauthorized mutilation and destruction of a protected animal species and the degradation and destruction of its habitats. In December 2019, on 2 occasions and despite a request to stop work, OFB agents discovered 10 dead or dying Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) on a Fortimmo worksite in Porticcio, on 6.3 hectares of degraded or destroyed habitat. Fortimmo was also prosecuted and fined 500,000 € (532,450 US\$) and ordered to pay 500,000 € in damages. It is likely that many other turtles were killed and crushed by the machines, and disappeared in the excavations, land clearing, and stump removal.

France 3 Corse ViaStella, October 18, 2022 and January 24, 2023.³⁸

POLAND

Hrebenne, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

Seizure of a live Horsfield's tortoise (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II) with which a Ukrainian national was attempting to enter the country. It was entrusted to the Zamosc zoo.

National Revenue Administration, January 10, 2023.³⁹

SWEDEN

February 1, 2023

Östergötland County, Sweden

A 30-year-old Norrköping resident was fined 11,600 kroner (1,100 US\$) for attempting to sell 2 diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II) via Blocket in the autumn. He was detected as he was about to conclude a transaction with a person living in Italy.

Sveriges Television, February 1, 2023; Folkbladet, February 2, 2023.⁴⁰

SWITZERLAND

January 10, 2023

Zuchwil, Canton of Solothurn, Switzerland

Theft of 9 juvenile leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) from the "Swisstropicalfish GmbH" pet shop. They weigh between 20 and 40 grams. Damage is estimated at 2,000 Swiss francs (2,165 US\$ or 240 US\$ per turtle).

Police of the canton of Solothurn, January 12, 2023.⁴¹

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 20, 2023

Marikana, North West Province, South Africa

Seizure by the SPCA and the police of a Southern African python (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II). It was confined in an unventilated box. The man wanted to sell it to a sangoma (healer). Charged with illegal possession of a protected animal and cruelty.

Platinum Weekly, January 31, 2023.¹

End of February and Beginning of April 2023

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A female Southern African python (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II) seized by Department of Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs officers acting on a tip-off from the Rustenburg SPCA was received at the veterinary clinic. A man was offering it for sale for 3,000 rand (170 US\$).

A few weeks later, it regained its freedom and slipped unhesitatingly into a stream.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, February 23 et April 3, 2023.²

NAMIBIA

January 18, 2023

Mutengo, Kavango West Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of 2 men, aged 45 and 55, in possession of a python (*Python* spp., Appendix II) skin with an estimated value of 30,000 dollars (1,750 US\$). They are suspected of killing it with a rifle. The weapon was seized.

Namibia News Digest, January 19, 2023.³

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OPERATION VIPER

January 12, 2023

Eagle Lake, Holly Hill, Palm Beach Gardens, Southwest Ranches, Miami, Cape Coral and Plantation, State of Florida, and State of Georgia, United States of America

Launched in 2020 on the basis of several reports, the FWC (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) investigation extended to the State of Georgia proved that at least 200 snakes of 24 exotic and sometimes highly venomous species were smuggled in and

sold under the table. The snakes included inland taipans (*Oxyuranus microlepidotus*), green mambas (genus *Dendroaspis*), puff adders (*Bitis arietans*), Gaboon vipers (*Bitis gabonica*), eyelash vipers (*Bothriechis schlegelii*), spitting cobras (family Elapidae), forest cobras (*Naja melanoleuca*), saw-scaled vipers (genus *Echis*), two-striped forest-pitvipers (*Bothrops bilineatus*), white-lipped island pitvipers (*Trimeresurus insularis*), Mexican west coast rattlesnakes (*Crotalus basiliscus*) and Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II). Eight individuals, Delvin Eugene Sasnett, William Chase Agee, Dylan Isaac Levin, Edward Daniel Bays, Jorge Javier Gonzalez, Paul Edward Miller, Joseph David Switalski Jr. and Timothy James Gould, are charged with felonies and misdemeanours related to wildlife trafficking, some of which are associated with illegal substance trafficking and the illegal possession of firearms. Several species are considered potentially invasive.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, January 13, 2023; Fox News Channel, January 16, 2023; WEYI, January 17, 2023; Florida Weekly - Bonita Springs, January 19, 2023.⁴



Bothrops bilineatus



Trimeresurus insularis bleu

facebook



February 14, 2023

Medford, State of New York, United States of America

Discovery of the carcass of a reticulated python (*Malayopython reticulatus*, synonymous with *Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) over 4 metres long on the side of the road. Keeping this species as a pet is prohibited in New York State.

Department of Environmental Conservation, March 1, 2023.⁵

PERU

January 11, 2023

Tarma, Province of Tarma, Department of Junín, Peru

Seizure at La Cachina Market, Santa Polonia Street, by Serfor with experts from ATFFS (Administración Técnica Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) and the police of 2 live boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) and 5 skins. The 2 boas were released in a suitable habitat.

Serfor, January 11, 2023.⁶

ASIA

INDIA

February 16, 2023

Zokhawthar, Champhai District, State of Mizoram, India. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure of 4 Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and 2 anacondas (*Eunectes murinus*, Appendix II) by the Assam Rifles. Four arrests. The smuggling of exotic species from Myanmar is becoming a major concern for Mizoram.

Public Relations Office Shillong, Ministry of Defence, February 16, 2023; Northeast Now, February 17, 2023; The Sentinel, February 17, 2023.⁷



© PRO Shillong, Ministry of Defence

VIET NAM

February 7, 2023

Haifong Municipality, Viet Nam

Police arrest Nguyen Duy Phuong in a public garden. He was carrying 2 bottles of cobra wine and was trying to sell them. At his home, police seized a third bottle. The snakes are king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II).

Cong An Nhan Dan, February 23, 2023.⁸

EUROPE

GERMANY

January 26, 2023

Hanover-Langenhagen International Airport, Lower Saxony State, Germany

Seizure of a traditional dance ornament made of African rock python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) in the suitcase of a passenger arriving from Senegal via Istanbul.

Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, January 31, 2023; Langenhagener Echo, January 31, 2023.⁹

Sunday, January 29, 2023

Konz, Rhineland-Palatinate State, Germany



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Discovery of 14 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), less than a year old and frozen to death in cardboard boxes and a supermarket bag from northern France, next to a used-clothing container and a glass container. The 2 containers were inspected with a thermal camera to check for snakes (non-venomous). An appeal for witnesses has been launched. Because of rising heating costs, breeders or traffickers of snakes of tropical origin abandon them in the street in the middle of winter. The NGO PETA is promising 1,000 € (1,065 US\$) to anyone able to apprehend the culprit(s).

Südwestrundfunk, January 31, 2023.¹⁰

POLAND

January 12, 2023

Tarnowo Podgórze, Greater Poland Voivodeship, Poland



Tropical snakes abandoned again during winter. The 12 snakes, ranging from 3 to 6 meters in length, were dead and hidden in a garbage bag. The state of decomposition of the bodies made it impossible at the time of seizure to determine whether they were boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II) or pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). In any case, they were strangling and non-venomous snakes. Poznań Municipal Police Headquarters, January 30, 2023.¹¹

Beginning of February 2023

Medyka Border Post, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.



The 53-year-old Ukrainian national entering Poland had in his luggage a coat and a pair of heeled shoes made from python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) skin. He had failed to declare them and had no import permit. The items were seized. Tax Administration Chamber in Rzeszów, February 10, 2023.¹²

February 12, 2023

Gliwice, Silesian Voivodeship, Poland

The parcel whistles and moves! It is destined for Szczecin. It is declared to contain electronic equipment. The sender was summoned to the sorting centre and the parcel was opened in her presence. Inside, there was a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II). "I had decided to sell it for the safety of the children." An investigation is underway into the migrant's origin. The mother of the family and the recipient may be charged with animal abuse. The python could have frozen to death during the postal journey.

Polish Police, February 13, 2023.¹³

SERBIA

End of February 2023

Svilajnac, Pomoravlje District, Serbia

Indictment of a 24-year-old man suspected of illegally importing and keeping a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) at his home.

Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, February 27, 2023.¹⁴

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

End of February 2023

Hobart, State of Tasmania, Australia



Following the seizure in May 2021 from a snake handler and identification specialist of a live carpet python (*Morelia spilota*, Appendix II), a dead blotched bluetongue (*Tiliqua nigrolutea*, Appendix III in Australia), and a tiger snake (*Notechis scutatus*) in the freezer, charred snakes on a pile of ashes, frozen baby snakes in a bottle, and a headless snake in his bedroom, Bruce Press, famous in the snake fan community, pleaded not guilty. Carpet pythons live in Australia and New Guinea. ABC News, February 27, 2023.¹⁵

IGUANAS, MONITOR LIZARDS AND CHAMELEONS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

REPEATED OFFENCE

January 2023

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



The rescue of a female flap-necked chameleon (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Appendix II). It was seized by members of the local NGO Friends of Rescued Animals at the Tarlton crossroads from the hands of the poacher, who was arrested. The chameleon regained its freedom after a few treatments. Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, January 23, 2023.¹

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

End of January 2023

Zona Bananera, Department of Magdalena, Colombia



"Nature is in good hands" is the department's motto when it comes to protecting biodiversity. Seizure of 4,500 iguana eggs (Iguanidae, Appendix II). They were in the custody of a passenger on the Bucaramanga-Cartagena bus route (620 km). Iguana eggs are allegedly roborative and sexually stimulating.

Between December and March, it's egg-hunting time. Iguanas of both sexes are captured. They are then incised in the groin. Female eggs are plundered. The wound is sometimes re-stitched after being stuffed with sand, ash, or sawdust. 95% of iguanas that undergo this torture die, and the 5% that survive are permanently sterile.

Iguana eggs, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.24, n°8 p.97, n°17 p.27, n°20 p.28, n°22 p.32, n°25 p.108, n°26 p.105, n°28 p.35, n°32 p.216 and p.217, n°34 p.199 and n°35 p.164 and p.165.

W Radio, January 26, 2023.²

Mid-February 2023

San Andres Island, Department of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, Colombia



Interception by road police of a vehicle and seizure of 4 tied green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II). They were released by the environmental authority in a suitable area.

Semana, February 17, 2023.³

Mid-February 2023

Fonseca and Albania, Department of La Guajira, Colombia. Border with Venezuela.

Seizures of 70 live iguanas (family Iguanidae) and 66 dead iguanas. At least 2 arrests. The 2 species present in Colombia are common spiny-tailed iguanas (*Ctenosaura similis*, Appendix II) and green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II). Fonseca, population 33,250, and Albania, population 27,000, are contiguous.

El Espectador, February 20, 2023.⁴

ASIA

INDIA

OPERATION WILEP

Beginning of January 2023

Panskura, Purba Medinipur District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of a live Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) tied in a painful position - head and tail tied together - and packed in a bag.

Railway Protection Force, January 4, 2023.⁵

ALLIGATORS, CROCODILES AND CAIMANS

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Saturday, January 1, 2023

Assumption Parish and Pierre Part, State of Louisiana, United States of America

LDWF (Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries) agents spot Jasson Hebert at 2:30 a.m. walking through a swamp with a flashlight and a rifle. Caught in the act, Hebert admits to hunting American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) out of season. He is smoking marijuana. His gun number is erased. Officers escort him home on foot and discover a live juvenile alligator and a fresh deer carcass.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, January 4, 2023.¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Sunday, January 15-January 19, 2023

Neptune Township, State of New Jersey, United States of America



- Discovery by Angel Rosario of an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) abandoned in Bangs Avenue in a plastic box. It is 90 cm long and around 2 years old. It is illegal to keep an alligator in the State of New Jersey.

- The truth is that Angel Rosario, the Good Samaritan who found the alligator and alerted the county SPCA, was an accomplice of his friend Savion Mendez, who had been evicted from his flat in East Orange, 80 km from Neptune Township, and didn't know what to do with the animal. Rosario agreed to take it in, but his parents objected and the family agreed to abandon it... and discover it.

Monmouth County SPCA, January 16, 2023; Asbury Park Press, January 16, 2023; Daily Voice, January 19, 2023.²

January 20, 2023

Tampa, State of Florida, United States of America



Robert Thomas Beasley, fully aware of the illegal nature of his actions, had been commissioned by Robert Albritton to collect 10,000 American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) eggs. Beasley did not have a licence and, with occasional accomplices, collected the eggs in prohibited locations. He was paid 15 US\$ per hour. The eggs were "laundered" at the SAF (Sunshine Alligator Farms), which legally supplies its skins to luxury leather goods manufacturers in Europe. The Court of Appeal upheld the lower court's judgement. Beasley was definitively sentenced to one year less a day in prison and 10 years' probation for conspiracy to commit racketeering, illegal capture and possession of alligator eggs and alligators. Albritton was previously sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment.

District Court of Appeal of Florida, Second District, January 20, 2023; Orlando Weekly, January 21, 2023.³

Beginning of February 2023

DeSoto County, State of Florida, United States of America

At a public construction site, the foreman reportedly ordered workers to clear the area of American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II). One alligator was hooked and killed with a crowbar or some other construction equipment. Prosecution by the public prosecutor for killing an alligator without a licence, permit, or CITES tag.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, February 9, 2023.⁴

Mid-February 2023

J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area, State of Florida, United States of America

Agent Trawinski receives an anonymous phone call. Three men are shooting at an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II). Arriving on the scene, Trawinski locates and arrests a suspicious vehicle with 3 men inside, as well as a dead alligator and black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). The 2 victims were pierced by small-calibre bullets, and each suspect was in possession of a small-calibre weapon. After claiming the animals had been given to them, they admitted killing them when reinforcements arrived.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, February 27, 2023.⁵

End of February 2023
Palm Beach County, State of Florida,
United States of America



A photo of a young man holding an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) a few months old, muzzled with adhesive tape, circulates on social media. Cyber agents identified the perpetrator and carried out a "knock and talk" at the suspect's home. After being informed of the rules at the same time as his parents, the young man received a summons for illegal possession of an alligator at home without a trapping permit.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, March 2, 2023.⁶

ASIA

CHINA

February 2, 2023
Nanjing Lukou International Airport, Jiangsu
Province, China



Seizure of 4 crocodile skin belts (*Crocodylia*, Appendix I or II) in the hand luggage of an overseas passenger. The boxes are stamped "Australian salt water crocodile" (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix I or II). Total weight: 1.35 kg.

Chinese Customs, February 8, 2023.⁷

THAILAND

February 16, 2023
Thalang District, Phuket Province, Thailand

Seizure from Mr. Teeradet, age 35, of 42 Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I). He was selling them via the Internet. He presented Phuket fisheries officers with a permit to own and sell crocodiles that had expired on September 9, 2022.

The Phuket Express, February 16, 2023; Phuket GO, February 17, 2023.⁸

EUROPE

ITALY

February 9 and 13, 2023
Cerreto Guidi and Scandicci,
Metropolitan City of Florence, Region
of Tuscany, Italy



- Unannounced visit by CITES carabinieri to a tannery producing crocodile (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) and caiman (*Alligatoridae*, Appendix I or II) skins. The CITES register had not been updated for "some time." The company's legal representative was fined 10,000 € (10,900 US\$).

- Unannounced visit by CITES carabinieri to another tannery producing crocodile, alligator, and caiman (*Alligatoridae*, Appendix I or II) skins. The CITES register had not been updated for "some time." The company's legal representative was fined 10,000 €. Metropolitan City of Florence - Communication and Information Directorate, February 9 and 13, 2023.⁹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Sunday, February 5, 2023
Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia



A salt-water crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II) was extracted alive from a trap set as part of the management strategy for this reptile population which is considered dangerous to human populations. The 3-meter-long crocodile was then killed, decapitated, and dragged by a vehicle, leaving traces of blood in its wake, before being abandoned on the side of the road. The vandals are being actively sought. They face up to 5 years in prison or a fine of 81,000 AUD (57,380 US\$).

The strategy aims to prevent their decline by controlling hunting, but also by protecting them from human activities. In this context, "problem" crocodiles are "removed" from the natural environment, which is a milder way of saying that they are trapped and then sold to breeding farms, either to be used as breeding stock or for their skins. To be considered "problematic," a crocodile must have attacked or be about to attack a person or persons; be behaving aggressively towards a person or persons; the location of the crocodile must make it a threat or potential threat to human safety or wellbeing; or the activity of the crocodile must be affecting the productivity of industry or commercial enterprises. 320 crocodiles were "removed" in the Northern Territory in 2021.

ABC News, February 7, 2023.¹⁰

See also page 123 ref. 1, p.145 ref. 6, p.146 ref. 7 et 9, p. 148 ref. 19 et p. 149 ref. 25.

ASIA

KYRGYZSTAN

January 2023

Bishkek City, Kyrgyzstan

Today, the last Central Asian frogs (*Rana asiatica*) continue to be sold dead on the markets of the capital of Kyrgyzstan for 250 soms (2.9 US\$). They were caught in the Issyk-Kul region and in the districts of Kochkor and Jumgal (Naryn region) 200-300 km away.

The draining of marshes and peatlands and the decline of tall-grass prairies are detrimental to their quest for food. They compete with marsh frogs (*Pelophylax ridibundus*), which are more resilient to climatic oscillations. Marsh frogs are aggressive and feed on insects, fish, newts... and frogs. According to Almazbek Raev, who lives in the district of Kochkor and has a passion for Central Asian frogs when they are alive, their decline is also due to American minks, who were imported to be reared and ended up colonising the natural environment. Another episodic factor in their disappearance dates back to the 1990s, when Chinese workers moved in temporarily to develop the road network, they bought Central Asian frogs for peanuts and locals who had no resources went out to catch them in masses in the marshes and forests to meet the demand. Dried, they are still used in folk medicine. Eating them is said to cure rheumatism and generally keep you healthy. The curative virtues of Central Asian frogs are mentioned in the oral Manas epic, which brings together the exploits, traditions and beliefs of the Kyrgyz people.

Radio Azattyk, January 30, 2023.¹



INSECTS, ARACHNIDS AND ANNELIDS



Antilles pinktoe tarantula (*Caribena versicolor*). Photo valentinl

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 10, 2023

Port of Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

Seizure of 169 4-week-old juvenile Antilles pinktoe tarantulas (*Caribena versicolor*, Appendix III in the European Union) from Martinique. Each was threaded into a small plastic tube. They were sent for care for in Ames by the University of Iowa's Insect Zoo, 2,765 km from Los Angeles and 4,360 km from Martinique, a French overseas territory in the Caribbean. As adults, they will be distributed to institutional zoos. Antilles pinktoe tarantulas are endemic to Martinique. They prefer humid forests. They are very popular on the new pet market. As they are not very aggressive and are fairly easy to spot, it is more profitable to capture them than to breed them, especially as they die after reproduction. Martinique's DEAL (Direction de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement) has noted an increase in customs seizures since 1995, and regularly receives reports of live specimens being taken from the wild. The Antilles pinktoe tarantulas are also threatened by deforestation and the drying out of their habitat. Inside Iowa State, February 16, 2023; Ames Tribune, February 22, 2023.¹



© Nirmalendu Majumdar/Ames Tribune

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of January 2023

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

The package claimed to contain "toys" actually contained 3 Lucanidae, each traveling in a plastic box filled with plant substrate.

Chinese Customs, January 12, 2023.²

January 19, 2023

Suzhou, Suzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in a postal parcel of 27 dead beetles of 19 species, including *Pachyrhynchus postpubescens*, *Aprophata eximia* and *Reineria coerulesignata* from Southeast Asia.

Chinese Customs, January 27, 2023.³



January 2023

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Six live beetles intercepted in a postal parcel from abroad: 1 Hercules beetle (*Dynastes hercules*) from Central America and 4 specimens of the species *Megasoma mars* from South America.

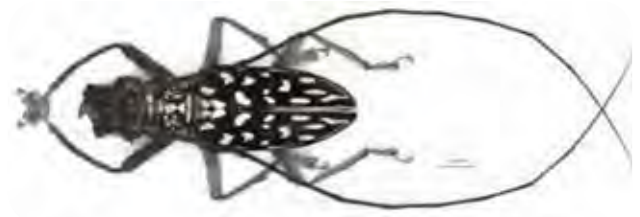
Chinese Customs, February 3, 2023.⁴

February 9, 2023

Suzhou, Suzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 24 dead beetles of 8 different species, including *Sphaenognathus xerophilus* from South America, in a postal parcel from abroad.

Chinese Customs, February 12, 2023.⁵



February 2023

Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure in 3 postal parcels from abroad of 3 *Serrognathus titanus palawanicus* beetles, one *Serrognathus titanus yasuokai* from South-East Asia and 2 *Megasoma elephas* from South America, all alive.

Chinese Customs, February 26, 2023.⁶

February 2023

Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

Interception of a parcel. Seizure of 7 dead *Euchirus longimanus longimanus*. They originate from South-East Asia.

Chinese Customs, February 28, 2023.⁷

February 2023

Hefei, Anhui Province, China

Seizure of 17 dead beetles in a parcel from abroad, including *Spinidymasius chrysophanes* (origin South-East Asia) and *Thermistis rubromaculata* (origin East and South-East Asia).

Chinese Customs, March 1st, 2023.⁸

February 2023

Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China



The package came from abroad. It was declared to contain "a toy kit" which turned out to be a live 10 cm-long *Chalcosoma moellenkampii*.

Chinese Customs, March 1, 2023; Nanning Evening News, March 2, 2023.⁹

February 27, 2023

Changsha, Changsha Prefecture, Hunan Province, China



Seizure of 6 exotic beetles from a parcel said to contain "toys": 4 giant stag beetles (*Dorcus titanus*, synonymous with *Serrognathus titanus*) from South-East Asia and 2 stag beetles (*Lucanus cervus*) from Europe. The *Dorcus titanus* measure between 32 and 111 mm in length, while the stag beetles measure between 25 and 70 mm. They are popular on the exotic pet market. The parcel was detected thanks to the vigilance of the customs dog.

Chinese Customs, March 1st, 2023; Mingchuan Media, March 3, 2023.¹⁰



February 22, 2023

Saint-Julien-en-Genevois, Department of Haute-Savoie, France. Border with Switzerland.



Seizure of some 50 live northern medicinal leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*, Appendix II) in 2 bottles full of water, hidden in a batch of clothing. The driver claimed to be from Switzerland, where he had "picked up" his family from Istanbul. He claimed to have therapeutic needs, but was unable to provide any documentation or explanation of the origin of the leeches which are listed in Appendix II of CITES. Leeches, see "On the Trail" n°9 p.102, n°25 p.37, n°26 p.35, n°32 p.224, n°33 p.217, n°34 p.209, n°35 p.271 and n°38 p.198.

Le Messenger, February 24, 2023.¹¹

Hirudo medicinalis leeches can measure 15 cm long and 1.5 cm wide. They live in fresh waters with little pollution in cold temperate Europe. They are amphibious and can survive up to 2 months out of water as long as they are kept moist. They feed on the blood of large mammals via a small mouth sucker, but will attack newts, frogs and fish if necessary. They hang on for between 20 and 40 minutes, then drop off when their hunger is satisfied. They are threatened by human collection and the loss of wetland habitats. They have been listed in Appendix II of CITES since October 22, 1987. It was only in 1972 that the French social security system stopped reimbursing the costs of medicinal leeches prescribed by doctors.



Oscar Comettant in 1865 in "Le Roi de la création et ses sujets ou des rapports de l'homme avec les animaux domestiques" (The King of Creation and His Subjects or Man's Relationship with Domestic Animals) describes in a hallucinating story the conditions under which leeches are reared in the marshes of south-west France:

"For the first meal, the horse enters the marsh up to the middle of his belly. The hungry leeches throw themselves on their prey and thousands of stings make the animal tremble, soon exhausted by the loss of his blood. When he is ready to faint, he is beaten with sticks until he comes out of the swamp... and they try to restore his strength and renew his blood for the second meal. He eats at will, something he hasn't done for a long time. After a few days of this comforting diet, the numerous small wounds have completely healed, and he is judged fit for a second sucking.

This time, he enters the swamp up to the base of his neck. The annelids, still hungry, stick their spears into the parts of the animal that have not yet been bitten, and have a field day until the horse, having shown signs of weakness, is removed from the marsh... copiously fed, put out to pasture, almost tenderly cared for, the unfortunate horse makes new blood, which will be the last to be shed...

For the third meal, the horse enters the swamp entirely, with only his head out of the water to breathe...

Finally, after the most appalling agony, the horse exhales his last breath with the loss of his last drop of blood and his corpse is not even buried. You frequently come across these corpses on the edges of marshes, infecting the air, covered in flies, torn apart by crows."

"When they had finished making the old horses suffer, they had to engage the man to work for a very special "harvest". To catch these leeches, all they had to do was walk through the marshes wearing canvas-covered boots so that the leeches couldn't smell the leather-care products. The fishermen would make waves in the water with a stick, and the leeches would rise to the surface and attach themselves to the jute. The fishermen would quickly catch them between two fingers, carefully avoiding them attaching themselves to their hands. If they did, they threw a handful of salt on them, which made them let go immediately. The average daily harvest was 2,500 leeches per person."

Histoire et Traditions du Bassin d'Arcachon, December 15, 2022.¹²





Harlequin poison frog (*Oophaga histrionica*). Photo René Stalder

Events concerning among others elephants, rhinos, felines, bears or pangolins and their by-products are indicated by these pictograms:



Cases concerning exclusively pangolins, elephants, rhinos and felines see page 10; elephants and felines, see page 25; rhinos and felines, see page 30.

WESTERN AFRICA

SENEGAL

January 2023

Koussanar and Tambacounda, Tambacounda Region, Senegal

D. N. and I. C. were street vendors selling patas monkeys (*Erythrocebus patas*, Appendix II) and golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in Senegal) meat in the Elevage district for 1,000 CFA francs/kg (US\$1.6/kg). Seizure of a rifle, the reddish-gold skin of a jackal, the reddish-white skin of a patas and 2 patas skulls. In case of attack by a predator, this spiny steppe little monkey prefers running fast and far than taking refuge in a tree. Suspended prison sentence of 6 months. Seneweb, January 27, 2023.¹



Erythrocebus patas

© Niall Perrins

EASTERN AFRICA

UGANDA

February 21, 2023

Naikesa, Eastern Region, Uganda

It all began with a human tragedy, the death of a child. The investigation led the police to the "shrines" of 2 witchdoctors, Balati Buluuba and Fred Balikoowa, where they seized pangolin scales, a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) skin, hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) teeth, horns and a leg of sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekii*), cowries (marine molluscs of the family Cypraeidae) and a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) skin. Three species of monitor lizard are found in Uganda: the Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*, Appendix II), the white-throated monitor (*Varanus albigularis*, Appendix II) and the savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II). In their defence, the witchdoctors say that this display of wildlife was taken from animals that died a long time ago and placed there by their great ancestors. The police at Kamuli central police station were not fooled, and the suspects will appear in court on charges of illegal possession of wildlife products. The Independent (Uganda), February 23, 2023.²



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

End of January 2023

Limpopo Province, South Africa

Races against the clock and against poisons. In one week, the vets were confronted 3 times with the plague of poisons.

- Nine vultures (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II) were fighting for their lives. They were rescued amidst 2 hooded vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II), yellow-billed hornbills (*Tockus leucomelas*), turtle doves and a myriad of dead beetles. Local vulture species include the white-backed vulture (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), the Cape vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*, Appendix II) and the white-headed vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Appendix II).
- Five lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) died from poison. A complete search of the estate was carried out to find dead or dying vultures.
- An African hawk-eagle (*Hieraaetus spilogaster*, Appendix II) was rushed to the clinic. It was almost unconscious and virtually immobile. It died 15 minutes after arrival. The autopsy revealed that it had been poisoned.

Letaba Herald, January 27, 2023.³



February 10, 2023

Tlaskameng, North West Province, South Africa

Search of a house and seizure of 2 pangolins, 2 Southern African pythons (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II) and 2 monkeys, all dead. Arrest of a Lesotho citizen who was unable to provide a "reasonable explanation" for the presence of this decaying collection. Six species of monkey are found in South Africa: the vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), the blue monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis*, Appendix II), Grant's dwarf galago (*Paragalago granti*, Appendix II), the Mohol galago (*Galago moholi*, Appendix II), the thick-tailed greater galago (*Otolemur crassicaudatus*, Appendix II) and the chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*, Appendix II). SAPS, February 12, 2023.⁴



NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 10, 2023

Amarillo, State of Texas, United States of America

Richard Kazmaier sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment followed by 3 years' probation and a 5,000 US\$ fine. The biology professor was fraudulently importing trophies, skulls and skeletons of animals protected by CITES from Indonesia and 11 other countries, including 6 in Europe (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.176). U.S. Department of Justice - Office of Public Affairs, January 11, 2023.⁵



FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 17, 2023

McAllen, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Roberto Angel Roman-Alvarez, age 27, is sentenced to the time served before the trial (6 months). In August 2022, this Mexican national, in collaboration with 2 members of his family, attempted to export from the United States of America and import into Mexico 160 animals, 90 of which were snakes, lizards, turtles, arachnids, insects, and amphibians belonging to 12 species listed in Appendix II of CITES (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.149).

MyRGV.com, January 19 2023; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, February 2023.⁶



FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 15, 2023

McAllen, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.



Sentencing of Jonathan Roberto Rojas-Casados and Roberto Rojas-Ramirez, father and son, to 12 months in prison for violating the Lacey Act, which prohibits any form of trade or transport of protected wildlife species, plants or animals, illegally captured or held. With the complicity of Roberto Angel Roman-Alvarez (see previous page, ref.6), in August 2022 they attempted to smuggle 160 animals, including tarantulas and frogs, into Mexico.

Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, March 2023.⁷

February 28, 2022

Idaho Falls, State of Idaho, United States of America



Indictment of Marshall Ray Andersen. In May 2021, the 23-year-old baited an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in order to poach him. He posted photos of his achievement on social networks. The investigation began when he was seen driving his vehicle in Lemhi County, where 2 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) had just been shot. Examination of photos collected during the investigation also led to identify him as the poacher of an elk (*Cervus canadensis*) in October 2021.

Post Register, February 7, 2023; Outsider, February 8, 2023.⁸

LATIN AMERICA

BOLIVIA

January 4, 2023

El Alto, Province of Pedro Domingo Murillo, Department of La Paz, Bolivia



Wallets, handbags, jaguar-skin hats (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) and caiman-skin caps (*Caiman* spp., *Melanosuchus* spp. or *Paleosuchus* spp., Appendix I or II) were seized, enough to impress at end-of-year banquets and family gatherings. Turtle fat and small stuffed lizards or toads (family Bufonidae) were also available at the El Alto market. An arrest. A jaguar skin hat sells for around 500 bolivianos (70 US\$).

La Razón (Bolivia), January 4, 2023.⁹

January 8, 2023

Colchani, Province of Antonio Quijarro, Department of Potosí, Bolivia



The hotel used 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and a blue-throated macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*, Appendix I) to attract and lure guests. A spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) was also part of the welcoming committee. The 4 animals are in the hands of vets.

Los Tiempos, January 8, 2023.¹⁰

February 10, 2023

Villa Tunari, Province of Chapare, Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia

Transfer of 15 animals rescued from trafficking from Cochabamba, where they were temporarily grouped, to the Trópico shelter (160 km): 6 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 4 blue-fronted parrots (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II), 3 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), a yellow-collared macaw (*Primolius auricollis*, Appendix II) and a Southern tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*). Michael León, who is responsible for monitoring and controlling wildlife trafficking, is realistic. "The loss of plumage is obvious in some birds, but the most serious damage is that these animals have become dependent on humans, which makes it difficult to release them back into their natural habitat."

Los Tiempos, February 10, 2023.¹¹

February 22, 2023

Cotoca, Province of Andrés Babiáñez, Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Dismantling of the private zoo of the Quinta Balneario y Hospedaje Las Parabas hotel complex, which specialised in "pool parties". Seizure of dusky-headed conures (*Aratinga weddellii*, Appendix II), yellow-chevrons parakeets (*Brotogeris chiriri*, Appendix II), blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), a grey brocket (*Mazama gouazoubira*), a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), a greater rhea (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II) and a muscovy duck (*Cairina moschata*, Appendix II).

La Voz de la Naturaleza, February 22, 2023.¹²



February 25, 2023

Camiri, Province of Cordillera, Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Another dismantling of an illegal zoo thanks to the action of the Pofoma (Policía Forestal y Prevención de Medio Ambiente) and the Santa Cruz Secretariat for Sustainable Development. Rafael Campos Justiniano probably didn't expect the environmental police to turn up at his Mi Fortuna restaurant and "eco-park" on a Saturday. All the animals kept in poor conditions were seized: a Bolivian squirrel monkey (*Saimiri boliviensis*, Appendix II), 4 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 2 toucans (family Ramphastidae), a greater rhea (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II), 16 muscovy ducks (*Cairina moschata*), 4 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), a grey brocket (*Mazama gouazoubira*), 5 Paraguayan caiman lizards (*Dracaena paraguayensis*, Appendix II) and 23 tortoises, yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) and Argentine tortoises (*Chelonoidis chilensis*, Appendix II).

La Voz de la Naturaleza, February 27, 2023.¹³

BRAZIL

January 9, 2022

Río de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

In her flat in Copacabana, an 80-year-old woman kept a parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), a turtle (order Testudines) of unspecified species - it is true that they were wading in their own feces, which made identification difficult - and 11 dogs. The flat is on the 10th floor of the luxury building. When a dog fell to the ground from the balcony, the neighbours reported it again and the SMPDA (Secretaria Municipal de Proteção e Defesa dos Animais) and the ICCE (Instituto de Criminalística Carlos Éboli) were called in.

Rio de Janeiro City Hall, January 9, 2023.¹⁴

OPERATION FAUNA LIVRE III (FREE FAUNA III)

January 30, 2023

Fortaleza International Airport, State of Ceara, Brazil

A 30-year-old man was arrested on allegations of wildlife trafficking. Three searches in the Novo Mondubim suburb led to the confiscation of bearded dragons (genus *Pogona*) from Australia, leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*) from South Asia, birds such as a Gould's toucanet (*Selenidera gouldii*), a local species, and ammunition. Gould's toucanets (30 cm long, 130-200 grams) are found in rainforests throughout central and eastern Brazil and eastern Bolivia. Males are differentiable from females in their pronounced black head and chest, and yellow stripes on the neck and upper back. The species is threatened in the State, mainly due to deforestation.

Civil Police of the State of Ceará, January 30, 2023; G1, January 31, 2023.¹⁵



Selenidera gouldii

February 1st-15, 2023

Pedro Afonso, Babaçulândia and Caseara, State of Tocantins, Itacaiú, State of Goiás and Xique-Xique and Ibotirama, State of Bahia, Brazil



Control operations on the Tocantins, Goiás and Bahia rivers. Ibama inspectors targeted fishermen using nets, a practice prohibited during the spawning season. More than 120 kg of fish and caiman meat (*Caiman* spp., *Melanosuchus* spp. or *Paleosuchus* spp., Appendix I or II) were seized, along with a boat, a motor, weapons, a chainsaw and more than 23 km of nets. The fish were donated to charity and the fishing gear destroyed. Nine notices were issued and a fine of 23,940 reais (4,425 US\$) was imposed.

G1 Tocantins, February 27, 2023.¹⁶

COLOMBIA

January 2023

Bogotá, Colombia

The El Salitre bus terminal in the heart of the city is a trafficking hub. All kinds of goods arrive there to be sold on local markets. Police checks resulted in the seizure of live and dead animals from 28 people:

- 8.22 kg of Meso-American slider (*Trachemys venusta*), capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and armadillo (family Dasypodidae) meat and Meso-American slider eggs, and a fragment of coral.
- 1 yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), 4 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II), 3 brown-throated conures (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II), 2 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) as well as other birds and turtles, all alive.

Mayor's Office of Bogotá, February 1st, 2023.¹⁷

January 27, 2023

Cali, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia



Arrest of Alex Velázquez Rodríguez and Nicolás Johan Mina Córdoba by the Specialised Directorate of Tax Services and the police. They are said to be 2 of the biggest wildlife traffickers in Colombia. Their stall was the Internet and they provided their customers with a home delivery service. In 2 homes, a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), an Asian python, 2 turtles (*Podocnemis expansa* or *Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 2 Meso-American sliders (*Trachemys venusta*) and an axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*, Appendix II) and 2 gars (family Lepisosteidae) were seized. Office of the Attorney General of Colombia, January 27, 2023; Semana, January 27, 2023.¹⁸

Mid-February 2023

On the road to Buga, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia



Seizure of 10 Harlequin poison frogs (*Oophaga histrionica*, Appendix II, endemic to Colombia) and 1,100 emperor tetras (*Nematobrycon palmeri*) during a car check. The frogs were in a roughly pierced plastic bottle and the ornamental fish in bags barely filled with water, all placed in the boot of the vehicle. The value of the frogs is estimated at the equivalent of 2,210 US\$ (221 US\$/specimen). One man was arrested. The animals were handed over to the CVC (Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca), which had helped to identify them.

Semana, February 14, 2023.¹⁹

FRANCE (GUIANA)

January 22, 2023

Petit-Saut Dam Reservoir, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Seizure during the night by the river brigade and the OFB of 2 hunting rifles, 2 fishing nets, 210 fish including aimaras (*Hoplias aimara*) in a cooler, 2 caimans (*Caiman* spp., *Melanosuchus* spp. or *Paleosuchus* spp., Appendix I or II) and 2 dead pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras). The 2 offenders were Brazilian nationals.

Aimaras have been endangered by 2 centuries of uncontrolled fishing and are now under pressure from mercury from illegal gold panners and gold miners, for whom aimaras are a prime food source. These large fish are trapped in the reservoir and upstream in the Sinnamary river. Unfortunately, the dam itself does not have a fish pass. The reservoir of the Petit-Saut hydroelectric dam covers 310 km² of former primary forest that was flooded in the early 1990s. A few patches of living trees stand out, while the tops of dead trees are everywhere else. Guyane la 1^{ère}, February 10, 2023; Gendarmerie of Guiana, February 11, 2023.²⁰

MEXICO

January 2023

State of Morelos, Mexico

Seizure of 2 mantled howlers (*Alouatta palliata*, Appendix I) and a white-fronted amazon (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II) from a private home. They were handed over to a UMA. Profepa, February 2, 2023.²¹

End of January 2023

San Gabriel, State of Jalisco, Mexico

Search of a ranch. Seizure of a Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*, Appendix I), 7 buffalo (subfamille Bovinae) and 2 ostriches (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 countries).

Several animals, including 2 tigers, had already been seized from a property in the State of Jalisco in May 2021 (see "On the Trail" no. 33, p.228). El Occidental, January 28, 2023.²²



PERU

February 2, 2023

Provinces of Pisco and Nazca, Department of Ica, Peru

Joint operation of the Serfor and the National Police Environment Department.

- Seizure of a jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) skin displayed in a shop. Its value is estimated at 5,000 sols (1,340 US\$).

- Seizure of a colfeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II) skin and another stuffed specimen from a street seller offering his shamanic skills. Serfor, February 2, 2023.²³

February 9, 2023

District of Nauta, Province of Loreto, Department of Loreto, Peru

Market seizure of 20 kg of collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and 4 live yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II). Departmental Management of Forestry and Wildlife Development - Loreto, February 9, 2023.²⁴



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of February 2023

Off Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of plastic crates and boxes full of 588 snakes, frogs and lizards in a go-fast ship after an hour-long chase on the Pearl River.

Chinese Customs, February 9, 2023.²⁵

February 2023

Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 8 ivory jewels, 121.21 grams, and 45 red coral jewels (genus *Corallium*), 262.53 grams, in a parcel from abroad.

Chinese Customs, March 1, 2023.²⁶



February 15 and 16, 2023

Nyalam County and Xigazê, Tibet Autonomous Region, China. Border with Nepal.



- At 4 p.m. on the 15th, a white van was inspected and 8 packets containing 3.7kg of musk deer (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I or II) preputial glands, 1.59kg of bear (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) gall bladder and 11.16kg of cordyceps (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*) were seized from under the bonnet, the driver's seat and behind the backs of the rear seats. The driver was arrested.

- At 9 p.m., the middleman was arrested.

- At 2.40 a.m. on the 16th, the consignee of the contraband was arrested.

Chinanews, February 18, 2023.²⁷

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

January 17, 2023

Jatimulyo, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Seizure by the provincial police (Criminal Affairs Department) of 2.445 kg of Javanese pangolin scales, an owl (*Strigiformes*, Appendix I or II) and 2 mitred leaf monkeys (*Presbytis melalophos*, Appendix II), multicoloured acrobatic monkeys reaching a metre from mouth to tail. In the wild, they live in families. They do not tolerate captivity well.

FLIGHT – Protecting Indonesia's Birds, January 20, 2023; Kupastuntas.co, January 20, 2023.²⁸

VIET NAM

January 2023

Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam

1.25 million dong fine (53 US\$) for a woman who offered pangolin scales, tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), bear (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) fangs and ivory bracelets and pendants for sale on social networks.

ENV, January 19 and 30, 2023.²⁹



January 2023

Long Thanh District, Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

A search of the Facebook wildlife seller's premises led to the seizure of 3 live crakes (family Rallidae) and 101 frozen animals, including 3 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), 6 lesser whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica*), 57 passerines (family Sturnidae), 8 spotted doves (*Spilopelia chinensis*) and 3 crakes. Fine of 6 million dong (255 US\$).

ENV, February 5, 2023.³⁰

facebook



January 11 and 28, 2023

Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure of a stuffed hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), 2 hawksbill turtle scale fans and 9 ivory hairpins at the home of Duong Thi Mai. He was trying to sell them via the Internet. VTV (Viet Nam), January 28, 2023.³¹



January 14, 2023

Viet Nam

Release of 8 Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and 7 Sunda pangolins on the occasion of the Tet festival. Each species was returned to a suitable and confidential habitat. The SVW rescuers were concerned about one of the pangolins, whose tail had been severely docked by amputation. The vets had been forced to take a radical decision to extricate the pangolin from a trap. This is a handicap for this skilled climber, who uses his prehensile tail to reach the summits. But all hopes are justified. He quickly climbed a tree. He's not yet hanging from the branches with his crippled tail, but it's a good start. SVW, January 19, 2023.³²



January 16, 2023

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a restaurant of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), an Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) and 2 ferret-badgers (genus *Melogale*). Apparently, they were not on the menu. They were simply used as a teaser and appetiser for customers. They were kept in disgusting conditions. ENV, January 16, 2023.³³

SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

January 27, 2023

Lohagara Upazila, Chittagong District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

The 4 men set off on a journey between Bandarban and Dhaka (330 km and 6 hours 40 minutes' drive), with 2 monkeys (Primates, Appendix I or II) and an owl (Strigidae, Appendix I or II) on their motorbikes. Caught by the police at the beginning of their journey, they ended it with 6 months in prison and fines of 5,000 takas (46 US\$) each.

New Age, January 28, 2023.³⁴



INDIA

January 11 and 12, 2023

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The smuggler arriving from Bangkok, Thailand, cracked at the last moment. The 2 trolley bags left at the arrival's turnstile were first scanned to check for weapons and ammunition, then opened, showing 3 common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II), 45 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), 8 corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*) and 3 Burmese star tortoises (*Geochelone platynota*, Appendix I) to the customs. The animals were quarantined, fed and returned to Bangkok the following day. The passenger was identified and summoned for the purposes of the investigation.

The Times of India, January 15, 2023; Chennai Customs, January 16, 2023.³⁵



OPERATION KALKI

January 22, 2023

Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru Rural District, and Kengeri, Bengaluru Urban District, State of Karnataka, India



- Seizure at the airport of 4 primates and 14 reptiles, including 6 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II, native to Africa), from 3 passengers, one of whom was a woman, from Bangkok, Thailand. Ten of the animals belong to species listed in Appendix II of CITES. The DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence) had received reliable information and was resolutely awaiting the smugglers.

- The prompt investigation in collaboration with the Forest Department and the WCCB resulted in the seizure of a further 139 animals belonging to 48 species, 34 of which are listed in the CITES Appendices. They were everywhere, even in the toilets. Evidence of financial transactions to buy and sell wildlife contraband via WhatsApp and other social networks was collected. Five people were arrested, including the 3 smugglers who allegedly put investigators on the trail of a 34-year-old man who works as a wildlife rehabilitator with "a famous animal protection NGO". Investigators declined to give details. The gang's aim was to open a "wildlife experience centre" and a "sanctuary" in Whitefield, a district of Bengaluru.

In all, 157 animals of 51 species were rescued from trafficking, including a very young Sulawesi macaque (*Macaca nigra*, Appendix II, classed as critically endangered and endemic to the island of Sulawesi), marmosets (Cebidae or Callitrichidae, Appendix I or II, native to South and Central America), raccoon dogs (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*), white-crowned parrots (*Pionus senilis*, Appendix II, Central America and Mexico), yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I, Central America and Mexico), yellow anacondas (*Eunectes notaeus*, Appendix II, South America), green anacondas (*Eunectes murinus*, Appendix II, South America), Nile monitors (*Varanus niloticus*, Appendix II, Africa), a Mexican black kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula nigrita*, endemic to the Sonoran desert), a common kingsnake (*Lampropeltis californiae*), iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II, South America), veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II, Saudi Arabia and Yemen), alligator gars (*Atractosteus spatula*, a North and Central American fish)...

The animals have been entrusted to the Bannerghatta Biological Park. NGOs fearing that the conditions are unsuitable for the Sulawesi macaque are calling for his quick repatriation to Indonesia. Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs; Press Information Bureau - Government of India, January 27, 2023; The Times of India, January 27 and 31, 2023.³⁶

January 24, 2023

Near Kamakhya, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India



Seizure in a shop of tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) claws, Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) hemipenes, presumed musk deer (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I or II) musk, a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) skull and teeth, Indian crested porcupine (*Hystrix indica*) quills, deer antlers, conch (genus *Strombus*) shells, cowries (family Cypraeidae), sea fans (order Alcyonacea) and corals (class Anthozoa). The Forest Department and the police have rendered Santosh Kumar Gupta and Sangit Gupta harmless. They have been charged and detained under the Wildlife Protection Act. East Mojo, January 25, 2023.³⁷

February 6, 2023

Paikabasa, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India



Officers from the Similipal Tiger Reserve seized an elephant bone, a turtle shell, bones of other unidentified animals and 2 country-made guns. Five people were charged and remanded in judicial custody for 14 days. The Print, February 6, 2023.³⁸

February 11, 2023

Karnawal, Meerut District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

In the houses of Sher Singh and Bhure, next to a brick kiln, forest officers and policemen seized the carcasses of a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) and 2 greater hog badgers (*Arctonyx collaris*) and an injured Indian hare (*Lepus nigricollis*). The 2 men have been charged. Outlook India, February 12, 2023.³⁹

Night of February 21 to 22, 2023

Poosaripatti and Ramasamy Raja Nagar Areas, Virudhunagar District, State of Tamil Nadu, India
The Great Night of Shiva

The 20 villagers were holding a free market in the forest on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri, "The Great Night of Shiva." They wanted to offer the deity the 29 Indian hares (*Lepus nigricollis*), 3 Indian grey mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsii*, Appendix III in India and Pakistan) and a grey francolin (*Francolinus pondicerianus*) poached by them. Alerted, forest rangers posted themselves on the road and inspected 4 vehicles. The remains were seized and the 20 poachers were taken to the station. The Times of India, February 23, 2023.⁴⁰

February 26, 2023
Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

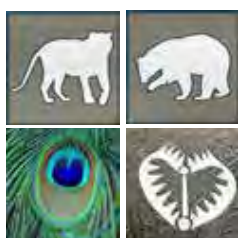


A so-called raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) and 4 live tegus (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II) were seized from the baggage of a passenger disembarking from a Malaysia Airlines flight from Kuala Lumpur. In fact, the customs photo shows a ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I) from Madagascar. The passenger was released on bail.
 Chennai Customs, February 27, 2023; The Times of India, February 27, 2023.⁴¹

Sunday, February 26, 2023
Palandur Zamindari and Mangezari, Gondia District, State of Maharashtra, India

At first light, police and forest rangers paid Sunday visits to the 2 villages. It was the poaching of a black leopard a month ago that led them on the right track, resulting in the seizure of 22 cases of homemade liquor with an estimated value of 84,000 rupees (1,030 US\$), 2,149,000 rupees (26,359 US\$) in cash, 2 teeth and a claw from a tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) or leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), claws of jungle cats (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II), 3 claws of sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), an armful of feathers, and a live Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), bones and various parts of unspecified species, and a snare trap. Ravi Bodgewar, illicit liquor seller, Shamlal Madavi, Divas Kolhare, Manik Taram, and Ashok Gote will have to answer for their actions in court.

The Print, February 27, 2023; PiPa News, February 28, 2023.⁴²



PAKISTAN

January 2023

On the border of the Margalla Hills National Park, Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan



It was a poacher's chase on the eastern edge of the park. They were on the prowl for Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and kalij pheasants (*Lophura leucomelanos*, Appendix III). The rangers had received information from well-informed local residents. The park covers 175 km². Two poachers were remanded in custody and their weapons were seized.

Associated Press of Pakistan, January 27, 2023.⁴³

February 2023

Karachi, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

The university campus was transformed into a poaching showcase. First there was the "poultry show," during which eagles (including, no doubt, Appendix II tawny eagles *Aquila rapax*) and snakes (Squamata order) were exhibited. Two weeks later, there was a "pet show" featuring juvenile mugger crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I), spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I), tawny eagles (*Aquila rapax*, Appendix II), and snakes (order Squamata). The province's wildlife conservationist, Javed Ahmed Mahar, is dismayed. The University is supposed to be setting an example, and all the animals on display are banned from capture and keeping. The University, which has authorized these fairs without questioning the species on display, has appointed a commission made up of Professor Faiyaz Vaid, Professor Farah Iqbal, and Dr. Syed Asim Ali to look into the matter.
 Dawn, February 28, 2023.⁴⁴

NORTHERN EUROPE

SWEDEN

February 1, 2023

Blekinge and Karlskrona, Blekinge County, Sweden



Two men ages 25 and 30, whose names are jealously guarded, were sentenced by the Karlskrona court to a fine the amount of which isn't published for negligence and cruelty in the management of Blekinge Exotiska Värld (Blekinge Exotic World). The 2 men pleaded not guilty and the court conceded, in a judgment which it hopes will not set a precedent in the European Union, that the cruelty they had shown was "involuntary." One of the convicts wants even more. He has appealed.

.../...

In their mess, in August 2019 county veterinary authorities seized, living in the shit and newspaper of litter boxes, 2 African dwarf crocodiles (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*, Appendix I), a Chinese crocodile lizard (*Shinisaurus crocodilurus*, Appendix I), a boa (Boidae, Appendix I or II), a savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II), a Chinese water dragon (*Physignathus cocincinus*, Appendix II), an iguana (family Iguanidae), a Central bearded dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*), a beauty ratsnake (*Elaphe taeniura ridleyi*), and a rattlesnake (genus *Crotalus*). Three emaciated, toothless white-eared marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) were seized, but had to be put down by the vets immediately afterwards. The freezer contained monkey carcasses. Sveriges Television, September 14, 2022, January 18 and February 1 and 22, 2023; Sveriges Radio, November 7, 2022; Aftonbladet, February 1, 2023.⁴⁵

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

January 24-29, 2023

Dortmund, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

"Jagd und Hund" (Hunt and Hound), the meeting place for sharpshooters from Germany and neighbouring countries, has caused controversy. The NGO Pro Wildlife denounced offers to hunt elephants in enclosures in Cameroon. After denying the presence of such an offer in the aisles of the show, the organiser finally admitted the facts. Other contested offers related to hunting lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and bongos (*Tragelaphus eurycerus*). A delegation from Botswana was present, including the head of national parks and the head of the CITES office within the Ministry of the Environment. An agreement was reached for Botswana to be the official partner of the 2024 session of Jagd und Hund. The show was opened by the Mayor of Dortmund. He did not hesitate to describe hunting and hunting-related activities as a "green passion".

The deer was once again consecrated as the pillar of hunting in the European Union. Three hunters from Bavaria, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Lower Saxony were chosen by the grand jury to represent Germany at the European deer hunters' competition in Brno in the Czech Republic in April 2023, and each and everyone - in a festive atmosphere only undermined by Pro Wildlife activists - was able to feast on game from around the world concocted by starred chefs at the Wild Food Festival. However, despite the displayed satisfaction and bliss, Jagd und Hund is increasingly the subject of controversy raised by anti-hunting NGOs, and an ethics commission is due to be set up by the Mayor of Dortmund to ensure that the 2024 session is as free from criticism as possible.

RUHR24, January 27 and 29, 2023.⁴⁶

January 29, 2023

Dresden, Saxony State, Germany

Intercepted on the motorway leading to Dresden and escorted by the police to a rest area, a man suspected of stealing cars and catalytic converters was transporting in a van a common crane (*Grus grus*, Appendix II), 2 black swans (*Cygnus atratus*), 2 Cape Barren geese (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*) from Australia, a gallinaceous bird from Latin America, a Parma wallaby (*Macropus parma*) from Australia, 6 alpacas (*Vicugna pacos*), 14 ducks and 10 wild geese and 2 porcupines (family Hystricidae).

Dresden Police Department, January 30, 2023; TAG24, January 30, 2023; Sächsische Zeitung, January 31, 2023.⁴⁷

Mid-February 2023

Burgthann, Bavaria, Germany



An impressive amount of wildlife contraband on shelves was discovered in 2 houses by the Veterinary Office, the State Office for Health and Food Safety, and the police. 141 snakes, including 2 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), hundreds of spiders including a tarantula (family Theraphosidae), and scorpions were encased in plastic boxes. The 2 pythons, measuring 1.4 and 1 meter long, shared the same box measuring 40x80 cm by 12.5 cm high, with soiled and sometimes moldy bedding and very inadequate ventilation. One of the snakes, covered in scars and with scales torn off, died a few days after its rescue. The Munich Reptile Rescue Centre (Reptilienaufangstation) is in charge of caring for the survivors, which are in any case sentenced to life in captivity. More than 200 mice and rats destined to feed the reptiles were also found. A trafficker has been identified.

Nürnberger Nachrichten, February 24, 2023; t-online, February 25, 2023.⁴⁸

FRANCE

January 23 and 24, 2023

Villers-en-Cauchies, Department of Nord, France



A motorcyclist refusing to comply with a roadside check was pursued by police motorcyclists. He was driving under the influence of drugs and carrying cannabis. A grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), a roseate cockatoo (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II) and a Senegal parrot (*Poicephalus senegalus*, Appendix II) were found at his home, a turquoise parakeet (*Neophema pulchella*, Appendix II), 6 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and 2 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) with a total estimated value of more than 10,000 or 10,650 US\$. He was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment for the road traffic offences and an investigation is underway to establish the origin of the animals and whether they were being trafficked for profit. As a precautionary measure, the turtles have been seized and transferred to an approved breeder.

La Voix du Nord, January 30, 2023.⁴⁹

February 2023

Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle International Airport, Roissy-en-France, Département du Val-d'Oise, France



"With what we see every day, we think we're screwed: pangolins every week, bats, and primates too. In short, animals that can transmit diseases to humans, such as coronavirus, Ebola... We've learned nothing from Covid!" Such is the observation of Emmanuel Bizeray, head of customs. The list of more or less bloody and decomposed animals entering French territory via Roissy airport's T2 terminal, where flights from West and Central Africa land, also includes gazelles, antelopes, porcupines, agoutis, warthogs, tortoises... Every year, around 30 tonnes of bushmeat are seized (including the weight of maggots), which is just 8% of the actual traffic according to airport customs officers. The industry is well organised, and the smugglers are rarely the final consumers. In fact, they are "entrusted" with a piece of baggage by a third party before their departure, for a fee of 8 € to 10 €/kg, which Air France authorizes them to take on board in addition to their own suitcase, at no extra cost. The meat is then sold in restaurants. Air France confines itself to promoting its awareness-raising clips and has no plans to change its commercial policy. The first to be exposed to health risks are travelers, customs officers, baggage handlers, and conveyor belt operators, who have to clean up blood splashes. In addition, live animals are also trafficked. The newspaper Les Echos de Congo Brazzaville warns: "Passengers arriving from Brazzaville and Kinshasa, beware, customs intercept bushmeat at Roissy".

Bushmeat seizures at Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle airport, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.96, n°6 p.42 and n°34 p.227. Seizure at Orly airport, "On the Trail" n°1 p.40. Le Parisien, February 15, 2023; Les Echos du Congo Brazzaville, February 22, 2023.⁵⁰

THE NETHERLANDS

February 1, 2023

Den Bosch, Province of North Brabant, Netherlands



Dutch justice is lenient. In the first instance (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.124), Hans Timmers was sentenced to 1 year in prison, 6 months of which were suspended, and a fine of 20,000 € (23,400 US\$). The Court of Appeal has just sentenced him to a 6-month suspended prison sentence, with a 2-year probation period, and 240 hours of community service (or 4 months in prison in default of execution). Operating Timmers Gems, he had imported from Indonesia via the port of Rotterdam an international catalogue of wildlife contraband, of which the Court of Appeal's decision has the merit of giving us an inventory:

310 fragments of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II) + 1,097.88 kg + 48 pendants, 110 bracelets, 31 chains, 47 necklaces, 42 branches of black coral (Antipatharia, Appendix II), 5 fragments of blue coral (Helioporidae, Appendix II), 209 fragments of sea organ (Tubiporidae, Appendix II), a babirusa skull (*Babirusa babirusa*, Appendix I), 11 rostrums of common sawfish (*Pristis pristis*, Appendix I), 4 sea turtle skulls (Cheloniidae, Appendix I), 8 cetacean vertebrae (Cetacea, Appendix I or II), 33 dugong vertebrae (*Dugong dugon*, Appendix I), 50 elephant ivory bracelets, 3 Nile crocodile skulls (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II), 9 long-tailed macaque skulls (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), 5 fishing cat teeth (*Prionailurus viverrinus*, Appendix II), 40 Indochinese spitting cobra by-products (*Naja siamensis*, Appendix II), 12 python skins (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), 74 monitor lizard skins (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), one nanday conure (*Nandayus nenday*, Appendix II), 257 queen conch shells (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II), at least one bobcat lower jaw (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), 57 crocodilian by-products (Crocodylia, Appendix I or II), 3 anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*, Appendix II) or arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) skin dagger sheaths, 1,607 cacti (family Cactaceae), and rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp., Appendix I or II).

See "On the Trail" n°14 p.109, n°27 p.124 and n°31 p.186

Bois-le-Duc Court of Appeal, February 1, 2023.⁵¹

SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

Mid-February 2023

Porlezza and San Nazzaro Val Cavargna, Province of Como, Region of Lombardy, Italy. Border with Switzerland.



- Cages filled with live birds and 2 legs of wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) seized during a roadside check. The 58-year-old driver was already known to the police and did not hold a hunting licence.

- His home, some 15 km away, was searched and additional live and dead birds, weapons, ammunition, bird and large mammal traps, stuffed animals, and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) trophies were seized.

He was also charged with capture of protected species and illegal possession of weapons.

La Provincia di Como, February 16, 2023.⁵²

Mid-February 2023

Cervarese Santa Croce, Province of Padua, Region of Veneto, Italy

The 100 eastern black-and-white colobus (*Colobus guereza*, Appendix II) and 700 fragments of sea otter skins (*Enhydra lutris*, Appendix I or II) had been purchased as part of the compulsory liquidation of a company specializing in leather goods. Neither the insolvency administrator nor the buyer were able to provide proof of legality to the carabinieri, who seized everything.

Il Gazzettino, February 17, 2023.⁵³

EASTERN EUROPE

POLAND

Beginning of January 2023

Terespol, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Belarus.



Seizure of a grey wolf pelt (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), 2 brown bear skins (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and 2 bear skulls mounted on wooden supports in the luggage of a Belarusian national entering Poland.

National Revenue Administration, January 10, 2023; Belsat TV, January 12, 2023.⁵⁴



RUSSIA

January-February 2023

Magnitogorsk and Chelyabinsk, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia



Rosselkhoznadzor (Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance) officials have identified 8 companies that exploit wild animals for cultural and entertainment purposes in violation of the law. One of them was keeping bears (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II), pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), lynx (*Lynx* spp., Appendix I or II), raptors (*Falconiformes*, Appendix I or II), owls (*Bubo* spp., Appendix II) and foxes (family *Canidae*) without a permit, and had not installed a protective barrier between the animals and visitors.

Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance, February 27, 2023.⁵⁵

VARIOUS MARINE SPECIES

ASIA

CHINA

January 6, 2023
Hengqin Island, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.



Customs interception of a vehicle from Macao carrying 900 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and 17 sea cucumbers. Gongbei Customs, January 12, 2023.¹

January 2023
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in a passenger's baggage of 2 bracelets, an amulet and a giant clam shell pendant (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 415 grams and 44 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) weighing a total of 100 grams. Chinese Customs, February 2, 2023.²

February 2023
Dachan Island, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in the Zhu Jiang (Pearl River) estuary of dried abalone and sea cucumbers, shark fins, swim bladders, and bird's nests. The contraband hidden in a ship's anchor chain well is estimated to be worth 5 million yuan (740,680 US\$). Chinese Customs, February 23, 2023.³

SRI LANKA

February 9, 2023
Serakkuliya, North West Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure in 2 trucks of 239 kg of dried sea cucumbers (family *Holothuroidea*) and 921 kg of dried shark fins. They were allegedly smuggled into Sri Lanka from India by sea. Two arrests. Sri Lanka Navy, February 9, 2023.⁴

EUROPE

ITALY

February 15, 2023
Cagliari, Metropolitan City of Cagliari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy



Seizure in a "private club" of 2,000 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*) and fish, including swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), which were obtained illegally. Fines of 8,500 € (9,270 US\$). Sea urchins in Sardinia, see "On the Trail" n°23 p.9, n°32 p.256 and p.272, n°34 p.245, n°35 p.197 and n°36 p.211.

La Nuova Sardegna, February 16, 2023.⁵

POLAND

Beginning of February 2023
Kraków John Paul II International Airport, Balice, Lesser Poland Voivodeship, Poland



Customs officials were intrigued when a suitcase was X-rayed: 11 fragments of stony coral (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II), 800 grams, and 3 half-shells of giant clams (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) mixed with other unprotected shellfish, were seized. The tourist, returning from the Maldives and Dubai, said she was unaware of the protected status of her souvenirs. Tax Administration Chamber in Kraków, February 16, 2023.⁶

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

February 10 and March 1, 2023

Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

The Australian Coast Guard intercepted their boat off Kimberley on February 10. On board were 30 shark fins and 300 kg of sea cucumbers. Six Indonesian sailors, Saida Bahar, Abdul Bakri Mau, Ab Pello, Boston Ramadani, Madun Saida and Jeskial Tualaka, all fathers, were jointly fined 9,000 dollars (6,040 US\$). This is the fourth trial of foreign fishermen since the beginning of the year.

NT News, March 3, 2023.⁷



February 21 and March 27, 2023

Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

- Boarding of the *Alwi Jaya* by the HMAS *Armidale* of the Australian Coastguard. On board the Indonesian fishing boat from the islands of Sulawesi and Rote, inspectors discovered 250 kg of sea cucumbers and 15 shark fins. The *Alwi Jaya* was towed to Darwin. The captain was the only person on board with any experience of long-distance fishing. The *Alwi Jaya* was over 400 miles from Rote Island. The waters off Darwin have been frequented for centuries by Indonesian fishermen. A kind of right of use has been established, and despite a memorandum of understanding signed in 1974 by Australia and



Indonesia authorizing traditional Indonesian fishing activities in waters under Australian jurisdiction, the conflict is still rampant. The Indonesian fleet, while still small-scale, uses industrial fishing techniques, does not comply with international regulations on species management, and has nothing to do with the subsistence fishing that the 1974 agreement was intended to protect.



- The 8 Indonesian sailors were fined a total of 9,600 \$ (6,440 US\$). Their boat was shredded on a wasteland. Since the beginning of the year, 29 foreign fishermen have been tried in Darwin. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the fall in fish prices and, on the other hand, the rise in the value and demand for sea cucumbers, are driving Indonesian owners and fishermen into hazardous waters from the legal view point.

Australian Border Force, February 23 and 24, 2023; ABC News, March 1, 2023; NT News, April 1, 2023.⁸

CORALS

AFRICA

SENEGAL

February 19, 2023

Kébémér, Louga Region, Senegal

Seizure of 100 kg of red coral (genus *Corallium*) in polystyrene fish boxes by the mobile customs brigade in a vehicle coming from Mauritania. The value is estimated at 327 million CFA francs (43,520 US\$ and 5,400 US\$/kg).

Dakaractu, February 24, 2023; Senegalese customs, February 24, 2023; Seneweb, February 24, 2023.¹



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 11, 2023

Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America

Sentence of Derek Kelley to 2 years' probation, to pay 2,000 US\$ to a foundation dedicated to protecting the sea and its resources, and to publish apologies on his Facebook page. He was a member of the conspiracy that in 2017 and 2018 secured the services of a diver in the Philippines and imported large numbers of corals via Alaska under false names (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.203). Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, February 2023.²



ASIA

CHINA

January 2023

Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, Hubei Province, China

2 fragments of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II) seized from the luggage of a passenger from abroad. Total weight: 383 grams.

Wuhan Customs, February 8, 2023.³

February 1st and March 1st, 2023

Horqin, Tongliao Prefecture, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China

The "mysterious" parcel from Japan contained 39 pieces of red coral (genus *Corallium*) jewellery. The recipient had ordered them in September 2022. He was arrested. The investigation is underway to establish the extent of the trafficking.

Malaqin.cn, March 7, 2023.⁴

February 2023

Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, Hubei Province, China

Four red coral necklaces (genus *Corallium*) seized from the luggage of an overseas passenger. Total weight: 259 grams.

Chinese Customs, February 14, 2023.⁵

February 2023

Ningbo Lishe International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

A fragment of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II), 33.89 grams, was seized from the handbag of a passenger travelling from abroad.

Chinese Customs, March 2, 2023.⁶

February 10, 2023

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

21 stony corals (Scleractinia, Appendix II) in plastic bags filled with water were seized from the backpack of a traveller from Hong Kong. Total weight: 1,396.36 grams.

Chinese Customs, March 4, 2023.⁷

February 23-27, 2023

Nanjing Lukou International Airport, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 13 fragments of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II) in the luggage of 4 passengers from abroad. Total weight: 770 grams.

Chinese Customs, March 1, 2023.⁸

EUROPE

GERMANY

January 16, 2023

Berlin Brandenburg Airport Willy Brandt, Schönefeld, Brandenburg State, Germany

The tourist's backpack from Singapore didn't escape the notice of Roxy, the endangered species detection dog. Inside were 29 fragments of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II) of 7 species. The 41-year-old woman said she had picked them up on the beach while on vacation and wanted to use them to decorate her home.

German Customs, January 18, 2023.⁹

POLAND

Beginning of January 2023

Warsaw Chopin International Airport, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland



Seizure of 10 live stony corals (Scleractinia, Appendix II) from Indonesia. They were not accompanied by an import permit. Customs officials handed them over to Warsaw Zoo as quickly as possible. Favourable prognosis.

Tax Office in Łosice, January 12, 2023.¹⁰

Beginning of February 2023

Kraków John Paul II International Airport, Balice, Lesser Poland Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure of almost a kilo of coral (Anthozoa class) from a man returning from Colombia.

Tax Administration Chamber in Kraków, February 16, 2023.¹¹

RUSSIA

February 21, 2023

Kazan International Airport, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia

Seizure of 17 "irregularly shaped porous objects with light grey and brown outgrowths", presumed to be fragments of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II), from the belongings of a woman coming from Dubai.

Kazanskije Vedomosti, February 21, 2023; Tatar-inform, February 21, 2023.¹²

CONCHES, GIANT CLAMS, NAUTILUSES, HORNED HELMETS, DATE MUSSELS ...



Bellybutton nautilus (*Nautilus macromphalus*). Photo Shankar Meyer

AMERICA

FRANCE (MARTINIQUE)

February 14, 2023

Le Vauclin, Territorial Collectivity of Martinique, France

The exchange of information and the first joint patrols of the French national gendarmerie in collaboration with the Saint Lucia police and coastguard are having an effect. A skiff sailing from Saint Lucia was tracked and checked on arrival in Martinique. As the police approached, 3 Martinicans and one Saint Lucian tried to swim away. In their bags abandoned on land, 1,180 kg of defrosting queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) meat worth 23,600 € (25,730 US\$ and 22 US\$/kg) were found. The 4 men were recovered and taken into custody. The resources deployed for this operation were impressive: air assets from the armed forces in the French West Indies and a Falcon aircraft to track the skiff, a fire brigade boat, a SNSM (Société Nationale de Sauvetage en Mer, National Lifeboat Society) boat, a Gendarmerie helicopter and divers from the Service Territorial d'Incendie et de Secours (Fire and Rescue Territorial Service) to catch the smugglers. The seizure was not lost to everyone, it was sunk to the bottom of the sea.

France-Antilles, February 15 and 16, 2023; Martinique la 1^{ère}, February 15, 2023.¹

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of January 2023

Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, Hubei Province, China

Seizure of 5 giant clam shell bracelets (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) weighing 477 grams and 3 red sandalwood bracelets (*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Appendix II) weighing 153 grams from the luggage of a passenger from abroad.

Chinese Customs, January 11, 2023.²

January 2023

Beijing Capital International Airport, China



Seizure of a nautilus (*Nautilidae*, Appendix II) weighing 235 grams in the luggage of a passenger from abroad.

Chinese Customs, February 3, 2023.³

January 2023

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 6 giant clam shell necklaces (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) in the suitcase of a passenger from abroad. Total weight: 457.46 grams. Hangzhou Daily, February 7, 2023.⁴

February 2023

Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China



Seizure of 4 nautilus (*Nautilus pompilius*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 399 grams in a parcel declared to contain "tableware" and arriving from abroad. Chinese Customs, February 15, 2023.⁵

February 22, 2023

Port of Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China



The container was filled with cartons stamped GLS Korea. One of them contained a nautilus (*Nautilidae*, Appendix II) weighing 209.04 grams. GLS Korea is a courier company based in Seoul, South Korea. Chinese Customs, March 2, 2023.⁶

February 2023

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a horned helmet (*Cassis cornuta*) in the luggage of a passenger from abroad, 890 grams. Chinese Customs, March 2, 2023.⁷

February 2023

Yantai, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 361 pieces of a giant clam (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) in a consignment of goods from abroad. Total weight: 2.52 kg. Giant clam shell "go" games, see "On the Trail" n°32 p. 260, n°33 p. 231, n°35 p. 191, n°37 p. 200 and n°38 p. 222. Chinese Customs, March 6, 2023.⁸

February 2023

Dalian, Liaoning Province, China



Giant clams (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) processed in go games are definitely in vogue. This one was found in another parcel from abroad. Total weight: 1.26 kg. Chinese Customs, March 7, 2023.⁹

February 2023

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a horned helmet (*Cassis cornuta*) weighing 1.04 kg in a parcel from abroad. Chinese Customs, March 8, 2023.¹⁰

EUROPE

ITALY

February 2, 2023

Naples, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy



The fishermen-looters of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II), the first links in the trafficking chain, were convicted in March 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.192). Here's what happened next. Giuseppe Buonocore, alias "Zi Peppe", was sentenced to 6 years in prison. He was the owner of the Neapolitan fish shop L'Ostricarò, which sold some of the illegal catch. Giuseppe Testa was sentenced to 4 years in prison. He was the one who received the date mussels, acted as a middleman and concealed the contraband before selling it on the market.

Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, February 3, 2023; Corriere del Mezzogiorno, February 3, 2023; La Stampa, February 3, 2023.¹¹

Haliotis spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 2 and March 24, 2023 Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

- Muchaga, Chauque, Mucache and Beca, ages 23, 28, 38 and 26, respectively, have nothing better to do in the megalopolis of Cape Town (population exceeding 4 million) than to set up a smuggled abalone processing workshop. The Hawks paid their business a visit. The abalone were weighed (2,476 kg), counted (8,993) and valued (4.5 million rand or 106 US\$/kg or 29 US\$/form).



- The 4 contractors were each fined 150,000 rand (8,140 US\$) or sentenced to 18 months in prison in the event of nonpayment. News24, January 3 and March 25 2023; SAPS, January 3 and March 25, 2023.¹

January 11, 2023 Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

At around 3:45 a.m., 8 bags of shucked abalone were seized from a red Toyota Condor. The car and suspect were carrying 1,620 abalones with a value equal to 30,000 US\$. Independent Online remarks, "Abalone, which is eaten as a delicacy and used as an aphrodisiac in Asian countries, is on the brink of extinction in South Africa as a result of years of uncontrolled commercial fishing and poaching." Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, January 11, 2023; Independent Online, January 13, 2023.²



January 17, 2023

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

A strong smell of seafood and cooking emanated from Daniel Street. No canine brigade was needed to track down the processing workshop where the chefs of fresh and dried abalone exercised their juicy talents. The abalone, altogether worth 40,000 US\$, were transferred to provincial stocks. The edible ones were resold at auction to legal networks. The proceeds finance the fight against smuggling and poaching. Seizures can also be stolen by officials who are in cahoots with abalone mafias. SAPS, January 18, 2023.³

Between mid-January and the beginning of February, 2023

Overberg District, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A report on ordinary crime in the district notes the seizure of a fishing boat, nets, fish traps, 1,333 abalones, 11 kg of dagga, 100 Methaqualone tablets, 31 tik "straws", and firearms. TimesLIVE, February 13, 2023.⁴

January 21, 2023

Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa

Watch out, it's heavy ! Police raid a processing plant full of salt, fans, gas bottles, heaters and scales. They confiscate 1,900 kg of fresh abalone and 230 kg of dried abalone. The value of the fresh abalone is estimated at 3.5 million rand (204,820 US\$ and 108 US\$/kg), the dried at 1.4 million rand (81,930 US\$ and 356 US\$/kg). One man escaped through a cleverly designed emergency exit. Another South African was handcuffed. SAPS, January 22, 2023.⁵



January 24, 2023

Table Mountain National Park, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A vehicle containing dozens of abalones and diving equipment was blocked and its 6 passengers arrested. One of the diver-poachers seriously injured a ranger from Table Mountain National Park. The lives of SEAM (Sea, Air and Mountain) rangers sometimes hang by a thread.

Independent Online, January 24, 2023.⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 3, 2023

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



A search in West End results in the confiscation of 7,388 abalones and arrest of Krishna Chetty, 59, and his son Seshen, 30. The father was released pending trial on 20,000 rand (1,150 US\$) bail. The son remains in prison.

SAPS, February 4, 2023; Algoa FM, February 6, 2023; Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), February 2023.⁷

February 4, 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Police have said for years that they've put a stop to abalone trafficking. This time, however, they arrested a 26-year-old man and a 23-year-old woman. Under a search warrant in Bellville, they seized 6,416 abalones, 4 crayfish and 40 tails inside 3 cold rooms, as well as 150,000 rand (8,660 US\$) in cash. The items have an estimated worth of 3.2 million rand or 184,700 US\$.

Eyewitness News, February 7, 2023; Getaway, February 8, 2023.⁸

February 11, 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

At around 9:30 a.m. on Walter Sisulu Road, police discovered and seized 821 abalones hidden inside a vehicle's trunk. The 37-year-old driver was unable to account for the shipment, estimated to be worth 500,000 rand or 28,860 US\$, and 35 US\$ per abalone.

SAPS, February 12, 2023.⁹

February 15, 2023

Mangaung, Free State Province, South Africa



In the morning, a chase ensues between a Toyota and police. Blue lights and sirens. The fugitives crash into a house and take off running. They wound one of the officers with something sharp. The K9 brigade seizes the wrecked car and 100 kg of abalone, estimated to be worth 200,000 rand (11,540 US\$, 115 US\$/kg). Two arrests. SAPS, February 15, 2023.¹⁰

February 17, 2023

Gansbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

After intercepting methaqualone, meth, ammunition, a revolver and arresting a young man, police carried out a traffic stop on the R43 between Gansbaai, the headquarters of smuggled abalone, and Stanford. They seized 3,608 abalones, valued at 1.4 million rand (80,810 US\$, 22 US\$ per abalone), from a minibuss cab and make 2 arrests.

SAPS, February 18, 2023.¹¹

February 17 and March 23, 2023

Kroonstad, Free State Province, South Africa

Seizure of abalones by the Kroonstad traffic police in a pick-up. The 2 riders offer the men in uniform 10,000 rand to buy their silence.

Sabriye Huseike, 28, was sentenced to a fine of 20,000 rand (1,080 US\$) or 5 years in prison for abalone trafficking; a fine of 10,000 rand (540 US\$) for attempted bribery with an alternative penalty of 5 years in prison in the event of non-payment, and 3 months in prison for breaching immigration laws. His sidekick Osman Abdulkarim Jama, 45, was sentenced to a 20,000 rand fine or 5 years in prison for abalone trafficking.

SAPS, March 27, 2023.¹²

Between February 21 and March 5, 2023

Overstrand, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A K9 dog squad seizes tik, marijuana, 318 abalones and methaqualone.

News24, March 10, 2023.¹³



February 24, 2023

Atteridgeville, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Guret Noor received a 6-year suspended prison sentence and a fine of 10,000 rand (580 US\$) for abalone trafficking and attempted corruption of law enforcement officers. See "On the Trail" n°34 p. 237. SAPS, March 2, 2023.¹⁴



ASIA

CHINA

January 2, 2023

Lok Ma Chau Control Point, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China. Border with Mainland China.



Officials seized 39 kg of dried abalone from a truck bound for Shenzhen, supposedly containing only sodas and cookies. The value of the abalone is estimated at 1.95 million Hong Kong dollars, i.e. 250,200 US\$ and 6,415 US\$/kg – a striking example of how endangered species accumulate value as they move from their continent of origin (Africa) to continent of consumption (Asia).

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, January 3, 2023; The Standard (Hong Kong), January 3, 2023.¹⁵

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

January 2, 2023

Killarney, State of Victoria, Australia

Poachers disguised as recreational fishermen were caught red-handed. Two men, a woman and a child first were found in possession of 14 abalones, 10 of which were undersized, and then 73 more in bags hidden near their car. The wetsuits were seized, and the abalone returned to the sea immediately. The Standard (Australia), January 4, 2023.¹⁶

REPEATED OFFENCE

February 7, 2023

Sydney, State of New South Wales, Australia



Steven John Brear was sentenced to 18 months in prison without the possibility of parole for 11 months, plus a fine of 35,000 \$ (24,800 US\$). The judge acknowledged Brear's long history of flouting fishing regulations and ordered the confiscation of his jet-ski and trailer. During his last foray in May 2022, he was caught poaching 94 abalones (the limit is 2 abalones for a recreational fisherman) and 6 rock lobsters. His sea-poaching record extends further back. In July 2021, in Royal National Park, fishery guards spotted him setting 2 lobster traps in the water, while recreational fishermen may only use one. In October 2021, guards also spotted him retrieving a professional fisherman's 19 lobster traps. In 2007, he was caught transporting 546 abalones off the Spirit of Tasmania car ferry and subsequently sentenced to 17 months in prison.

The Daily Telegraph, November 17, 2022 and February 8 2023; The Beagle, February 8 2023.¹⁷

SEA URCHINS



Purple sea urchin (*Paracentrotus lividus*). Photo Tmenut

EUROPE

CROATIA

Saturday, February 18, 2023
Pašman Canal, Zadar County, Croatia

Maritime and airport police seized a citizen. His diving equipment was seized, along with 1,590 sea urchins.

Zadar Police Department, February 20, 2023.¹

ITALY

Mid-January 2023
Pula, Metropolitan City of Cagliari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

Seizure of nets and 400 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*) when unloading a boat. M.P.A. was loading his car. Also known as "sea hedgehogs," the urchins were quickly returned to their element.

Sardinia Region Forest and Environmental Surveillance Corps, January 14, 2023.²

January 26 and February 1st and 2nd, 2023

Quartu Sant'Elena, Metropolitan City of Cagliari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy



- Seizure on the seafront of 2,000 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*) sold illegally in the street. One arrest. Fine of 1,500 € (1,600 US\$). The sea urchins were alive. They were returned to the sea.

- Seizure on the seafront of 500 urchins sold illegally in the street. Fine of 1,500 € (1,600 US\$). The sea urchins were alive. They were returned to the sea.

- Seizure on the seafront of approximately 500 sea urchins and pulp. Fine of 1,500 € (1,600 US\$). The sea urchins were alive. They were returned to the sea. Coast Guard, January 26, 2023; Sardegna Reporter, February 3, 2023.³



January 31, 2023

Cagliari, Metropolitan City of Cagliari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

New sea urchin trafficking. Seizure in a beach hut of 10 kg of purple sea urchin (*Paracentrotus lividus*), approximately 150 specimens, largely below the minimum authorized size and largely beyond the authorized catch. Administrative fine of 3,000 € (3,200 US\$). Sardinia Regional Forestry and Environmental Surveillance Corps, January 31, 2023.⁴



February 2, 2023

Civitavecchia, Metropolitan City of Rome, Region of Lazio, Italy

Four divers from Palermo had traveled to Civitavecchia (1,000 km) to poach sea urchins. They were surprised by a patrol. They returned to land with over 8,000 urchins, far exceeding the threshold of 50 urchins tolerated for a single recreational fisherman. The city's Guardia di Finanza fined them a total of 24,000 € (26,170 US\$). Canale Dieci, February 3, 2023.⁵



February 8, 2023

Fiumicino, Metropolitan City of Rome, Region of Lazio, Italy

At around 2 a.m. in Santa Marinella, police spotted 4 divers returning from the beach with full bags and suspected of looting sea urchins. They were stopped 40 km further on at the Torrimpietra tollbooth by the coast guard and traffic police. Inside their vehicle were 10,000 sea urchins in 6 boxes. They had traveled 500 km from Puglia, and this excursion cost them 16,000 € (17,440 US\$) in fines.

Canale Dieci, February 9, 2023.⁶



Saturday, February 11, 2023

Santa Marinella, Metropolitan City of Rome, Region of Lazio, Italy

New seizure of sea urchins in the Region of Lazio from illegal divers. A total of 16,000 € (17,440 US\$) in fines. The 1,000 sea urchins were returned to the water.

Rai News 24, February 12, 2023.⁷



February 12, 2023

Taranto, Province of Taranto, Region of Apulia, Italy

The Sunday fisherman was fined 2,000 € (2,180 US\$). 350 sea urchins were seized. Quotidiano di Puglia, February 15, 2023.⁸



February 14, 2023

Civitavecchia, Metropolitan City of Rome, Region of Lazio, Italy

The Guardia di Finanza fills its coffers. The vein is good. In 2 seizures on the cold night of Valentine's Day, it seized 4,000 and then 9,200 sea urchins and fined 7 divers from southern Italy 36,000 € (39,250 US\$). TRC Giornale, February 16, 2023.⁹



February 15, 2023

Olbia, Province of Sassari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

Seizure by the Guardia Costiera of Olbia in partnership with the traffic police of 2,000 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*). Fine of 1,000 € (1,090 US\$). The still-viable booty was loaded onto a Guardia Costiera patrol boat and returned to sea in a habitat agreed upon with the management of the Tavolara-Punta Coda Cavallo marine protected area.

"Commander Rosario Morello reiterates that the crackdown on illegal fishing will continue unabated, as will the constant monitoring of the entire supply chain, in order to protect consumers, professional fishermen, and fishery resources. This activity, which is part of a targeted and systematic effort to combat illegal fishing and the illicit marketing of sea urchins, testifies to the importance of safeguarding the marine environment and protecting biodiversity."

OlbiaNotizie.it, February 15, 2023.¹⁰



Mid-February 2023

Taranto, Province of Taranto, Region of Apulia, Italy

5,600 sea urchins (230 kg) were seized from 5 poachers during 5 separate checks by agents of the Naval Air Service of the Guardia di Finanza based in Bari. None had fishing permits or certificates of origin. The sea urchins, still alive, were returned to the sea.

PugliaIn, February 16, 2023.¹¹

Mid-February 2023

Metropolitan City of Bari, Region of Apulia, Italy

Seizure of 750 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*), 25 kg of undersized fish and 25 kg of fish of unknown origin. The fishmonger was fined 2,000 € (2,180 US\$). BariToday, February 20, 2023.¹²



February 23, 2023
Santa Marinella, Metropolitan City of
Rome Capital, Region of Lazio, Italy



Again, divers from Apulia who had come up to the north of Rome to plunder sea urchins were caught in the night by the Guardia Costiera of Civitavecchia. As a precaution, they had left their loot at sea in bags marked with a buoy, but they were discovered anyway. The 13,000 sea urchins were released and the 2 traffickers were fined 16,000 € (17,440 US\$). Quotidiano di Puglia, February 24, 2023; Rai News 24, February 24, 2023.¹³

February 24, 2023
Bosa, Province of Oristano,
Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy



Seizure of 400 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*) from an illegal fisherman. Fine of 1,000 € (1,090 US\$). Still alive, the sea urchins were returned to the ocean. La Nuova Sardegna, February 25, 2023.¹⁴

February 25, 2023
Cagliari, Metropolitan City of Cagliari,
Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy



A sport fisherman was fined 4,000 € (4,360 US\$) for poaching 7 kg of purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*) and purple dye murex (*Bolinus brandaris*) by diving into the harbor. The animals were returned to the water. Purple dye murex, now fished for consumption, were in ancient times prized for their purple dye.

Sardegna Live, February 25, 2023.¹⁵

SEA CUCUMBERS



Black sea cucumber (*Holothuria forskali*). Photo Tmenut

Sea cucumbers: *Holothuria fuscogilva*, *Holothuria nobilis* and *Holothuria whitmaei* (teatfish): Appendix II. *Isostichopus fuscus*: Appendix III in Ecuador.

AFRICA

SENEGAL

February 26, 2023

Blaise Diagne International Airport, Thiès Region, Senegal

Seizure by the special customs brigade of 58.1 kg of sea cucumbers from Morocco. There are 8 species of sea cucumber in Moroccan waters (*Holothuria mammata*, *Holothuria poli*, *Holothuria arguinensis*, *Holothuria forskali*, *Holothuria lentiginosa*, *Holothuria arenicola*, *Holothuria tubulosa* and *Holothuria helleri*). Poaching is widespread in Dakhla Bay, the port of Lâayoune and Dar Bouazza. Several hundred kilos of sea cucumbers are caught every day and sold mainly to Chinese middlemen. L'Observateur du Maroc et d'Afrique, July 13, 2020; Senegalese Customs, April 2, 2023.¹

AMERICA

MEXICO

February 25, 2023

Cancun International Airport, Yucatan Province, Mexico

A first ! Live sea cucumbers bound for Montreal seized at Cancun International in a passenger's luggage. The fraudster's nationality was not specified.

Riviera Maya News, February 27, 2023.²



ASIA

CHINA

February 2023

Shandong, Fujian and Guangdong Provinces, China



After a comparison between the flurry of companies specializing in the import-export of sea cucumbers in Shandong province and the lack of customs or CITES declarations, the police decided to "take the silk out of the cocoon" and get to the bottom of it. After several months of field and documentary investigations, particularly in the port of Yantai, a major smuggling operation was uncovered. The market report of the traffic is amounting to 140 tonnes of cucumbers worth 200 million yuan (29.6 million US\$ or 210 US\$/kg). 11 company directors were arrested. Yantai-based Lin's Company alone is responsible for the smuggling of 70 tonnes. One of the tricks used by importers working in conspiracy was to import sea cucumbers from Japan and South Korea and bring them across the border to Viet Nam, where import duties are only 30 yuan/kg (4.5 US\$/kg), a tax measure designed to revitalize the economy of border areas. The sea cucumbers were then transported by truck to Qingdao, Shandong province, 2,600 km from the border with Viet Nam. During the investigation, 300 kg of sea cucumbers were seized. Shanghai Observer, February 12, 2023; Qingdao Customs, February 13, 2023.³

INDIA

January 1, 2023

Pamban Light House, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India. Maritime border with Sri Lanka.



After 15 nautical miles, the traffickers fled in full view of the coastguard. The military somehow managed to seize 300 kg of sea cucumbers, with an estimated value of 13.5 million rupees (165,590 US\$, or 552 US\$/kg). The crew proudly poses in front of their catch on the beach.

Indian Coast Guard, January 3, 2023; Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), January 4, 2023.⁴

January 4, 2023

Vedalai, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Offshore seizure by maritime police and OCIU (Organised Crime Intelligence Unit) of 850 kg of cooked sea cucumbers in 21 bags aboard 2 unregistered boats. Arrest of Mohammed Abdul. The Hindu, January 4, 2023.⁵

February 22, 2023

Near Uppur, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



55 kg of sea cucumbers. Two arrests. The Hindu, February 22, 2023.⁶

February 25, 2023

Off Nagapattinam, Nagapattinam District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Coastguard interception of a suspicious vessel. On board were 526 kg of sea cucumbers with an estimated value of 31,460 US\$, or 60 US\$/kg. She was probably heading for Sri Lanka. One arrest. Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), March 1, 2023.⁷

SRI LANKA

January 5, 2023

Off Achchankulam, Northern Province, Sri Lanka



In the early hours of the morning, the Navy on a fisheries patrol seized 168 sea cucumbers, a boat, nets, flippers, and flashlights. Nine men between the ages of 25 and 58 were arrested.

In 2022, 18,369 sea cucumbers were seized by the Navy and 126 suspects were arrested.

Sri Lanka Navy, January 5, 2023.⁸

February 4, 2023

Off Ippantivu Island, North Western Province, Sri Lanka



In this dinghy 671 sea cucumbers, fins, and scuba tanks were seized and 3 suspects were arrested.

Sri Lanka Navy, February 5, 2023.⁹

February 10, 2023

Pungudutivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The *SLNS Gotaimbara* on patrol off Pungudutivu Island, 45 miles from the Indian State of Tamil Nadu, intercepted a boat, seized 119 sea cucumbers, and arrested a looter. Electric fishing is on the rise in the area. More and more batteries are being seized. Sri Lanka Navy, February 16, 2023.¹⁰



SLNS Gotaimbara, Colombo, February 13, 2017

February 11, 2023

Mannar District, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

SLNS Pussadewa boards a boat. Interception of 8 men and seizure of 78 sea cucumbers and several batteries from fishing boats. Electric fishing develops.

Sri Lanka Navy, February 16, 2023.¹¹

February 13, 2023

Palaitivu Island, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure off Palaitivu Island of 163 sea cucumbers, 2 boats, and diving equipment. Six arrested.

Sri Lanka Navy, February 16, 2023.¹²

February 14, 2023

Kalmunai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The *SLNS Welusumana* on a fisheries patrol intercepts 3 dinghies and a trawler and seizes 509 sea cucumbers off Kalmunai. 24 fishermen are presented to the local maritime authorities.

Sri Lanka Navy, February 16, 2023.¹³

February 23, 2023
Off Mandaitivu Island, Northern Province, Sri Lanka



On night patrol, the Navy apprehends 13 sea cucumber scavengers off Mandaitivu Island and Vettalaikerni. Two others were fishing using light beams. The 15 offenders, their boats and equipment were handed over to the Fisheries Inspectorate. Sri Lanka Navy, February 23, 2023.¹⁴

EUROPE

ITALY

January 8, 2023
Taranto, Province of Taranto, Region of Apulia, Italy

The diver is charged with environmental disaster and violation of the ministerial decree banning the capture of sea cucumbers. He had 63 kg in 3 buckets, i.e. 630 individuals based on an average weight of 100 grams.

CosmoPolisMedia, January 9, 2023.¹⁵

Mid-February 2023
Taranto, Province of Taranto, Region of Puglia, Italy

There were 8 plastic bins and 200 kg of sea cucumbers in one of the suspect's cars prowling the docks and visited by the coast guard. Arrest of the driver.

Quotidiano di Puglia, February 15, 2023.¹⁶

MONTENEGRO

February 13, 2023
Baosici, Municipality of Herceg Novi, Montenegro

The NGO Stop krivolovu (Stop poaching) is up in arms. It has been observed that the looting of sea cucumbers is increasing, and that almost every day and night, people come up the beach with full buckets. To top it all off, a sea cucumber processing plant has just opened in Budva. If Stop krivolovu is to be believed, the catching of sea cucumbers, the frequency of dives, and the tensions with local populations are gradually taking on the appearance of abalone trafficking in South Africa.

On Monday February 13, around 6 a.m., 300 kg of sea cucumbers were seized from a car. Some 5,000 individuals were found according to the NGO, an estimate confirmed by fisheries inspectors. The diver, realizing he was being watched, reportedly dumped buckets full of sea cucumbers from his clandestine night



dives back into the sea. According to Stop krivolovu, the Montenegrin sea cucumber mafia is run by the Turkish community living in the country. Black sea cucumbers (*Holothuria forskali*), bottleneck sea cucumbers (*Holothuria impatiens*), white spot sea cucumbers (*Holothuria poli*), and tubular sea cucumbers (*Holothuria tubulosa*) are listed as protected species in Montenegro.

Stop krivolovu, February 13, 2023; Pobjeda, February 20, 2023.¹⁷

RUSSIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 12, 2023

Korsakov, Sakhalin Oblast, Russia

Sea cucumbers Big Bang on Sakhalin Island.

Arrest of 6 fishermen, including 2 brothers. For a year and a half (2019-July 2020), they are suspected of having caught 45,000 Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) in Aniva Bay, south of Sakhalin Island, and of having organised or attempted to export them in containers to China via Vladivostok after processing them in a specialised workshop. The ecological value of the traffic is estimated at 60 million roubles or 879,800 US\$ and 19.5 US\$ per "trepang", the vernacular name for edible sea cucumbers. The Korsakov court will examine the substance of this case of seabed raking.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Sakhalin Oblast, August 25, 2020 and January 27, 2023; Sakhalin Oblast Prosecutor's Office, January 12, 2023.¹⁸

Mid-January 2023

Artyom, Primorsky Krai, Russia

A 4.4 million roubles (64,520 US\$) for having detained 3,287 Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) in November 2021. The amount of the fine corresponds to the experts' assessment of the damage inflicted on the seabed by this poaching.

Prim.News, January 16, 2023; Chief Military Prosecutor's Office, February 3, 2023.¹⁹

SEAHORSES AND PIPEFISHES



Three-spot seahorse (*Hippocampus trimaculatus*). Photo Franca Wermuth

ASIA

CHINA

January 2023

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



1,277 dried seahorses and pipefishes seized from the hand luggage of an overseas passenger. Chinese Customs, January 28, 2023.¹

INDIA

January 24 and 28, 2023

Naxalbari Community Development Block, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

Dried three-spot seahorses (*Hippocampus trimaculatus*, Appendix II) climbed to the border with Nepal.

- Seizure of 5 kg. Faiz Ahmed arrested.

-Subsequent seizure of 8.5 kg. Arrest of Shefali Roy, Jiwan Thapa, Sujit Tamang, and Kankan Raha. The ringleader is believed to be Manoj Roy, Shefali Roy's husband. He is currently on the run.

WCCB, January 25, 30 and 31, 2023; The Telegraph India, January 26, 2023; Millennium Post, January 28, 2023.²

EUROPE

AUSTRIA

Beginning of February, 2023

Vienna International Airport, Vienna State, Austria



Thanks to the vigilance of 2 inspection dogs, 49 dried seahorses were seized from a Vietnamese resident of the Czech Republic. According to the traveler, the seahorses were to be used to manufacture a powder for traditional Chinese medicine. More prosaically, seahorse powder is reputed to promote erections.

Kurier, March 6, 2023; Federal Ministry of Finance, March 6, 2023.³



MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH



Dusky parrotfish (*Scarus niger*). Photo Peter

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 3, 2023

Port Nolloth, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of large quantities of rock lobsters (*Jasus lalandii*) and undersized white steenbras (*Lithognathus lithognathus*). White steenbras, endemic to South Africa, live mainly in estuaries. A small colony is thought to be present in Namibia. They were successively the victims of recreational or subsistence fishermen, then of offshore commercial seine fishing, which was banned in 1983 and replaced by commercial seine fishing in shallow waters along beaches, which in turn was banned in 2001. This ban was poorly enforced and came too late because steenbras stocks had already collapsed. The resumption of commercial fishing in the next few years, as demanded by the fishing and fishmongering community, would lead to the complete depletion of this fishery resource. The opportunistic poaching of white steenbras gathering in the narrow spawning grounds of 6 South African estuaries could be the other death penalty for the species. SAPS, February 5, 2023.¹

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 2023

State of Oregon, United States of America

Seizure and release of an undersized white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*, Appendix II) during an inspection between The Dalles dam and the mouth of the Klickitat, a tributary of the Columbia River. In all, 23 boats carrying 84 fishermen were inspected. Oregon State Police, January 2023.²

Beginning of January 2023

Skyway Fishing Pier State Park, State of Florida, United States of America

The 2 suspects had a fillet of bonnethead shark (*Sphyrna tiburo*, Appendix II from February 23, 2023) in a cooler and another in a refrigerator. Bonnethead sharks must not be cut open before being unloaded, in order to prove that the authorized recreational fishing quota has not been exceeded (one shark per day for a single fisherman, or 2 for a boat with several fishermen). Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, January 12, 2023.³

February 21, 2023

Key West, State of Florida, United States of America

Elite Sky International was fined 250,000 US\$. The charges on Elite Sky were reported in "On the Trail" n°36 p.216: disguised shipments of shark fins under false names to China (approx. 3 tonnes), as well as lobsters under false names of origin.

U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of Florida, February 23, 2023; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin, March 2023.⁴



LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 6, 2023

Fonte Boa, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Military police seized 2 tonnes of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) in 20 bags among other goods.

G1 AM, January 7, 2023.⁵

February 14, 2023

Itajaí, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

Seizure by Ibama and federal police of 13 tonnes of blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*, Appendix II), shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II), swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*), and a longline from an illegal fishing vessel. The captain tried to prevent the inspectors from boarding the vessel. He faces a fine of 350,000 reais (67,350 US\$). The vessel has been seized until further notice. The fish were donated to Mesa Brasil, the food security program for socially vulnerable people.

Ibama, February 14, 2023.⁶



COSTA RICA

Beginning of February 2023

Costa Rica

President Rodrigo Chaves Robles signs the decree banning the capture, transport, storage and sale of smooth hammerheads (*Sphyrna zygaena*, Appendix II), scalloped hammerheads (*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II) and great hammerheads (*Sphyrna mokarran*, Appendix II) and all their parts such as teeth and fins. The country's approach to sharks is contradictory. As early as 2013, it contributed to the listing of hammerhead sharks in Appendix II of CITES, while at the same time authorising their capture and sale on the domestic

market. In 2017, a decree issued by President Luis Guillermo Solís clarified the conditions under which sharks and their fins can be exported. Costa Rica has long opposed a ban on finning and the sale of fins on international markets, although in 2018 it opened a sanctuary for hammerhead sharks in the Golfo Dulce in the south of the country.

In 2022, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy came under fire from NGOs for still allowing thousands of fins to be exported to China.

Shark fin smuggling in Costa Rica, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.5, n°4 p.6, n°7 p.4-5, n°8 p.5, n°16 p.8 and n°20 p.15.

Presidency of the Republic of Costa Rica, February 8, 2023; Mongabay, February 10, 2023.⁷

FRANCE (GUIANA)

OPERATION MOKARRAN (GREAT HAMMERHEAD) REPEATED OFFENCE

January 27 to February 13, 2023

Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France



Boarding in Guyanese waters by the patrol vessels *La Confiance* and *La Résolue*, reinforced by marine commando riflemen, of 3 Brazilian "tapouille" boats, the *Comte Italo*, *Comte Lauro Gomes III*, and *Anjo Gabriel*. The boarding of the latter was difficult due to evasive maneuvers and projectile throwing. Seizure of 9.5 km of nets, 23 tonnes of fish, and 222 kg of presumed acoupa weakfish (*Cynoscion acoupa*) swim bladders. The 3 tapouilles were diverted and destroyed ashore. The 3 captains and a deckhand were taken into custody.

Acoupa weakfish, see "On the Trail" n°19 p.12, n°21 p.12, n°23 p.15, n°26 p.15, n°31 p.208, n°32 p.282, n°34 p.249, n°36 p.217 and n°37 p.213.

Ministry of Armed Forces, February 16, 2023; Le Marin, February 21, 2023.⁸

PANAMA

Beginning of January 2023

Panama

Finless sharks and marlins or spearfish (family Istiophoridae) amputated from rostrum are intercepted aboard *Panamar III*. Marlins have "swords" that command a high price on the market. Shark fins in Panama, see "On the Trail" n°12 p.8, n°14 p.9 and n°37 p.214.

Panamá América, January 4, 2023; La Razón (Bolivia), July 13, 2023.⁹

THE CARIBBEAN

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

PECES EN VEDA OPERATION (FISH PROHIBITED FROM FISHING)

February 10 to 13, 2023

Provinces of Santo Domingo, San Pedro de Macorís, La Romana, La Altagracia, Samaná and María Trinidad Sánchez, Dominican Republic

Agents from the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, Codopesca (Consejo Dominicano de Pesca y Acuicultura), Senpa (Servicio Nacional de Protección Ambiental), and the Dominican Navy intervened in 5 coastal provinces. By the end of the operation, 6,230 kg of parrotfish (family Scaridae), 56 kg of sharks, and 3 kg of angelfish (family Pomacanthidae) had been seized. In San Pedro de Macorís and María Trinidad Sánchez, scuffles broke out with fishermen and fishmongers, but according to the Vice-Minister for Coastal and Maritime Affairs, calm was restored and the seizures were successfully completed. Fishing for parrotfish, surgeonfish (family Acanthuridae), angelfish and sea cucumbers has been suspended by presidential decree since 2019, and the use of diving compressors to catch queen conches and lobsters has been banned. The capture of sharks has been banned in Dominican Republic waters since 2017.

Parrotfish are in decline. They provide an ecological service by feeding on the algae that colonizes coral reefs, helping to maintain and develop them. Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic, February 10, 2023; DominicanToday.com, February 11, 2023; Diaro Libre, February 15, 2023.¹⁰



CENTRAL ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

January 24, 2023

Aktau, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

Confirmation on appeal of the 3-year prison sentence imposed on R. He had been checked in his car in Shayr on the night of 9 to 10 September 2022 with 5 sturgeons (*Acipenser* spp., Appendix I or II), totalling 24.2 kg in the boot (see "On the Trail" no. 37 p.224). in Aktau, January 24, 2023; Mangystau Region Court, January 24, 2023.¹¹



UZBEKISTAN

End of February 2023

Do'stlik District, Jizzakh Region, Uzbekistan

U.G. and G.N. arrested in flagrante delicto for electrofishing. A total of 218 fish died, including a pikeperch (*Sander lucioperca*), 47 crucian carps (*Carassius carassius*) and 160 roaches (genus *Rutilus*). The district lies on the shores of the artificial lake Aydar (3,000 km²).

Ministry of Natural Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan, February 27, 2023.¹²



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

January 2023

Nanchong, Nanchong Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Tizi, a food blogger, was fined 125,000 yuan

(18,500 US\$). In summer 2022, she put on a show by posing next to a great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II) or a grey sharpnose shark (*Rhizoprionodon oligolinx*), then cooking it half-boiled, half-barbecued to please her grandparents. See "On the Trail" n°37 p. 214.

Jiupai News, January 30, 2023; The Star (Malaysia) with Bloomberg, January 30, 2023.¹³



February 2023

West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China. Border with Mainland China.

Seizure in the baggage of a passenger leaving for mainland China of 67 fins of 4 species, great hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*, Appendix II), scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II), shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) and sawfish (*Pristis* spp., Appendix I). The total weight is 5,705 kg. Chinese Customs, March 6, 2023.¹⁴

February 17, 2023

Hong Kong International Airport, China



Seizure of suspected endangered and protected shark fins (1,200 kg). Their value is estimated at 40 million Hong Kong dollars (5.1 million US\$ or 4,250 US\$/kg) on the retail market. The shipment came from Mexico.

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, February 18, 2023.¹⁵

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

January 15, 2023

Uiasa, Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Lesser Sunda Islands Archipelago, Indonesia

F.N., "a fish bomber", was preparing to blow fish up with ammonium nitrate off the coast of his village. The ammonium nitrate, fishing gear and boat were seized.

Telisik Indonesia, January 16, 2023.¹⁶



MALAYSIA

January 18, 2023

Sultan Abu Bakar Border Post, Iskandar Puteri, State of Johor, Malaysia. Border with Singapore.



Officials confiscated 3 koi fish and 5 goldfish (*Carassius auratus*) from a Malayan individual's car. They were destined for the aquarium market. Their total value is estimated at 750 ringgits (170 US\$). The Star (Malaysia), January 19, 2023.¹⁷

PHILIPPINES

January 27, 2023

Off Lucena, Philippines

Authorities seized 77 bottles of ammonium nitrate in a boat with no name or registration number. The 7 members of the "blast fishing" crew fled.

Manila Bulletin, January 28, 2023; Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), February 1, 2023.¹⁸



SOUTHERN ASIA

SRI LANKA

January 5, 2023

Negombo and Beruwala Ports, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Officials seized dried shark fins aboard 2 trawlers on 2 occasions (3 kg with 54 kg of dried shark meat and 1.79 kg) and arrested 14 sailors in total.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, January 6, 2023; Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), January 2023.¹⁹

January 17, 2023

Cod Bay Port, Trincomalee, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Aboard a trawler, officials uncovered dried fins and 28 kg of dried shark meat, a violation of 2015 "high seas" regulations prohibiting all shark parts from retention on board, transshipment and bringing back ashore. The Maritime Affairs questioned 6 fishermen.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, January 19, 2023.²⁰

January 20, 2023

Port of Beruwela, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Aboard a trawler, authorities seized 130 fins (approx. 21 kg), 2 thresher sharks (*Alopias vulpinus*, Appendix II) and 7 whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*, Appendix II). Maritime Affairs interviewed 6 sailors.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, January 22, 2023.²¹

January 30, 2023

Port of Dikovita, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Aboard 2 trawlers, authorities seized 11 kg and 2.4 kg of dried shark fins. Maritime Affairs questioned 14 fishermen.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, January 31, 2023.²²

February 9, 2023

Achchankulam, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The *SLNS Pussadewa* caught in the act 3 people on board their boat who were illegally catching fish for the aquarium market. There are around a hundred species of ornamental fish in Sri Lankan waters. Those that are poached end up in aquariums or die en route.

Sri Lanka Navy, February 16, 2023.²³

February 12, 16 and 17, 2023

Ports of Dikovita and Negombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizures of 11.75 kg of dried shark fins and 92 kg of dried shark meat on board 3 trawlers or on the docks. Twelve arrests.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard, February 13 and 18, 2023.²⁴

WESTERN ASIA

TURKIYE

Beginning of January 2023

Urla District, Izmir Province, Türkiye



Fishermen in Izmir pulled up a 10-meter-long, 2-tonne basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*, Appendix II) in their nets. A crane was mobilized to hoist it onto the quayside, watched by a few curious onlookers. Ortaç Onmuş, professor of biology at the University of Ege, expresses his concern: "The basking shark is in danger of extinction, warning that fishermen should be more sensitive."

Hürriyet Daily News, January 7, 2023.²⁵

NORTHERN EUROPE

SWEDEN

January 2 and 26, 2023

Karlskrona, Blekinge County, Sweden

Peter Magnus Nilsson, State Secretary to Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, was caught red-handed fishing for European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in September 2021. From vague explanations ("I had gone out to sea to collect garbage", "the fyke nets [eel traps] on board my boat do not belong to me", "nor do the eels [11 kg]") to belated confessions and apologies, he was fined 38,800 kronor (3,700 US\$) and lost the Prime Minister's support. Fifteen eels shattered Nilsson's promising political career; he was forced to resign. Since 2007, recreational eel fishing has been banned in Sweden.

Expressen, January 20, 2023; Aftonbladet, January 24, 2023; Arbetaren, January 24, 2023; PM Nilsson, January 26, 2023; Sveriges Television, January 26, 2023.²⁶



WESTERN EUROPE

BELGIUM

February 24, 2023

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



Seizure of 200 kg of European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) stored in water bags in the suitcases of 6 Malayan traffickers on their way to Malaysia, with transit through Qatar and Viet Nam. After DNA tests certifying that they were indeed the European species, the glass eels were carefully released into several rivers in the Flemish region. The value of the seizure on the Asian market is estimated at 400,000 € (436,120 US\$ or 2,180 US\$/kg). Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, February 25, 2023; Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, March 1 and 8, 2023.²⁷

FRANCE

January 2, 2023

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

An electrician and 3 local civil servants, bounded by their friendship, passion for underwater hunting and temptation to profits, were convicted. They were fined between 3,000 € and 3,450 € (3,195 US\$ and 3,675 US\$) and ordered to pay 3,000 € in ecological damages to the Calanques National Park. They regularly poached European sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) and forkbeards (*Phycis phycis*) on Fridays to sell to restaurant owners before their peak weekend crowds. Officials confiscated their fishing gear, wetsuits and harpoons. France 3 Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (with AFP), January 2, 2023; France Bleu Provence, January 2, 2023.²⁸



January 8 and 12, 2023

Saunac-et-Muret, Department of Landes, and Region of Ile-de-France, France

- The Arcachon brigade checked a lorry travelling north/south. Under a load of polystyrene sheets, customs officers unearthed a tank connected to an oxygenator, and 28 kg of frozen glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in a can next to it. The commercial vehicle was likely travelling to Spain and would transport live glass eels on its return journey, thanks to its pre-installed mobile aquarium. Two arrests.



- Bit by bit, investigation led to the discovery and dismantling of a glass eel transit and shipment workshop in the Paris area. 150 kg of live glass eels were seized, a first in France.



French Customs, January 12, 2023; Actu Landes, January 13, 2023.²⁹

January 30, 2023

Toulon, Department of Var, France

"On the Trail" n°33 p.267 - continued.

The Toulon criminal court sentenced Mr. Autuori, a professional fisherman-poacher-repeat offender, to a fine of 2,500 € (2,660 US\$) for catching bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) and a Jerusalem haddock (*Lampris guttatus*) (41 kg) on July 26, 2021 at Sanary-sur-Mer, absent the necessary declarations and tags to ensure their traceability. Robin des Bois was the plaintiff in this case. The NGO obtained compensation for moral prejudice and recognition of ecological prejudice. Mr. Autuori has not appealed the decision.



The Jerusalem haddock, like bluefin tuna and swordfish, is both threatened and essential to marine ecosystem regulation. It feeds on cephalopods and crustaceans and can live up to 50 years. It represents the sole abyssal fish species that is completely endothermic (warm-blooded). This enables the species to follow prey relentlessly and migrate over long distances.

The Jerusalem haddock can be found in the North Atlantic from Nova Scotia (Canada) to Florida (USA), the East and South Atlantic, the Mediterranean Sea, the Pacific, and the Southern Ocean. It doesn't matter whether the sea is cold or warm; the important thing is that the water's deep and has plenty of food.

France 3 Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, January 30, 2023.³⁰

Image: Biodiversity Heritage Library (in "The natural history of British fishes", Donovan, E., 1802-1808)

February 9, 2023

Department of Val-de-Marne, France



Seizure in a workshop of more than 800,000 European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) i.e. 302,2 kg, 4 oxygenation tanks, oxygen cylinders, around 40 suitcases, polystyrene boxes, 7 bags of salt 25-kg each, plastic bags to fill with water for smuggling via air transport. Arrest of 3 individuals. The eel fry were returned to the water in the Seine upstream of Paris, with no certainty as to their survival.

French Customs, February 13 and 17, 2023.³¹

THE NETHERLANDS

February 28 and March 6, 2023

International Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Province of North Holland, The Netherlands



Seizure by NVWA, the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, of 54 kg of European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), i.e. around 170,000 specimens, in the 4 suitcases of 2 Malayan passengers who were about to fly back to their country. They were taken into custody. The glass eels were stored in water bags. The survivors were released into "Randmeren," the "border lakes" that separate "natural" land from polders near Harderwijk. The operation was carried out by the NVWA and the Dupan Foundation, whose mission is to restore eel populations in Dutch inland waters. Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, March 1, 2023; DUPAN, March 6, 2023.³²

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

January 7, 2023

Port of Algeciras, Province of Cádiz, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Officials seized 192 kg of European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) inside 10 closed crates full of water from a van disembarking a car ferry from Tangiers, Morocco. The cargo has an estimated economic value of 250,000 € (266,225 US\$ or 1,180 US\$/kg) on the Spanish market. The biological value, however, is inestimable. Glass eels are the fry of eels. The species is in danger of extinction. Any international trade in European eels is detrimental and prohibited by the European Union. Based on an average weight of 0.3 grams, 192 kg of glass eels corresponds to 640,000 glass eels. They were transferred to oxygenated tanks to increase their chances of survival, with the intent to release them into suitable habitats in the very near future. This is the biggest ever glass eel seizure in Andalusia.

International elver trafficking in Morocco, see "On the Trail" n°20 p.14, n°22 p.10, n°24 p.15, n°35 p.206 and n°38 p.239.

Guardia Civil, January 7, 2023.³³

ITALY

End of December 2022 – Beginning of January 2023

Province of Pescara, Region of Abruzzo, Italy

On New Year's Eve 2022 and New Year's Day 2023, the province's CITES carabinieri monitored fishing activities in the Aterno-Pescara river, which flows into the Adriatic Sea. Authorities intercepted 25 kg of European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) and returned the survivors back to the water. Fish wardens from the Guardia Civile Ambientale association participated in the hunt. Officials arrested 10 people, "mostly Italian", and confiscated a large number of traps.

IlPescara, January 16, 2023; Rete8, January 16, 2023.³⁴

Night of January 12-13, 2023

Aci Castello and Riposto, Metropolitan City of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy

- The Catania coastguard, patrolling the docks, seized 300 kg of Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), 2 albacore tunas (*Thunnus alalunga*) and 5 dolphinfishes (*Coryphaena hippurus*) from a Fiat Panda loaded as a truck. The driver was hit with an administrative fine of 34,500 € (36,740 US\$).

- Officials seized 26 swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) from a fishmonger, for their sale is prohibited in winter. If veterinary services deem them fit for consumption, they will be donated to charity. The fishmonger must pay an administrative fine of 2,666 € (2,840 US\$).

Cronaca Oggi Quotidiano, January 13, 2023.³⁵



End of January 2023

Riposto, Metropolitan City of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy



Officials intercepted 120 kg of Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) in a refrigerated lorry leaving the port area. The 37 specimens had an average weight of 3.25 kg, meaning they were juveniles that had not reached sexual maturity. Their capture compromises the species' overall capacity to reproduce. The carrier was hit with an administrative fine of 15,000 € (15,975 US\$). In addition to the bluefin tuna, 165 kg of other fresh fish with no traceability (where had they come from, where were they going?) were seized. The 285 kg of fish were deemed fit for consumption and donated to charity. It was Christmas a month late.

CataniaToday, January 26, 2023; lasiciliaweb, January 26, 2023.³⁶



End of January 2023

Muravera, Province of South Sardinia, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

The Picozza river flows into the Colostrai pond after a 13 km stretch. Its mouth was completely blocked, however, by "bertavelli" (creels) meant to capture European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). They were dismantled and seized by wildlife protection officers. No one has claimed responsibility.

Sardinia Region Forestry and Environmental Surveillance Corps, January 31, 2023; L'Unione Sarda, January 31, 2023.³⁷

End of January 2023

Metropolitan City of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy



The control operation carried out by the harbour master's office mainly targeted Asian restaurants. Four tonnes of fish and other seafood products were seized. In addition, 2 street vendors and their 100 kg of swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) did not escape the vigilance of the agents. They were fined 2,600 and 3,000 € (2,770 US\$ and 3,200 US\$).

LiveSicilia, January 27, 2023.³⁸

February 23, 2023

**Riposto, Metropolitan City of Catania,
Region of Sicily, Italy**

Seizure of 267 Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) all under the minimum size requirement and over quota by the Coast Guard patrol boat Gregoretti after boarding a fishing vessel. The tuna, weighing a total of 1,100 kg, or an average of 4 kg per specimen, were landed at Riposto with the support of the CP 276 patrol boat. Coast Guard, February 25, 2023.³⁹



**February 23 to 24 and
September 22, 2023
Argenta and Ferrara,
Province of Ferrara, Region
of Emilia-Romagna, Italy**



- The 4 Romanians, aged between 21 and 35, were fishing with cables connected to a battery in a fish reserve where they had broken into. They were caught red-handed with a haul of 500 kg of dead or dying fish, including carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*), and crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*).



- They did well. They paid 2,000 € (2,175 US\$) in damages to the reserve's managers, and Judge Carlotta Franceschetti considered that this money was sufficient to extinguish the offence, without even taking into account that among the dead or stunned fish were European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), which are strictly protected in Italy and the European Union, without taking into account the cruelty of the poaching method, which in a way can be likened to torture, and without taking into account the international chain of evacuation and marketing of the dead fish. A similar case has already made the headlines in Italy (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.241).

FerraraToday, February 25, 2023; Corriere Romagna, February 26, 2023; Estense.com, September 23, 2023.⁴⁰

MONTENEGRO

January 28, 2023

**Virpazar, Municipality of Bar,
Montenegro**



Night-time arrest of 3 people by the Skadar Lake National Park Protection Service. In their boat, they were preparing to fish with a lamp, harpoons and a battery. All their equipment was confiscated.

National Parks of Montenegro, January 29, 2023.⁴¹

February 16, 20 and 21, 2023

**Lake Skadar National Park
Montenegro**



- The fight against poaching in the national park is drawing the wrath of the poachers. They threaten the guards and prevent the seizure of electric batteries and captured fish.

- Seizure of 80 kg of fish. The poachers caught them with spotlights and netted them. They managed to escape.

- Seizure of 20 kg of carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). Electric fishing is becoming established in Europe's inland waters. Batteries were also seized from the boat belonging to D.M. and I.P. I.P. was fined 1,000 € (1,090 US\$) and the Podgorica prosecutor ordered the continued detention of the 2 electro-fishermen. The new Montenegrin National Parks Directorate has set as its priorities the fight against poaching, logging and illegal construction.

National Parks of Montenegro, February 17 and 21, 2023; Vijesti, February 22, 2023.⁴²

SERBIA

February 17, 2023

**Dubovac, Southern Banat District,
Serbia**



Seizure of 100 kg of carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*), and pikeperch (*Sander lucioperca*) from the hands and car of 2 poachers by fishery guards and elements from the river security service linked to the Ministry of the Interior. They were engaged in electric fishing in the Danube. Batteries and electric cables were seized as evidence.

021, February 17, 2023; Vojvodina Uživo, February 17, 2023.⁴³



RUSSIA

January 10, 2023**Lensk, Republic of Sakha, Russia**

Poachers who caught 2 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the River Lena in June 2021 have been found guilty. They must pay damages of 320,000 roubles (4,700 US\$) which they refused to pay of their own accord after their arrest. East Siberian Transport Prosecutor's Office, January 10, 2023.⁴⁴

**January 11, 2023****Nikolayevsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

Five men had amassed 264 kg of Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and 64 kg of caviar between May and September 2021. They have now been sentenced to 5 years and 2 months in prison, suspended for 4 years on probation, and ordered to pay 14.5 million roubles (212,620 US\$) in damages. Khabarovsk Krai Prosecutor's Office, January 11, 2023.⁴⁵

**January 13, 2023****Tevriz, Omsk Oblast, Russia**

Resident of Omsk sentenced to 240 hours community service for poaching 25 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II). Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, January 13, 2023.⁴⁶

**January 20, 2023****Nizhnevartovsk, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia**

Arrest of 2 poachers aged 49 and 61. They had been caught in August 2022 in a branch of the Ob river, having just captured 9 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II). The damage is estimated at 40,000 roubles (590 US\$). Their nets were seized. BezFormata, January 17, 2023; SurgutInformTV, January 20, 2023.⁴⁷

January 23, 2023**Verkhnevilyuysk, Republic of Sakha, Russia**

B. had caught 4 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the Vilyuy, a 2,650 km long tributary that flows into the Lena, in the summer of 2022. The opportunity was too good. He had stored them at home in preparation for a future feast. Police intervention thwarted his plans. He expressed his repentance and unhesitatingly paid the damages of 641,800 roubles (9,410 US\$). The court therefore decided to discontinue the proceedings against him. SakhaPress, February 28, 2023.⁴⁸

January 23, 2023**Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

A 49-year-old resident of Tsimmermanovka village was indicted after more than 10 kg of caviar and 4 kg of Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) were discovered at his home in May 2022. Far East Transport Prosecutor's Office, January 23, 2023.⁴⁹

January 23, 2023**Pushkin, Federal City of Saint Petersburg, Russia**

Oleg Voshchelev and Sergey Flochi found a golden opportunity. From 2017 to 2019, they earned over 15.5 million roubles (228,000 US\$) black-marketing caviar from Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II), Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II), chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*), cod liver (genus *Gadus*) and red king crab (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*) meat. But their business came to an abrupt end. Authorities searched their homes, garage and rented refrigerated warehouses only to find 1.5 tonnes of caviar and cod liver worth 10 million roubles (146,635 US\$). Making matters worse, Voshchelev was found with 45 grams of black powder and Flochi with 15 grams of narcotics.

Voshchelev was sentenced to a one-year suspended prison term with one year of probation and a 900,000 rouble (13,200 US\$) fine, while Flochi was sentenced to a 2-year suspended prison term with 2 years' probation and a 150,000 rouble (2,200 US\$) fine.

St. Petersburg Prosecutor's Office, January 23, 2023; Megapolis, January 23, 2023.⁵⁰

**January 25, 2023****Bolsherechye, Omsk Oblast, Russia**

Two poachers were arrested on May 25, 2022 on the Irtysh River in possession of a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 14 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II). One was sentenced to 2.5 years' deprivation of liberty, the other to 2.5 years' suspended imprisonment with 3 years' probation. They jointly paid 225,465 roubles (3,300 US\$) in damages.

Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, February 16, 2023.⁵¹

**January 26, 2023****Bogorodskoye, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

Two men extracted 50 kg of caviar from 2 Amur sturgeons (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II). One was sentenced to 5.5 years in prison, suspended for 3 years on probation. He also must pay 10 million roubles (146,635 US\$) in damages. "The second criminal case has been closed due to the death of the accused", said the prosecutor.

Khabarovsk Krai Prosecutor's Office, January 26, 2023.⁵²



February 2, 2023

Kerch, Republic of Crimea

Two men, ages 46 and 51, were sentenced to 7.5 years of correctional labour with a 10% income deduction to benefit the State. They had been arrested in possession of a 36.6 kg beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) and a 4.6 kg Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II).

Kerch City Court, February 2, 2023.⁵³



February 3, 2023

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Two men caught an Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) on May 14, 2022, at night, in the Amur river. One of them kept 2 sturgeon fillets at home. They were sentenced, one to 5 years' deprivation of liberty suspended with 3 years' probation, the other to 5.5 years' deprivation of liberty suspended with 4 years' probation.

Khabarovsk Krai Prosecutor's Office, February 3, 2023.⁵⁴



February 7, 2023

Surgut, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia

A Nefteyugansk resident was indicted after being accused of poaching a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 13 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) in the Ob River in August 2022. Ecological damage is estimated at 540,000 roubles (8,870 US\$).

Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District Prosecutor's Office, February 7 2023; Nizhneobskoye Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fishery, March 3 2023.⁵⁵

February 7, 2023

Uvat, Tyumen Oblast, Russia

The 66-year-old poacher who caught 27 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) in the Irtysh in July 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.224) was fined 30,000 roubles (430 US\$). In sentencing him, the court took into account his repentance and voluntary repayment of 123,000 roubles (1,770 US\$) in ecological damages. Tyumen Oblast Prosecutor's Office, February 7, 2023.⁵⁶



February 11, 2023

Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan, Russia

Two Makhachkala residents were indicted after FSB agents arrested them in January 2021. They caught 49 Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) and 7 starry sturgeons (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) in the Caspian Sea with the intent to sell them. With the FSB estimating the value of a Russian sturgeon at 138,000 roubles (1,840 US\$) and a stellate sturgeon at 70,400 roubles (940 US\$), they could have made over 7 million roubles (over 96,700 US\$).

The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Dagestan, February 11, 2023.⁵⁷

February 14, 2023

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

In October 2019, 3 men began trafficking in caviar and Amur sturgeon meat (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II). In September 2021, they were caught unloading their illicit goods from a boat. In all, 260 kg of caviar and 130 kg of sturgeon meat passed through their hands (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.256).

The first has just been sentenced to 2 years and 6 months in general penal colony and a fine of 100,000 roubles (1,440 US\$), the second to one year and 6 months in general penal colony and a fine of 100,000 roubles, and the third to one year and 6 months' suspended deprivation of liberty and a fine of 50,000 roubles (720 US\$).

Khabarovsk Krai Prosecutor's Office, February 14, 2023.⁵⁸



February 20, 2023

Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

A 52-year-old man was indicted for agreeing in exchange for a bribe to transport over 237 kg of Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) caviar from Nikolayevsk to Khabarovsk via the Amur, a journey of over 900 km, for pay. He was arrested before delivering the 481 jars.

Khabarovsk Krai Prosecutor's Office, February 20, 2023; Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation in Khabarovsk Krai and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, February 20, 2023.⁵⁹

February 27, 2023

Alexandrovskoye, Omsk Oblast, Russia

A 59-year-old poacher has been charged with catching 22 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and 3 other sturgeons (*Acipenser* spp., Appendix I or II) in the Ob River in May-June 2022. Aggravating circumstance: he was using prohibited fishing equipment, a "zakidushka" (a fishing line 0.6 mm to 0.9 mm in diameter and 30 to 50 metres long, with several hooks and a sinker at the end, connected to a reel). Ecological damage is estimated at 130,000 roubles (2,160 US\$).

Omsk Oblast Prosecutor's Office, February 27, 2023.⁶⁰

February 27, 2023

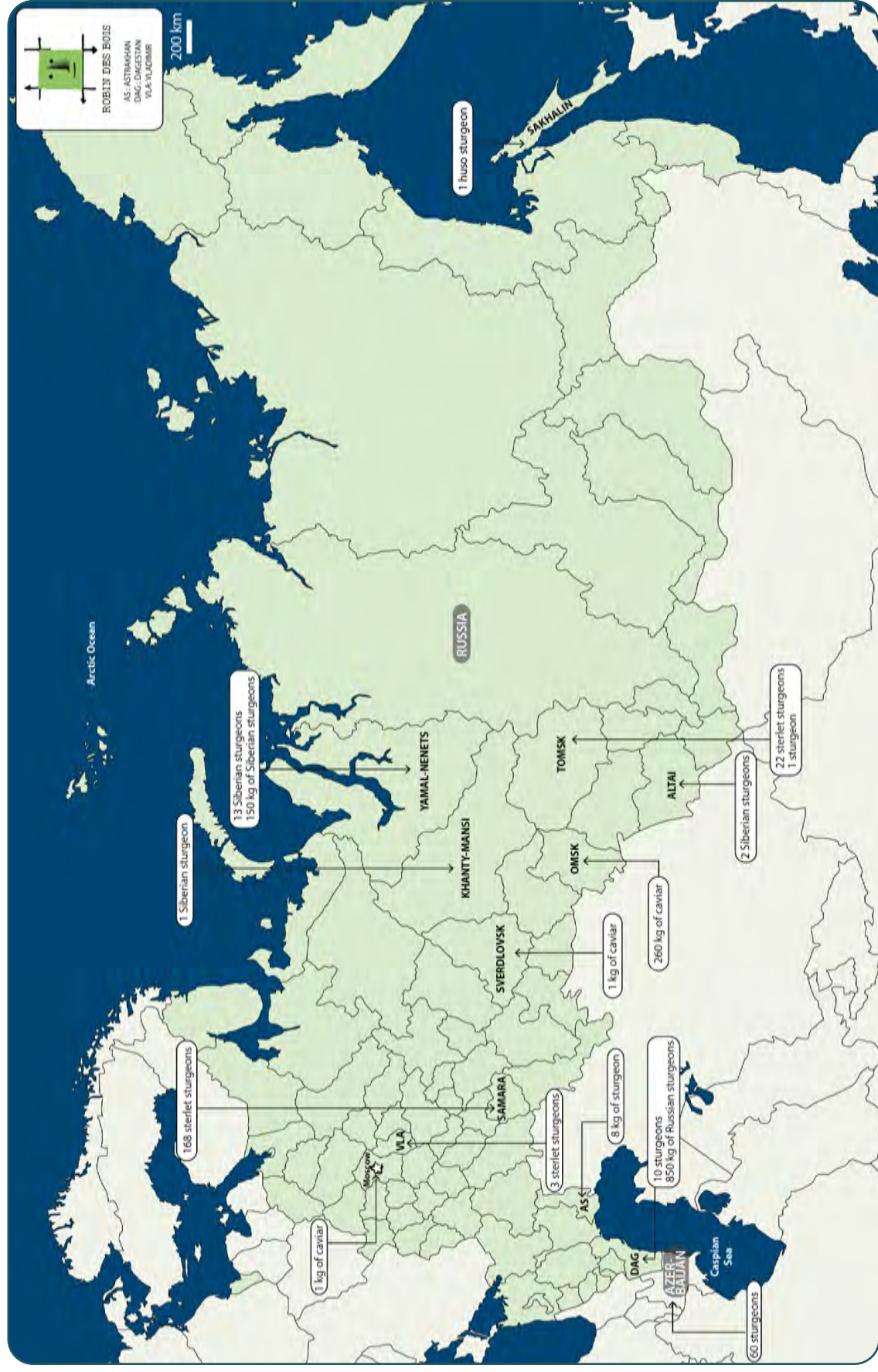
Zabaykalsk, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.

A 26-year-old trafficker in sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) was sentenced to 3 years and 2 months' suspended imprisonment, 3 years of probation and a fine of 100,000 roubles (1,440 US\$). Bucking the usual trend, he was caught in October 2019 attempting to import 430kg of caviar from China, divided into 882 jars. The value of his shipment was estimated by customs officials at 16 million roubles, or 248,620 US\$ and 580 US\$/kg.

Eastern Interregional Transport Investigation Department of the investigative committee of the Russian Federation, December 28, 2022; Chita.ru, December 29, 2022; Zabaykalsky District Court in Zabaykalsky Krai, March 7, 2023.⁶¹



Russia and Azerbaijan. Seizures of caviar (262 kg, minimal value 75,980 US\$), poaching and seizures of sturgeons (328 specimens + 1,008 kg of flesh) between January 1 and February 28, 2023



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 190

MARINE TURTLES



Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). Photo paladalik

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

COMOROS

January 13, 2023

Off Vassi, Anjouan Island, Union of the Comoros

On Friday night off Vassi, the Comorian coast guard boarded a boat carrying an adult Ridley sea turtle, which was upside down on its back. It had been captured by poachers on the island of Mohéli. It was returned to the water.

Comorian Coast Guard, January 14, 2023.¹

FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

February 10 and 13, 2023

Moya 2 Beach and Mamoudzou, Department of Mayotte, France

Immediate appearance of an individual caught in the act of poaching a green turtle on Moya 2 beach in Petite-Terre. Sentenced to one year's imprisonment and ordered to pay 1,000 € (1,090 US\$) in damages to 4 associations, including Oulanga na Nyamba.

Mayotte la 1ère, February 13, 2023.²



MAURITIUS

February 22, 2023

Mauritius

The 67-year-old man put a stuffed sea turtle up for sale on Facebook for 5,000 rupees (110 US\$). On the island, it is forbidden to sell live or dead sea turtles.

Zinfos Moris, February 24, 2023; Le Quotidien de la Réunion et de l'Océan Indien, February 25, 2023.³



AMERICA

FRANCE (GUIANA)

February 2nd, 2023

Amana Nature Reserve, Mana, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France. Border with Suriname.

Seizure of 155 green turtle eggs. Two nests looted. Two arrests.

Amana Nature Reserve, February 8, 2023.⁴

REPEATED OFFENCE

February 16 and 17, 2023

Amana Nature Reserve, Awala-Yalimapo, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France. Border with Suriname.

131 eggs from green turtle seized in a garbage bag. The man is a repeat offender. OFB arrests him. Ten months' imprisonment.

Gendarmerie of Guiana, February 28, 2023.⁵



SURINAME

Saturday, February 18, 2023

Albina, Marowijne District, Suriname. Border with French Guiana.

14,000 green turtle eggs in the dugout. One hundred nests destroyed. The seized eggs were thrown into the Cottica River. Five arrested. Three men charged. A woman and a 14-year-old child were released.

Department of Nature Conservation (Suriname), February 20, 2023; Suriname Police, February 20, 2023.⁶

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

February 8, 2023

Moruga, Princes Town Region, Trinidad and Tobago

The leatherback turtle that came to lay its hundred or so eggs a little ahead of schedule was decapitated and its fins were cut off.

Trinidad Express Newspapers, February 8, 2023.⁷



ASIA

CHINA

February 2023

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

A fan made of imbricated tortoise shell was seized in a parcel declared to contain "beauty products".

Chinese Customs, February 22, 2023.⁸



February 2023

Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China

29 bracelets and 3 combs made from imbricated tortoiseshell seized from the luggage of 7 passengers travelling from abroad. Total weight: 464 grams.

Chinese Customs, February 25, 2023.⁹

INDIA

January 8 and 12, 2023

Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, Kendrapara District, State of Odisha, India

Ridley sea turtles wash up on the sanctuary's beaches. They have either drowned in fishing nets, where fishing is banned between November and May, or been struck and injured by boat propellers or bows. Fishing boats have just been seized and 32 sailors arrested. Temporary repressive measures are not enough to confine fishermen to their harbours, or to encourage them to fish anywhere other than the 20 km of sea irrigated by the mouths of the Devi, Dhamra, and Rushikulya rivers. Their beaches have always been popular with Ridley turtles. The most spectacular thing Odisha has done for them this year is to make them the mascot of the Hockey World Cup.

Ridley sea turtles in Odisha, see "On the Trail" n°21 p.17, n°24 p.20 and n°28 p.26.

Orissa Post, January 11, 2023; Odisha Bytes, January 12, 2023.¹⁰



Scavengers snoop, scavengers poke.

INDONESIA

January 12, 2023

Melaya, Jembrana Regency, Bali Province, Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia

The 43 green turtles were reportedly captured in Madura, east of Java Island, and taken by boat to Bali to be killed and eaten. The traffickers abandoned them on the beach of Klatakan, where they had voluntarily run aground after being pursued by the Navy, before disappearing into the mangroves. The surviving turtles will now be placed in a quarantine tank for health checks.

VOI, January 13, 2023.¹¹

PHILIPPINES

January 22, 2023

Bubuan Island, Hadji Panglima Tahil, Province of Sulu, Philippines



Carnage on Bubuan Island in the southern Philippines and northern Borneo. Seizure of 15 harpooned green turtles, 5 traditional boats, 7 spears, and other instruments of capture. Arrest of 7 suspects between the ages of 18 and 22 as well as a 30-year-old man. The upper beach was used as a slaughterhouse and butchering table.

Philippine National Police, January 23, 2023; Philippine News Agency, January 23, 2023; Manila Bulletin, January 24, 2023.¹²



SRI LANKA

January 12, 2023

Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 30 sea turtle eggs that the 60-year-old man was selling on Wedikanda beach.

Ada, January 12, 2023.¹³

EUROPE

FRANCE

January and April 24, 2023

Saint-Etienne-de-Tulmont and Montauban, Department of Tarn-et-Garonne, France



Seizure of the shell of a hawksbill turtle from a local resident who had put it up for sale on the Top Annonces website, a subsidiary of ParuVendu ("JustOutYetSold"). The shell was allegedly bought by his father 40 years ago from "a turtle farm on Reunion Island." He was fined 1,500 € (1,630 US\$).



La Dépêche du Midi, January 18, 2023; Montauban Court, November 14, 2023.¹⁴

ITALY

January 9, 14 and 20, 2023

Barletta, Province of Barletta-Andria-Trani, Region of Apulia, Italy

The black series continues for loggerhead turtles in Puglia. It began in October 2022 with the discovery of the first drowned turtle, whose flipper was attached to a weight. Since the beginning of the year, 2 turtles have been found in the harbour mud, weighted down by large stones. A third has just been recovered. It was drowned at the foot of a quay and weighed down by a truck brake disc. All eyes and suspicions turn to the fishermen who set their nets at the entrance to the harbour. After being disentangled, the victims are said to be finished off and weighted down in hopes that they disappear forever.

Rai News 24, January 15, 2023; BariSera news, January 22, 2023.¹⁵

MARINE AND FRESHWATER MAMMALS



Indian ocean humpback dolphins (*Sousa plumbea*). Photo Avinash Bhagat

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 8, 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest of Luxoli Godana, Nyameko Titi, Nkosinathi Ndzendevu, and Sibusiso Zamani, ages 18 to 26, after stoning a Cape fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*, Appendix II) on the rocks, whom the vets were forced to finish off. The 4 killers were released on bail of 1,000 rand (60 US\$). "Not in 37 years of working in wildlife welfare have I seen such a case of abject cruelty visited on a defenseless animal that was, in all likelihood, just minding his own business," says an SPCA inspector.

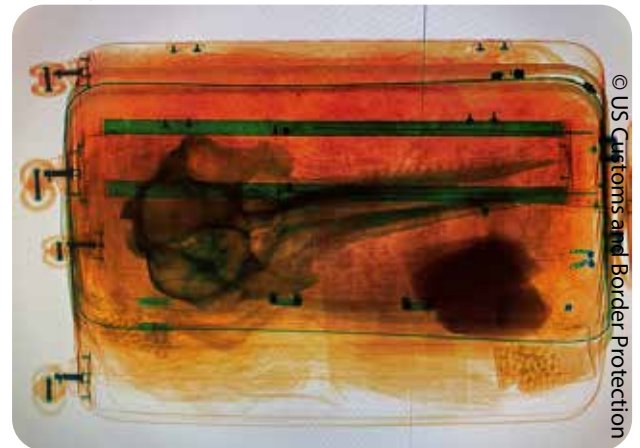
Eyewitness News, January 9, 2023; News24, January 9 and 10, 2023.¹

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of January 2023

Detroit Metropolitan Airport, Romulus, State of Michigan, United States of America



Seizure of a dolphin skull (Cetacea, Appendix I or II) in a suitcase in transit thanks to X-ray "sniffing." The US Customs release does not specify who owns the suitcase.

The Detroit News, February 3, 2023; US Customs and Border Protection, February 3, 2023; NBC News, February 5, 2023.²

BAHRAIN

January 2023

Bahrain

Five Indian Ocean humpback dolphins (*Sousa plumbea*, Appendix I) have been released back into the Persian Gulf after being captured by a fishing boat 2 years ago and sold to a luxury resort where they were exposed to the fondling of customers. His Excellency the Minister of Petroleum and Environment and Bahrain's Ambassador for Climate Affairs thanks Ifaw for its cooperation in this delicate mission, a first in the region. The dolphins are equipped with a geolocation beacon. Let's hope that one day they won't be branded as spy dolphins.

News of Bahrain, January 27, 2023; IFAW, February 1, 2023.³

INDIA

January 7, 2023

Mangaluru, Dakshina Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 3.2 kg of sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) with an estimated value of nearly 200,000 US\$/kg in the hands of 2 men. The value of the block on the international market, as estimated by the authorities, is 32 million rupees (386,229 US\$), or 680 times the average monthly wage as assessed by official statistics.

Mangalorean, January 8, 2023.⁴

January 15, 2023

Kolhapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Forest department stops 2 cars going from Sindhudurg and Goa to Ajara, Kolhapur district (120 and 150 km apart), with 2 blocks of sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) presumed to be commonly and mistakenly called "whale vomit," one kilo per car.

The Times of India, January 16, 2023.⁵

February 5, 2023

Odalbakra, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of 24 blocks and fragments of a waxy, greyish, and blackish substance presumed to be sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) with an international market value of over 3 million US\$. Four arrests. The substance is believed to have been imported from Myanmar.

The Sentinel, February 7, 2023.⁶

Night of February 8 to 9, 2023

Sangli, Sangli District, State of Maharashtra, India

Police seizure of 5.7 kg of sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I). Salim Gulab Patel and Akbar Yakub Shaikh claim to have acquired the suspected block of ambergris in the village of Achara, 200 km from Sangli, on the Arabian Sea. The Times of India, February 9, 2023.⁷

February 25, 2023

Kollegal, Chamaraajanagara District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure in a hotel of 4.95 kg of presumed sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I). The 4 suspects were traveling from Kerala to Bangalore (over 500 km).

Star of Mysore, February 27, 2023.⁸

JAPAN

September 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023

Bay of Taiji, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan

Taiji was a traditional whaling town. The whale was pushed into a net by men in rowing boats. Since the 1960s and 1970s, marine mammal hunting has changed in scale and targets. Dolphin pods are tracked by a conspiracy of motorized boats. According to the meticulous observations of Japanese activists grouped together in LIA (Life Investigation Agency), the toll for the winter of 2022 to 2023 is 214 melon-headed whales (*Peponocephala electra*, Appendix II) including 212 dead, 135 striped dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*, Appendix II) including 134 dead, 72 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops* spp., Appendix II) including 38 dead, 130 Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*, Appendix II) dead, 11 short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*, Appendix II) dead and 2 white-beaked dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*, Appendix II) dead. The dolphins are butchered and canned or eaten fresh, or the younger ones sold to aquatic parks, but this international market is shrinking thanks to the efforts of global NGOs. A few, with broken rostrum and lacerated fins, manage to get out to sea, where they are no doubt victims of the orcas' opportunism.

Dolphin Project (with Life Investigation Agency), March 3, 2023.⁹

PAKISTAN

Beginning of January 2023

Sukkur, Province of Sindh, Pakistan



Manoor Mirani was sentenced to 5 years in prison and a fine of 1,104 US\$. In 2022, he had hacked to death a Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) caught in a trap on the west bank of the Indus. Daily Pakistan, January 5, 2023.¹⁰

ICELAND AND JAPAN

December 2022 to February 2023

Hafnarfjörður, Capital Region, Iceland - Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan

Export of 2,576 tonnes of fin whale meat (*Balaenoptera physalus*, Appendix I with reservations for Iceland, Japan, and Norway) to Japan. The *Silver Copenhagen* left Hafnarfjörður on December 21. She was due to arrive in Shimonoseki in February 2023.



Silver Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, 'Moby Dick' Terminal, station L-1, February 17, 2021

ROBIN DES BOIS INVESTIGATION:

Silver Copenhagen (ex-*Frio London*, ex-*Centavr*). IMO 9143386. Refrigerated freighter. Length 97.70 m. Deadweight 4,230 tonnes. Norway flag (international register). Classification society Registro Italiano Navale. Built in 1998 in Aarhus (Denmark) by Aarhus Flydedok. Owner Silver Copenhagen II AS registered in Norway under the care of Fjord Shipping AS (Norway).

On its website, Fjord Shipping AS claims a total fleet of 20 vessels (10 refrigerated cargo ships, 6 tankers, 2 general cargo ships, a container ship and a research vessel) as ISM manager and/or manager.

She called at Shimonoseki (Japan) in February 2023, Dutch Harbor (Alaska, USA) in March, Tin Can Island, Fuglafjörður (Iceland), St Petersburg (Russia) and Kongshavn (Norway) in May, Las Palmas (Canary Islands, Spain) and Tin Can Island (Nigeria) in June, St Petersburg, Vopnafjörður, Faskrudsfjörður and Hornafjörður (Iceland) in August.

Location, September 2023: Klaipeda (Lithuania).

The reefer didn't have enough range to go to Japan in one trip. Unlike previous voyages, there were no protests in Africa or the Indian Ocean during its refuelling.

In August 2015, to avoid controversy, the *Winter Bay*, which was transporting whale meat from Iceland, took the Arctic route and enjoyed the protection and complicity of Russia. On this subject, see the Robin des Bois press release "Premiere in the Arctic: whale meat goes through the North-East Passage" published on August 3, 2015 (<https://robindesbois.org/en/grande-premiere-en-arctique-la-viande-de-baleine-transite-par-le-passage-du-nord-est-2/>).

Shimonoseki is the home port of the *Nisshin Maru*, the Japanese-flagged factory whaler that has distinguished itself in Antarctic campaigns for decades, first for commercial and then for "scientific" whaling. Now 36 years old, the *Nisshin Maru* continues to carry out scientific hunting in the North Pacific without straying too far from her bases to avoid a humiliating tow by the Russians. Every day, she comes closer to being scrapped or put in a museum.

Kyodo Senpaku Kaisha, the historic whaling company that bought fin whale meat from Iceland, has been lobbying for years to get the Ministry of Fisheries to finance the construction of a new trans-oceanic factory ship that meets the latest air and sea pollution control standards. She regularly announces the construction of this "mother ship" which, she says, will be able to go as far as Antarctica and, if necessary, ensure Japan's food sovereignty, an allusion to the years of famine following the Second World War.

Australia, anxious to protect whales and curb the plundering of southern waters by hyper-industrial predator ships, is concerned about this possible revival of the Japanese whaling fleet, and its Environment Minister says he has received assurances from the Japanese government that it has no intention of subsidizing the project.

Nisshin Maru, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.12 and p.14, n°9 p.6, n°11 p.10, n°17 p.15, n°20 p.19, n°21 p.15, n°22 p.15, n°23 p.20, n°32 p.301 and n°36 p.234.

Visir, January 9 and February 6 2023; Heimildin, January 16 2023; IFAW, January 24 2023; The Guardian, February 16 2023; Yomiuri shinbun, May 13 2023; The Suisan-Keizai Daily News, May 16 2023.¹¹

Map sources

Kazakhstan. Seizure of horns (2,257), carcasses (44), skins and meat of saiga antelope between January 1 and February 28, 2023 (page 58).

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 8, 16, 20, 24, 25 and 31 and February 3, 6, 16, 17 and 18, 2023 ; Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 13, 2023 ; Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 19 and 24 and February 16, 17, 21 and 28, 2023 ; Okhotzooptom, January 26 and February 20, 2023 ; National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, February 25, 2023.

Brazil. Seizure of 1,585 birds between January 1 and February 28, 2023 (page 94).

Federal Highway Police, January 3, 31, February 9 and March 1, 2023 ; GZH, January 4, 2023 ; Military Police of the Federal District, January 5 and February 25, 2023 ; Military Police of Ceará, January 9, 21 and 29 janvier, February 10 and 11, 2023 ; O Dia, January 14, 2023 ; Military Police of the State of Rio de Janeiro, January 14, 2023 ; Portal da Cidade Registro Igrejinha, January 18, 2023 ; G1 Piracicaba e Região, January 19, 2023 ; Ibama, January 19, 2023 ; Diário do Rio, January 20, 2023 ; Bem Paraná, January 21, 2023 ; OBemdito, January 26, 2023 ; Jornal de Brasília, January 29, 2023 ; Civil Police of the State of Ceará, January 30, 2023 ; Environmental Military Police Battalion, February 2 and 13, 2023 ; Rádio Província FM, February 10, 2023 ; JB Litoral, February 13, 2023 ; G1 BA, February 14, 2023.

Indonesia. Seizure of 7,265 birds between January 1 and February 28, 2023 (pages 100 et 101).

Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, January 6 and 28 and February 3, 2023 ; Mataram Agricultural Quarantine Center, January 13, 18 and 27 and March 5, 2023 ; FLIGHT – Protecting Indonesia's Birds, January 17 and 20, February 7, 19, 20, 27 and 28, March 2 and 7, 2023 ; Surabaya Agriculture Quarantine Center, January 18 and 27 and March 5, 2023 ; Garda Animalia, January 19 and February 1, 2023 ; BKSDA Maluku, January 20, February 1, 3 and 22, 2023 ; Kupastuntas.co, January 20, 2023 Cilegon Class II Agricultural Quarantine Center, February 5, 2023 ; JPNN.com, February 9, 2023 ; BKSDA Bengkulu, February 27, 2023.

Italy. Poaching and seizures of birds (557) between January 1 and February 28, 2023 (page 116).

- Calabria: Il Lametino, February 13, 2023 ; QuiCosenza.it, February 13, 2023.
- Campania: Maiori News, January 5, 2023 ; Ilgiornalelocale, January 15, 2023 ; Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, February 10, 2023 ; Nicola Campomorto, February 27, 2023 ; NapoliToday, February 27, 2023.
- Emilia-Romagna: Rifugio Matildico - Wild Animal Rescue Centre, January 6, 2023 ; Kodami, February 2, 2023 ; Telereggio, February 2, 2023 ; Province of Ferrara, February 16, 2023.
- Lombardy: Bresciaoggi, January 13, 2023 ; La Provincia di Como, February 16, 2023.
- Apulia: IlSipontino.net, February 2, 2023.
- Sardinia: L'Unione Sarda, February 1, 2023 ; Sardinia Region Forestry and Environmental Surveillance Corps, February 17 and 22, 2023 ; Committee Against Bird Slaughter, March 2 and 7, 2023 ; Sardinia Post, March 3, 2023 ; Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli, March 8, 2023.
- Sicily: CataniaToday, February 18, 2023.
- Tuscany: Natura Viva, February 12, 2023 ; Greenreport, February 13, 2023.
- Trentino-Alto Adige: Autonomous Province of Trento, January 9, 2023.
- Veneto: Il Giornale di Vicenza, January 18, 2023 ; L'Eco Vicentino, January 18, 2023 ; VeneziaToday, February 16, 2023 ; Province of Vicenza, February 20, 2023 ; Rai News 24, March 1, 2023.

Russia and Azerbaijan. Seizures of caviar (262 kg, minimal value 75,980 US\$), poaching and seizures of sturgeons (328 specimens + 1,008 kg of flesh) between January 1 and February 28, 2023 (page 183).

Azerbaijan

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, February 20, 2023.

Russia

- Altai Krai : Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, January 26, 2023.
- Astrakhan Oblast : Volga-Caspian Management Unit of the Federal Agency for Fishery, January 11 and March 1, 2023.
- Republic of Dagestan : Dagestankaya Pravda, February 14, 2023 ; RIA Dagestan, February 15, 2023 ; North Caucasus Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fishery, February 22, 2023.
- Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District : Vesti Yamal, January 24, 2023 ; Yamal-Media, February 14, 2023 ; Moskovski Komsomolets Yamalia, February 15, 2023.
- Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District : Yugra Police, February 1, 2023.
- Omsk Oblast : Virtual Customs, February 1, 2023 ; Sputnik Kazakhstan, February 1, 2023.
- Moscow Federal City : Life, February 8, 2023.
- Sakhalin Oblast : Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Sakhalin Oblast, February 16, 2023.
- Samara Oblast : Volga News, January 30, 2023 ; GTRK Samara, January 31, 2023.
- Sverdlovsk Oblast : Virtual Customs, January 11, 2023.
- Tomsk Oblast : Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery, February 2, 2023 ; GTRK Tomsk, February 6, 2023 ; Komsomolskaïa Pravda Tomsk, February 6, 2023 ; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Tomsk Oblast, February 6, 2023.
- Vladimir Oblast : Komsomolskaïa Pravda Vladimir, February 3, 2023.

Index "On the Trail"

- Angul District, State of Odisha, India:

"On the Trail" n°14 p.93 (ref.113), n°18 p.100 (ref.124), n°20 p.104 (ref.102), n°23 p.89 (ref.65) and p.130 (ref.124), n°26 p.27 (ref.7), n°29 p.18 (ref.26, 27 and 28), n°30 p.38 (ref.139), n°31 p.32 (ref.106) and p.162 (ref.8), n°32 p.246 (ref.93), n°33 p.50 (ref.193) and p.209 (ref.12), n°34 p.40 (ref.144), p.41 (ref.148 and 154), p.42 (ref.158) and p.75 (ref.87), n°35 p.31 (ref.110), n°36 p.37 (ref.106 and 111) and p.64 (ref.56), n°37 p.30 and p.31 (map), n°38 p.31 (ref.106), p.33 (ref.113) and p.58 (ref.54), n°39 p.87 (ref.5).

- Animal experimentation (capture, trafficking or use of animals):

"On the Trail" n°9 p.40 (ref.30), n°12 p.47 (ref.32), n°15 p.79 (ref.25), n°17 p.91 (ref.25), n°26 p.54 (ref.11) and p.59 (ref.37), n°27 p.69 (ref.27), Covid-19 Special Edition p.5, n°30 p.91 (ref.18) and p.97 (ref.60), n°31 p.99 (ref.19), n°31 p.182 (ref.73), n°32 p.304 (ref.16), n°33 p.63 (ref.10), p.142 (ref.55) and p.281 (ref.3), n°35 p.97-98 (ref.30), n°37 p.100 (ref.23), n°38 p.109 (ref.23) and p.111 (ref.31), n°39 p.76 (ref.19), p.80 (ref.37 and 39) and p.83 (ref.54).

- Crested porcupines (*Hystrix cristata*) (poaching and seizures):

"On the Trail" n°13 p.101 (ref.2), n°30 p.16-18, n°31 p.133 (ref.110), n°33 p.149 (ref.23), n°34 p.229 (ref.109), n°35 p.112 (ref.12) and p.185 (ref.69), n°36 p.121 (ref.10), n°37 p.115 (ref.17 and 18) and p.181 (ref.12), n°39 p.88 (ref.12 and 14).

- European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) (seizures and convictions in France and Spain):

"On the Trail" n°4 p.10, n°5 p.10, n°12 p.9 (ref.12), n°13 p.11 (ref.14 and 14bis), n°16 p.9 (ref.19 and 20) and p.10 (ref.21, 22, 23, 24 and 25), n°18 p.12 (ref.15), n°20 p.18 (ref.24 and 25), n°21 p.11 (ref.20 and 21), p.12 (ref.22, 23 and 25), p.119 (ref.74), n°22 p.13, n°23 p.16 (ref.32 and 33), n°24 p.15 (ref.16, 17, 18 and 19), n°25 p.17 (ref.30 and 34) and p.18 (ref.37), n°27 p.21 (ref.41), n°28 p.19 (ref.20, 21, 22, 23 and 24), n°31 p.211 (ref.41), n°32 p.288 (ref.65, 66, 67, 68 and 69), n°33 p.266 (ref.38) and p.267 (ref.41), n°34 p.253 (ref.36 and 37), n°35 p.205 (ref.43, 44 and 45) and p.206 (ref.46, 47, 48 and 49), n°36 p.221 (ref.43 and 44), n°37 p.218 (ref.59), n°38 p.239 (ref.52, 54 and 55), n°39 p.177 (ref.29), p.178 (ref.31) and p.179 (ref.33).

- Frankfurt, Hesse State, Germany (wildlife smuggling via the international airport):

"On the Trail" n°4 p.38, n°5 p.31, n°6 p.18 (ref.23), p.32 (ref.37) and p.96 (ref.126), n°7 p.75 (ref.78), n°11 p.63 (ref.52), n°15 p.24 (ref.4), n°18 p.21 (ref.22), n°23 p.15 (ref.27) and p.134 (ref.156), n°26 p.43 (ref.35) and p.96 (ref.138), n°28 p.8 (ref.11), p.34 (ref.17), p.90 (ref.17) and p.115 (ref.107), n°29 p.91 (ref.23), n°33 p.230 (ref.72), n°36 p.204 (ref.8), n°39 p.25 (ref.80).

- Hair curler network (smuggling of songbirds concealed in curlers):

"On the Trail" n°20 p.43 (ref.91), n°23 p.43 (ref.15), n°25 p.42 (ref.18), n°28 p.45 (ref.19), n°32 p.153 (ref.22) and p.154 (ref.29), n°37 p.121 (ref.27) and p.124 (ref.32), n°39 p.92 (ref.16).

- Lwiro (Primate Rehabilitation Centre), Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo:

"On the Trail" n°6 p.41, n°8 p.35 (ref.1), n°9 p.36 (ref.2 and 3) and p.37 (ref.7 and 11), n°11 p.37 (ref.1 and 4) and p.38 (ref.7 and 8), n°12 p.27 (ref.2) and p.41 (ref.5, 6 and 7), n°13 p.43 (ref.8 and 9) and p.44 (ref.11 and 12), n°14 p.37 (ref.8 and 10), n°15 p.50 (ref.6), n°16 p.41 (ref.2 and 3), n°17 p.45 (ref.6 and 7), n°19 p.56 (ref.4 and 5), n°20 p.57 (ref.4), n°23 p.72 (ref.9 and 10), n°25 p.54 (ref.1), n°27 p.64 (ref.1), n°28 p.67 (ref.3), n°30 p.90 (ref.10) and p.91 (ref.13 and 14), n°31 p.97 (ref.12) and p.114 (ref.7), n°32 p.128 (ref.10 and 11) and p.129 (ref.12, 15, 16, 17 and 18), n°33 p.132 (ref.15 and 16), n°34 p.120 (map) and p.140 (ref.16), n°35 p.94 (ref.9 and 10), n°36 p.104 (ref.12 and 13), p.105 (ref.15) and p.124 (ref.8), n°37 p.97 (map), p.98 (ref.10) and p.117 (ref.5), n°38 p.106 (map), n°39 p.74 (ref.6).

- Mammoth (*Mammuthus*) ivory:

"On the Trail" n°3 p.76, n°7 p.71 and p.88 (ref.63), n°8 p.82-84, n°9 p.103 (ref.80), n°11 p.9 (map), p.83 (ref.76), p.87 (ref.1) and p.97 (ref.49), n°12 p.92 (ref.94 and 102), n°13 p.77 (ref.5), n°14 p.88-89 (ref.87) and p.110 (ref.43), n°15 p.87 (ref.1) and p.105 (ref.120), n°16 p.82 (ref.75) and p.90 (ref.1 and 2), n°17 p.108 (ref.2), n°18 p.106 (ref.140), n°20 p.110 (ref.1) and p.111 (ref.2), n°21 p.102 (ref.1) and p.116 (ref.50), n°23 p.135 (ref.1 and 2), p.136 and p.151 (ref.49), n°24 p.80 and p.81 (ref.1 and ref.1, left column), n°26 p.97 (ref.1), n°27 p.83 (ref.9 and 10) and p.129 (ref.82), n°29 p.32 (ref.68) and p.41 (ref.126), n°30 p.163 (ref.39), n°31 p.40 (ref.1) and p.41 (ref.4), n°33 p.39 (ref.111) and p.231 (ref.77), n°34 p.33 (ref.82) and p.48 (ref.1, 2 and 3), n°38 p.37 (ref.1 and 2).

- Merida, State of Yucatan, Mexico (wildlife smuggling via the international airport):

"On the Trail" n°2 p.18 and p.19, n°4 p.27 and p.33, n°5 p.27, n°19 p.9 (ref.8), n°20 p.12 (ref.2 and 4), n°21 p.8 (ref.3) and p.25 (ref.4), n°24 p.61 (ref.48), n°25 p.12 (ref.6), p.15 (ref.18 and 20) and p.32 (ref.5), n°26 p.54 (ref.9), n°28 p.45 (ref.23), n°29 p.115 (ref.34), n°34 p.115 (ref.14) and p.146 (ref.47), n°35 p.44 (ref.1), n°36 p.69 (ref.77).

- Musical instruments with ivory parts (pianos, violins, cellos, etc.):

"On the Trail" n°5 p.95, n°22 p.102 (New Zealand), n°28 p.110 (ref.70), n°29 p.31 (ref.63), n°32 p.36 (ref.117), p.37 (ref.122) and p.42 (ref.176), n°33 p.38, p.39 (ref.109) and p.44 (ref.161), n°34 p.37 (ref.125), n°35 p.27 (ref.85), n°37 p.27 (ref.61) and p.37 (ref.127), n°38 p.27 (ref.74) and p.36 (ref.131), n°39 p.17 (ref.39) and p.18 (ref.46).

- Poisoning by agricultural toxins (pesticides, insecticides, rodenticides, such as: aldicarb, bendiocarb, brodifacoum, bromadiolone, carbofuran, chlorpyrifos, Curater, endosulfan, fenthion, Furadan, metaldehyde, monocrotophos, parathion, sulfotep, Temik, Thimet, or not named):

"On the Trail" n°2 p.37, n°4 p.30, p.54 and p.83, n°7 p.20 (ref.1) and p.27 (ref.39), n°8 p.20 (ref.2), p.26 (ref.32) and p.75 (ref.30), n°10 p.69 (ref.15), n°11 p.51 (ref.44), p.74 (ref.46) and p.84 (ref.83), n°12 p.27 (ref.3), p.57 (ref.25) and p.102 (ref.2), n°13 p.59 (ref.37), p.61 (ref.52), p.102 (ref.10) and p.103 (ref.14), n°14 p.27 (ref.1), n°15 p.36 (ref.59), p.64 (ref.50), p.65 (ref.52) and p.101 (ref.94), n°16 p.75 (ref.10), n°17 p.38 (ref.69) and p.55 (ref.5), n°18 p.32 (ref.32), p.34 (ref.49), p.54-55 (ref.26), p.58 (ref.59) and p.85 (ref.20), n°19 p.33 (ref.2) and p.71 (p.50), n°20 p.34 (ref.4), p.46 (ref.109), p.48 (ref.121), p.69 (ref.55) and p.106 (ref.118), n°21 p.37 (ref.72 and 75), p.52 (ref.19), p.69 (ref.86) and p.98 (ref.113), n°22 p.44 (July 27, 2018) and p.56 (August 12, 2018), n°23 p.46 (ref.36), p.50 (ref.59), p.55 (ref.84, 85, 88 and 89), p.89 (ref.67), p.94 (ref.92), p.114 (ref.10) and p.118 (ref.36), n°24 p.43 (ref.65), n°25 p.42 (ref.16), p.44 (ref.35) and p.116 (ref.98), n°26 p.36 (ref.1), p.47 (ref.55), p.61 (ref.3), p.62 (ref.8 and 10), p.64 (ref.22) and p.66 (ref.39), n°27 p.41 (ref.2), p.42 (ref.5), p.48 (ref.33) and p.49 (ref.40), n°28 p.47 (ref.39 and 41), p.80 (ref.39), p.93 (ref.3) and p.135 (ref.78), n°29 p.54 (ref.7), p.55 (ref.12), p.56 (ref.15), p.68 (ref.82), p.118 (ref.44), p.126 (ref.102), p.128, p.129 (ref.110) and p.131 (ref.129), n°30 p.119 (map), n°31 p.68 (ref.103), p.72 (ref.9), p.110 (ref.8), p.114 (ref.9), p.116 (ref.19), p.133 (ref.110) and p.181 (ref.66), n°32 p.70 (ref.6), p.73 (ref.23), p.78 (ref.51), p.100 (ref.34), p.145 (ref.6), p.156 (ref.39), p.172 (ref.108), p.173, p.180 (ref.156 and 157), p.181 (ref.163), p.182 (ref.170 and 171), p.183 (ref.175 and 176), p.194 (ref.243) and p.195 (ref.244 and 246), n°33 p.46 (ref.172), p.87 (ref.60), p.115 (ref.25), p.169 (map), p.172 (ref.102), p.173 (map), p.179 (ref.132), p.182 (ref.140) and p.239 (ref.122), n°34 p.41 (ref.148), p.156 (map), p.161 (map), p.162 (ref.109) and p.179 (ref.217), n°35 p.52 (ref.54), p.67 (ref.18), p.128 (map), p.133 (ref.80), p.134 (ref.91), p.135 (ref.99), p.136 (ref.106 and 109), p.143 (ref.147), p.145 (ref.163), p.146 (ref.167) and p.185 (ref.71), n°36 p.59 (ref.23), p.71 (ref.2), p.138 (ref.62), p.144 (ref.92), p.145 (ref.97 and 98), p.146 (ref.101), p.147 (ref.110), p.155 (ref.135), p.159 (ref.162) and p.191 (ref.34), n°37 p.133 (map), p.137 (ref.86 and 90), p.138 (ref.94), p.140 (ref.110), p.147 (ref.144 and 146) and p.176 (ref.1), n°38 p.50 (ref.8), p.68 (ref.1), p.70 (ref.12), p.71 (ref.14), p.73 (ref.26), p.148 (map), p.154 (ref.127), p.155 (map), p.156 (ref.133), p.159 (ref.157), p.161 (ref.173), p.164 (ref.185) and p.169 (ref.209), n°39 p.34 (ref.14), p.109 (ref.85), p.111 (ref.97 and 99), p.112 (ref.102), p.119 (ref.129 and 131) and p.122 (ref.146).

- Rathkeale Rovers:

"On the Trail" n°1 p.22, n°2 p. 48, 49, 50, 52 and 53, n°4 p.67 and p.69-70, n°5 p.76, n°7 p.75 (ref.78), n°8 p.66 (ref.55 and box), n°9 p.69, n°10 p.49 (ref.49bis), n°12 p.72 (ref.48/49), n°13 p.76 (ref.61), n°14 p.97 (ref.129), n°15 p.86 (ref.75), n°16 p.70 (ref.37), n°18 p.78 (ref.70), n°19 p.87 (ref.28 and 29), n°27 p.88 (ref.23), n°30 p.49 (ref.37bis), n°32 p.55-58, n°34 p.60 (ref.62).

- Servals (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) alive in Europe and Northern America:

"On the Trail" n°11 p.52 (ref.51), n°26 p.68 (ref.52), n°27 p.79 (ref.57), n°28 p.86 (ref.69 and 70), n°31 p.66 (ref.92), n°32 p.88 (ref.117, 118 and 119) and p.251 (ref.119), n°33 p.91 (ref.87 and 88) and p.96 (ref.114), n°34 p.78 (ref.106, 107 and 108), p.82 (ref.131), p.83-84 (ref.135) and p.227 (ref.98), n°35 p.58 (ref.94), p.62 (ref.123) and p.187 (ref.84), n°36 p.66 (ref.69 and 70) and p.67 (ref.71), n°37 p.55 (ref.60), n°38 p.62 (ref.76), p.66 (ref.94), p.67 (ref.95) and p.214 (ref.81), n°39 p.41 (ref.51,52 and 54).

- Sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) (teeth thefts, seizures and convictions):

"On the Trail" n°2 p.5, p.70 and p.77, n°3 p.76, n°4 p.13, n°7 p.116 (ref.69), n°9 p.88-89 (ref.95), n°10 p.9 (ref.3), n°11 p.12 (Various marine species), p.97 (ref.49) and 98 (ref.55), n°12 p.12 (ref.6), n°13 p.114 (ref.74 and 75), n°15 p.11 (ref.6) and p.87 (ref.1), n°16 p.12 (ref.1), n°17 p.16 (ref.10), p.99 (ref.74) and p.117 (ref.33), n°18 p.13 (ref.2), n°20 p.128 (ref.78), n°21 p.14 (ref.1), n°22 p.124 (August 2018), n°24 p.17 (ref.5 and 8), n°25 p.19 (ref.4), p.20 (ref.10) and p.111 (ref.69), n°26 p.18 (ref.7), n°27 p.23 (ref.1) and p.127 (ref.74), n°29 p.41 (ref.124 and 126) and p.180 (ref.6 and 7), n°30 p.174 (ref.95), p.179 (ref.8), p.197 (ref.6) and p.200 (ref.17), n°31 p.41 (ref.2 and 4) and p.188 (ref.103 and ref.2), n°32 p.241 (ref.61) and p.305 (ref.22), n°33 p.59 (ref.4, 5 and 6) and p.282 (ref.8), n°34 p.49 (ref.1 and 6) and p.227 (ref.97), n°35 p.35 (ref.5), p.215 (ref.2) and p.217 (ref.9 and 10), n°36 p.43 (ref.2), n°37 p.197 (ref.4), p.232 (ref.12) and p.233 (ref.13), n°38 p.213 (ref.77) and p.252 (ref.4).

- Spiders in and from Poland:

"On the Trail" n°25 p.37 (ref.4), n°31 p.166 (ref.10), n°33 p.217 (ref.30), n°34 p.208 (ref.10 and 12) and p.209 (ref.13), n°37 p.178 (ref.9 and .10).