

ROBIN DES BOIS

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling  
n°8 / 1<sup>st</sup> January - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

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## Introduction

The traffickers' tricks beginning of this year:

Rhino horns chopped in bits threaded into frozen lobsters' heads.

Rhino horns inside wooden statuettes of Buddha.

Tips of elephant tusks made up as buffalo horns.

Freshwater turtles hidden with mangrove crabs.

Ivories and pangolins declared as telephone equipment to repair.

Sea turtles shells declared as "oval and marbled sculptures".

Pygmy frogs and pythons in children's books and cigarettes packet.

Illegal ivories declared as instant noodles.

Ivory objects concealed in powdered milk cans.

Sections of elephant tusks in the middle of wine bottles.

False CITES certificates accompanying geckos and butterflies.

Seahorses and pangolin scales in bags of medical plaster.

0.5 ton of ivory in 1 ton of shea butter.

Paint a leopard skin as a tiger skin.

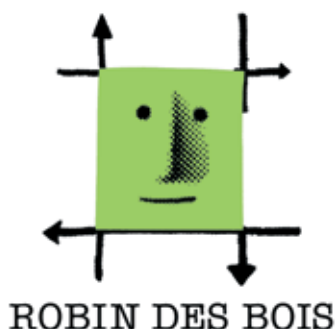
Paint a goatskin as a tiger skin.

Caravan of 5 couriers on the same flight conveying 500 turtles.

Teaching philosophy at university and having a second life as an ivory and rhino horn dealer.

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

Carried out by Robin des Bois (Robin Hood) with the encouragement  
and financial support of the Fondation Brigitte Bardot,  
the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux  
and the Fondation Franz Weber



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## Previous issues

### **n°7 / 1<sup>st</sup> October - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014**

[http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON\\_THE\\_TRAIL\\_7.pdf](http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON_THE_TRAIL_7.pdf) (pdf 132 p. 7.1 Mo)

### **n°6 / 1<sup>st</sup> July- 31<sup>st</sup> September 2014**

[http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON\\_THE\\_TRAIL\\_6.pdf](http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON_THE_TRAIL_6.pdf) (pdf 134 p. 5.8 Mo)

### **n°5/ 1<sup>st</sup> April - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

[http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON\\_THE\\_TRAIL\\_5.pdf](http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON_THE_TRAIL_5.pdf) (pdf 132 p. 7.2 Mo)

### **n°4/ 1<sup>st</sup> January - 31<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

[http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON\\_THE\\_TRAIL\\_4.pdf](http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON_THE_TRAIL_4.pdf) (pdf 112 p. 6.4 Mo)

### **n°3/ 1<sup>st</sup> October - 31<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

[http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON\\_THE\\_TRAIL\\_3.pdf](http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON_THE_TRAIL_3.pdf) (pdf 80 p. 4.5 Mo)

### **n°2/ 1<sup>st</sup> July - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

[http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON\\_THE\\_TRAIL\\_2.pdf](http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON_THE_TRAIL_2.pdf) (pdf 80 p. 4 Mo)

### **n°1/ 1<sup>st</sup> April - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

<http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/ON-THE-TRAIL-1.pdf> (pdf 42 pages 3,2 Mo)

**French version available on**  
**<http://www.robindesbois.org/>**

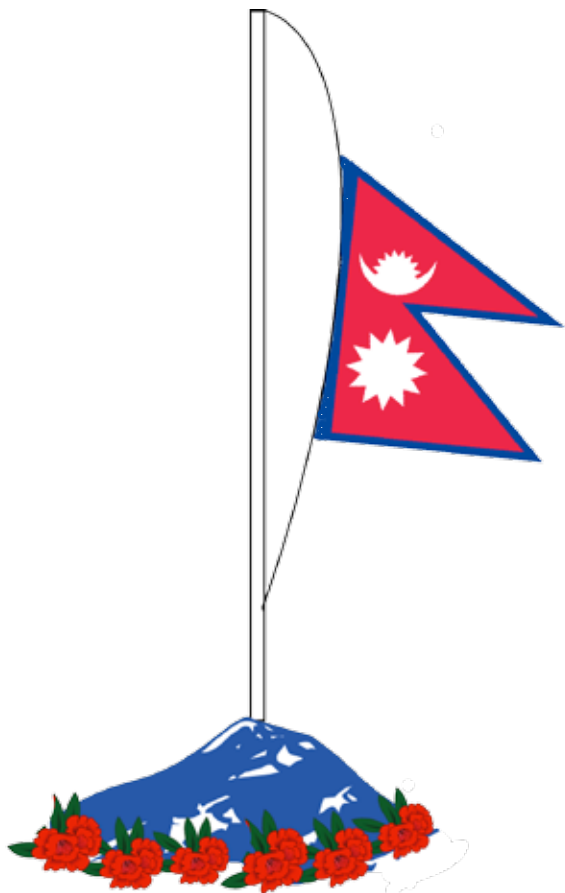
## CITES\* Appendices

**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.

\* Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. 180 Member States.



**Nepal**  
**Avril 25, 2015 - 06h00 UT**

## Seahorses

### AFRICA

**Seizure of a thousand seahorses (3 kg) (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and arrest<sup>1</sup>**  
**International Ivato Airport, Analamanga Region, Madagascar**  
**February 19, 2015**

On the same Air Mauritius flight, there were 3 traffickers, a Sri Lankan who was hiding 1.4 kg of gold in hollow metal canes and 2 Chinese whose final destination was Hong Kong. They were smuggling 3 kg of seahorses "for personal use".

### EUROPE

**Seizure of 112 seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II)<sup>2</sup>**  
**Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle Airport, Île-de-France Region, France**  
**January 15, 2015**



"It was to cook our baby's soups". The Chinese couple coming from Shanghai and going to Spain was required to pay 2 "substantial" customs fines.

**Seizure of 18,688 seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II)<sup>3</sup>**  
**Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle Airport, Île-de-France Region, France**  
**February 5, 2015**

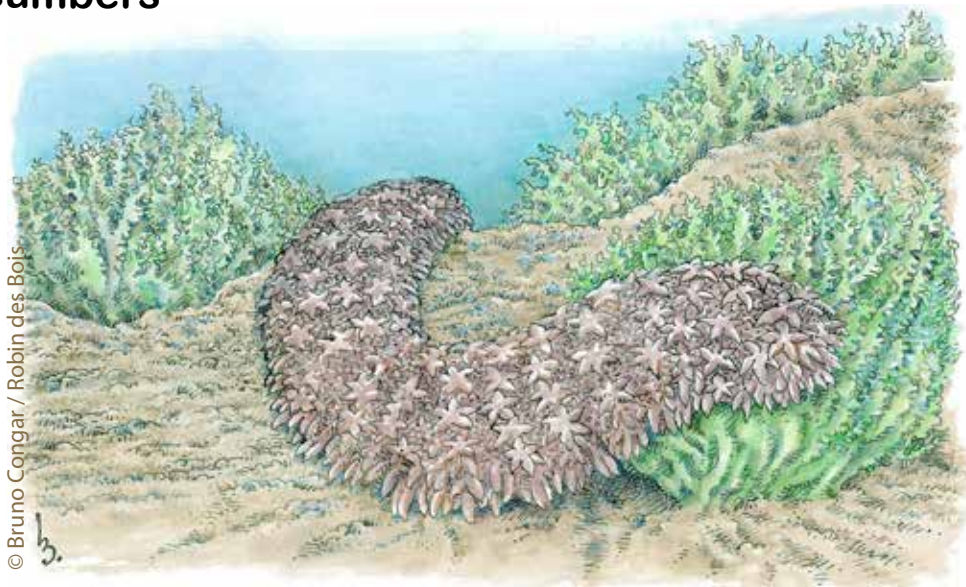
French customs estimate the cargo value at € 200,000. The seahorses came from Madagascar. The delivery was planned in Hong Kong. The traffic would have been organized by Sky Marks company based in Toliara (Madagascar) and specialized in sea food. According to Eric Narivony Rabenja, the new general manager of Madagascar customs, one of the Madagascan involved in this expedition has been arrested.



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# Sea Cucumbers



## ASIA

### Seizure of 110 kg of sea cucumbers (class Holothuroidea)<sup>1</sup>

**Kilakarai, State of Tamil Nadu, India  
January 2, 2015**

Sea cucumbers are universally raked, in all seas. They are used for several purposes. In the United States of America, sea cucumber powder is sold to cure rheumatism ... of cats.

In Indian waters, it is prohibited to fish for "holothurie"—the scientific name for sea cucumber. Experts recommend registering the genus in CITES Appendix II. The 2 persons involved bought them from fishermen. The cooking and processing workshop was 20 kilometers away from Indian Ocean fishing ports.



### Seizure of 110 kg of sea cucumbers (Holothuroidea class) and arrest<sup>2</sup>

**Thondi, State of Tamil Nadu, India  
March 11, 2015**

Just like the seizure in January. The same police inspector, Ramesh Kumar, found the boiled and dried sea cucumbers in a van. Bought from fishermen, they were to be delivered to

a wholesaler. Planned destination: China.



## Corals

### ASIA

### Conviction for corals poaching (Anthozoa class)<sup>1</sup>

**Kagoshima, Kyushu Island, Japan  
March 23, 2015**



The waters of the Kyūshū island attract many Chinese fishermen. They are now punishable by fines of up to € 230,000. One of them was arrested by Japanese coast guards and sentenced to 18 months of suspended imprisonment. Red coral was the target.

## Fishes

### AMERICA

### REPEATED OFFENSE

### Seizure of 38 rays (Potamotrygon spp. subject to quota in Brazil) and arrest<sup>1</sup>

**Sao Paulo de Olivenca, State of Amazonas, Brazil  
February 16, 2015**

The 4 men, including an infant, were transporting them in their vehicle. They were placed in plastic bags -filled with water- to supply the aquarium trade. According to the authorities, the "merchandise" was heading toward the United States via Colombia. The estimated value of the seizure is \$310,000 US.



**Seizure of 280 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 183 kg of tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*), 25 kg of Osteoglossidae, 41 kg of pacu (Characidae family) and 59 kg of wild animals meat<sup>2</sup>**

**Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil**

**February 26, 2015**

The 32-year-old man was released on bail of \$279 US.

**Exportation of 455 kg of hammerhead sharks fins (*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II)<sup>3</sup>**

**February 2015**

**Costa Rica**



Costa Rica doesn't care about sharks. The country is often mentioned in alleged controversial transactions. Costa Rica has proved that it does not want to and is unable to control the practices of international and Asian fishing fleets unloading in its ports (cf. "On the Trail" n°5, p. 7 and n°7, p.4).

The NGOs PRETOMA and Sea Turtles hold documents establishing the substance of the facts—of the offenses, actually. Hammerhead sharks fins (*Sphyrna lewini* and *Sphyrna zygaena*) are shipped to Hong Kong by air via the United States of America. NGOs claim that the USA is an accomplice. December 2014: 411 kg of fins. February 2015: 455 kg.

**Seizures of 121 totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>4</sup>**

**San Luis Río Colorado, State of Sonora and San Felipe Mexicali, State of Baja California, Mexico**  
**March 2015**

1 - San Luis Río Colorado. 86. Estimated worth of Mexican pesos 3 million (\$200,000 US) on the Asian black market : \$2400 US per swim bladder. A man and a woman were arrested.

2 - San Luis Río Colorado. 34 (23 kg). Value of the seizure on the Asian black market: Mexican pesos 1.2 million (\$80,630 US), or around \$3,500 US/kg. 2 people were arrested. Specialists believe that the poached fish were between 50 and 60 year old.

3- San Felipe Mexicali. 1. One person arrested.

**Seizure of 90 totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I)<sup>5</sup>**

**San Felipe Mexicali, State of Baja California, Mexico**

**March 30, 2015**

2 men on the side of the road at night. When they see the police, they flee abandoning their

backpack. The federal police finds 25.5 kg of swim bladder inside it.



## ASIA

**Conviction for trafficking of 27 kg of Manta ray gills (*Manta spp.*, Appendix II)<sup>6</sup>**

**Indonesia**

**February 2015**

A first! A Manta ray gills trafficker was sentenced to 16 months in prison without parole. He was caught in flagrante delicto transporting Manta ray gills in September 2014, right after the promulgation of a law that makes trafficking in the world's largest ray punishable by prison. The Manta ray wingspan extends to 7 m. The trafficker also had to pay a fine of \$5,000 US. The value of the 27 kg of gills was estimated at \$4,000 US. Between August and September 2014, the Indonesian services seized 138 kg of manta ray gills, an entire manta ray, 558 kg of bones, and arrested 5 members of Manta networks connecting Indonesia and China. The annual smuggling trade is estimated to US \$30 millions. The by-products of Manta rays are said to be "tonic". However, traditional Chinese medicine does not consider them to be so.



**Poaching of a Manta ray (*Manta spp.*, App. II)<sup>7</sup>**

**Bohol Island, Eastern Visayas**

**Region, Philippines**

**March 5, 2015**

Freshly fished.





## EUROPE

### **Seizure of 2 million glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>8</sup>**

**Sofia International Airport, Bulgaria**

**January 2015**

The 2 Chinese traffickers were arrested in Sofia Airport. The post-larval eels were declared as "food product" and transported in 8 polystyrene boxes. The glass eels were taken to the Varna Black Sea Aquarium. Their fate is uncertain. They could end up as fish food. Their total weight was around 600 kg.

### **Seizure of 2 European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II)<sup>9</sup>**

**Como, Lombardy, Italy**

**February 2015**

They were declared as carps to customs. The import and export of European eels are prohibited within the 28 countries of the European Union.

## OCEANIA

### **Seizure of ornamental fish for a value of \$300.000 AU, among which an Asian arowana (*Scleropages formosus*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>10</sup>**

**Adelaide Airport, State of South Australia, Australia**

**February 2, 2015**

The R&D director of a global leader in tropical fish, Qian Hu Corporation from Singapore, was caught in Adelaide Airport with 20 plastic bags which content was worth \$300,000 AU. The bags were transit containers for rare fishes protected by the CITES Convention. Some of the fishes were dead, others were still alive.

Chang Kuok Weai went to Australia for vacation. After the customs officer arrested Chang, 2 premises were searched in Adelaide, ending with 2 new seizures. The star of these 2 replicas is an Asian arowana, a species that lives only in fresh water. Ornamental fish collectors have been rushing on these fish since 1970. From 1975, Asian arowanas were registered in Appendix I of CITES. International trade is prohibited. However, arowana smuggling continues.

Chang's Singaporean employer is in a dilemma. Chang's Australian lawyer said that she would like to request his release on bail and that no person or legal entity was currently ready to act as a guarantor.



## Marine Mammals

## AFRICA

### **Seizure of 15 jaws bones, about 40 vertebrae and bones of African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>1</sup>**

**Dekpo, Maritime Region, Togo**

**March 31, 2015**

The species is registered in CITES Appendix I since 2013. There are only a few thousands African manatees left in West Africa, threatened by illegal catches for zoos, accidental captures in fishing nets, wounds caused by the boats propellers. They are also victims of the booming trade in manatee oil which, all the way to Mali, is said to heal ear infections, rheumatism or eczema. In Togo, the manatee meat sells for 500 to 10,000 CFA francs (\$1 to \$20.20 US) and the whole animal sells for between 100,000 and 200,000 CFA francs (\$196 to \$392 US). To top it all, it is fashionable to make canes from their bones.



This 80-year-old fisherman and his crews (you can't land a sirenian weighing 300 to 500 kg by yourself) have contributed to the species near extinction.

## AMERICA

### **Conviction for narwhal tusks trafficking (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II)<sup>2</sup>**

**State of Maine, United States of America**

**January 2015**

Zaraskas is unlucky, he did not know that the 33 narwhal tusks that he ordered from Canada between 2002 and 2008 were illegal and came from Inuit poachers. He thought he was just doing business, he was actually smuggling. His lawyer will appeal. Zaraskas already was granted concessions. For health reasons, his imprisonment has been postponed for 3 months. He also has to pay a fine of \$85,000 US.



**Seizure of a sealskin bag (Phocidae family)<sup>3</sup>  
Bridgewater, State of Maine, United States of America**

**March 2015**

The woman, Canadian sealskin ambassador, decided to shop on the other side of the American border. A woman customs officer confiscated the bag and fined her for \$230 US. The U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act prohibits the import of any part of a seal or its by-products into the United States of America.



**ASIA**

**Poaching of a Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>4</sup>  
Sharda Canal, State of Uttar Pradesh, India  
March 2, 2015**



The poachers warned by public rumor were more persistent than the anti-poaching brigades. They managed to locate the dolphin swimming in murky waters in Sharda Canal (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p. 52). They killed the dolphin and brought the carcass to their village for the cutting up. The police struck back and seized the dead body. It was 2.13 m long and weighed 90 kg. *Platanista gangetica*, cf. "On the Trail" n°2, p. 5-6.

**Japanese Ministry of Health regards whale meat from Norway as a toxic waste<sup>5</sup>**

**Japan**

**March 11, 2015**

Japan is uncompromising about the percentage of pesticides in whale meat. However, it is less strict about the level of cesium137 and other radionuclides from the Fukushima disaster. The Japanese Minister of Health announces that the meat imported from Norway has been "thrown out". It had 0.2 parts per million (PPM) of aldrin and dieldrin, above the tolerated levels of 0.1 and 0.05.



**OCEANIA**

**Poaching of dugong (*Dugong dugon*, Appendix I) and sea turtles (Appendix I)<sup>6</sup>**

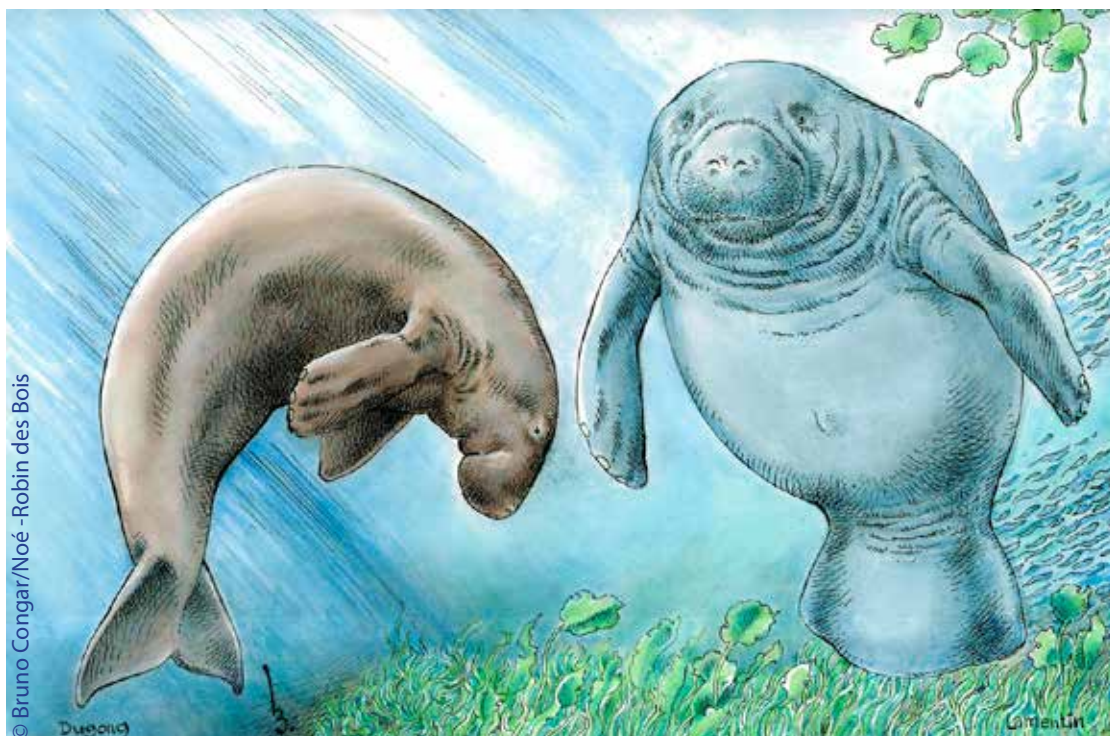
**State of Queensland, Australia**

**February 12, 2015**

In the Cairns region in northern Queensland, the gangs have better watch out. The Minister for the Environment is determined to eradicate the smuggling of "these majestic creatures". The new federal law states that smuggling of protected species will be fined a maximum amount of \$1 million AU (\$785,500 US).

Under the Native Title Act of 1993, aborigines may hunt dugongs and sea turtles for personal or family use. This act may be interpreted in many ways.

Dugong



Manatee



# Various Marine Species

## AMERICA

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**Indictment for trafficking of totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) and sea cucumbers (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III in Ecuador)<sup>1</sup>**

**State of California, United States of America**

**January 9, 2015**

Kam Wing Chan, aged 61, the owner of Kaven Company, officially specialized in Chinese furniture import in Los Angeles, was actually illegally exporting seafood to China. The recipients were members of his family. The estimated value of this traffic is at least \$3 million US.

It was a triangular traffic between Mexico, California and China. One totoaba's swim bladder sells for \$4000 US in Asia. The same sells for between \$1,000 to \$4,000 US in Mexico, depending on its size.

Abalone was part of the traffic as well.

## ASIA

**Seizure of 288 seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), 7 sea cucumbers (class Holothuroidea) and 189 queen conches<sup>2</sup>**

**Muthukuda, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

**January 2015**

**Seizure of 163 kg of sea cucumbers (class Holothuroidea) and 666 kg of trochus shells (genus *Trochus*)<sup>3</sup>**

**Andaman and Nicobar Island, India**

**January 29, 2015**

The local press asserts that "sea cucumbers can be used to fight cancer". Trochus live on coral reefs. Their shell (*Trochus niloticus*) is used to make buttons and jewelry. Locals consume their meat smoked or dried.



*Trochus niloticus*

**Seizure of shellfish, 2 tons of shark fins (chondrichthyens class), 5 Manta rays (*Manta* spp., Appendix II) and 50 hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I)<sup>4</sup>**

**Indonesia**

**January 2015**

The shipment of 49 styrofoam boxes containing mangrove crabs destined to Shanghai on a Singapore Airlines flight stopped short. 709 crabs were smaller than the authorized size for catches and commercialization. 10 boxes were full of turtles (cf. p. 12). A Chinese representative of the export company was interviewed by the police and Maritime Affairs. A few days before, the same services seized 140 undersized lobsters heading to Hong Kong. Lobsters are facing a critical situation in Indonesian waters. They are disappearing much faster than they are reproducing.

In mid-January, the maritime police inspected a Vietnamese boat. In its hold, they found 2 t of shark fins, 50 sea turtles and Manta rays in pieces. The Vietnamese boat was casting a large gillnet into the sea. A few days after, she was scuttled.





Illegal fishing threatens all marine resources in Indonesia. The fisheries minister Susi Pudjiastuti mentioned the December 2014 boarding of *MV Hai Fa* and its seizure. Its hold contained 900 t of frozen fish and 66 t of hammerhead and oceanic white-tip shark, 2 species registered in CITES Appendix II. The estimated value of the cargo is Rp 70 million Indonesian, or \$5,637 US. The *MV Hai Fa* is a special case. Her crew consisted of 24 Chinese. Depending on the circumstances, she was flying a Panamanian or an Indonesian flag. The *MV Hai Fa*, a refrigerated cargo boat, is now strictly used for logistical needs for national fisheries and fish processing. Indonesia would like to put the exploitation of its waters in order. Resource pillaging by foreign fleets is estimated at \$2 billion US per year. Boats from Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, Taiwan and Papua New Guinea have been inspected, seized, and sometimes sunk.



**Blast poaching<sup>5</sup>**  
**Raja Ampat Archipelago, West Papua Province, Indonesia**  
**February 2015**

Pirate fishing is not just for foreign fleets. 2 boats from Sulawesi Island in the Celebes Sea were fishing with explosives on the marine park of Sayang Island in the western part of West Papua. All the fishermen were arrested. The fate of the boats has not been decided on. They could be destroyed. Manta rays love the archipelago of Raja Ampat. Sharks too. Indonesia would like to make it a sanctuary.



## Marine Turtles

**Total from January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**77 marine turtles and 117 eggs seized**

### AFRICA

**Seizure of 11 sea turtle shells (Appendix I) and arrest of 4 suspects<sup>1</sup>**

**Lomé, maritime region, Togo**  
**January 31, 2015**



**Seizure of 31 sea turtle shells (Appendix I), arrest, escape and re-arrest<sup>2</sup>**

**Cameroun**  
**February 2, 2015**

The 3 traffickers were "re-released" by a night watch police officer. According to the NGO LAGA, an agreement was made with the smugglers. 6 days later, they were arrested again.



### REPEATED OFFENSE

**Seizure of 8 bags of green turtle meat (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I) and conviction<sup>3</sup>**

**Acoua, Mayotte (Indian Ocean), France**  
**February 26, 2015**

The accused is very familiar with the courts. He was already found guilty twice of smuggling turtles and eggs. In 2003, a 3 month suspended prison sentence. In 2008, one year in prison including 6 months without remission. This time, at 8 in the morning, he was caught in the act, after cutting the throat of a green turtle that had just laid its eggs, butchering it into 8 bags of meat : 9 months prison of which 3 suspended.

In 2014, The French authorities on Mayotte Island reported 260 sea turtle smuggling offenses.



**Seizure of 7 sea turtles shells (Appendix I)<sup>4</sup>**

**Agbodrafo, Maritime Region, Togo**  
**March 7, 2015**

The turtle shells were seized, but not the fishermen, whom the villagers had alerted. The "suspicious" cars of the OCRTIDB (the central office for the repression of illicit drug trafficking and money laundering) had been identified.

## AMERICA

### Acquittal of 7 people suspected of killing an ecologist<sup>5</sup> Costa Rica January 26, 2015



The death of Jairo Mora Sandoval remains unpunished. The 7 men accused of beating, stripping, handcuffing, and killing him were acquitted. The judge considered that the investigation was bungled. On May 31, 2013, in the evening, Sandoval and 4 American and Spanish women

volunteers were approaching Moin Beach, near Limón, by car to protect the eggs of leatherback sea turtles. A tree trunk lying across the street blocked the car. The four young women were taken hostage and brutalized before they manage to escape. The corpse of Sandoval was found the next day.

4 of the accused remain in prison for another case of robbery and rape. The death of the young man, 26, and the violence inflicted upon his colleagues show that the trafficking of sea turtle eggs attracts common law criminals.

The eggs are said to be aphrodisiacs. A sea turtle egg sells for around \$1 US in Central America. A leatherback sea turtle lays around a hundred eggs in the sand in one clutch.

Randall Arauz, founder of Pretoma, an NGO in Costa Rica dedicated to protecting sea turtles, considers that the inability of her country's police and justice system to identify and sentence the perpetrators of the crime is a "national shame and a stain on Costa Rica's reputation".

The young sea protector and other volunteers had already been threatened and subject to violence. 3 years ago, members of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation (WideCast) were molested and tied up. Through their presence on the site, they were protecting hundreds of sea turtles laying their eggs on a beach. The attackers left with all the eggs. They have never been identified.

### Seizure of 117 olive Ridleys eggs (*Lepidochelys olivacea*, Appendix I) and arrest of 2 persons<sup>6</sup> Puerto Vallarta, State of Jalisco, Mexico February 2015

### Appearance for illegal import of 2 green turtle shells (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I)<sup>7</sup> San Francisco, State of California, United States of America March 31, 2015

Hedley's Humpers Ltd. has offices in London, New York, Paris, and Avignon. Hedley's Humpers

specializes in import/export and the transport of works of art and antiques for 40 years. The company admitted illegally importing shells into the United States of America. On the export documents, the 2 turtle shells were described as being "mottled oval sculptures". Other "animal sculptures" have been appraised by Hedley's Humpers. The company confesses that the total value of cover smuggling "in previous years" was up to \$70,000 US. As a private entity, Hedley's Humpers must serve 3 years of probation, pay \$75,000 US in fines, \$25,000 US in community service payments, and \$400 US for a mandatory special assessment. Hedley's Humpers accepted these requisitions. The Federal Court has to confirm them.

## ASIA

### Discovery of Kemp's Ridley turtles carcasses (*Lepidochelys olivacea*, Appendix I)<sup>8</sup> Visakhapatnam, State of Andhra Pradesh and Chennai, State of Tamil Nadu, India January-February 2015

1 - Partiers regularly take over the Indian Ocean beaches between Tenneti Park and Bheemili. The terrestrial and marine diversity suffers from their behaviour. Carcasses of wild animals, stags and wild boars, are found burned on the high end of the beach, next to empty bottles of alcohol. At dawn, other gangs scour the beaches to capture olive ridley turtles that they butcher at once. The turtle meat is sold the same evening. An individual portion sells for Rs. 1,200, or \$19 US. This new coastal economy is devastating. Driftwood brought in by the sea is used for campfires and barbecues. The police and environmental protection services pretend that they are unaware of these new ways of using the coast around Visakhapatnam (1.8 million inhabitants).

2 - At dawn, the beaches of Chennai looked like a battlefield. The sea turtles had suffered a terrible defeat. 21 carcasses were lying in the sand, a dozen others were floating on the small beachside waves. The Student Sea Turtle Conservation Network is categorical: they are victims of trawlers. The trawl nets trap the turtles and drown them. Losses are greater at the egg laying season between January and March. In the States of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, trawls are prohibited on a coastal strip of 5.5 km and 8 km. The Fisheries Department has no way of checking if this forbidden zone is respected. "We rarely fish near the shore ... some of us come near river mouths to catch shrimps" says the president of the South Indian Fishermen Welfare Association. How do turtles die in the trawling nets? They drown or are mutilated. To quickly get rid of the turtles caught in the nets, their flippers are cut and their carcasses are thrown over board. Some are also killed with rifles to prevent them from being accidentally caught in the nets and to save time. Some also hunt them for money. Their meat is sold. Although this practice does exist, it is not widespread. It requires organized smuggling involving the entire crew.



Turtle defenders recommend installing a TED (Turtle Excluder Device) at the trawl net entrance. A turtle excluder device allows turtles and other big catches to escape. A TED costs Rs. 3,000 (\$48 US) and makes fishermen lose 5% of their catch. Turtle defenders also ask for a close monitoring of the fishing fleet between January and March and track all fishing boats in the nautical area via GPS.



Chennai beach

## OCEANIA

### Release of a green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas* spp., Appendix I)<sup>9</sup>

Vinh Long, Can Tho Province, Vietnam  
March 16, 2015

The green turtle was meant for an offering to Buddhists of a pagoda in Vinh Long. It was returned to the ocean.



### Release of a sea turtle (*Cheloniidae* spp., Appendix I)<sup>10</sup>

Ninh Thuan Province, Vietnam  
March 2015

The turtle will no longer live in the closed quarters of the restaurant boat. It was set free in the Pacific Ocean.

### Appearance for poaching of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I)<sup>11</sup>

Papeete,  
French Polynesia,  
France

February 2 and March 3, 2015

They were arrested in November 2014 (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p.12). 93 kg of meat were in an icebox, "regular trafficking" as the deputy director of French customs said. One of the accused is a sailor on a ship connecting Tahiti and Tuamotu Archipelago. 181 pearls and 545 mother-of-pearls were also found in the homes of the 2 men. During the trial, the lawyers of the 2 defendants who were not put in custody claimed it was a "cultural practice".

The turtle was captured on an atoll of the Tuamotu Islands, "inhabited by 300 turtles and 0 humans" specifies a lawyer. When he returned to Papeete on the island of Tahiti, a friend came to pick the smuggling boatman up in his car. "He didn't know what was in the icebox." The prosecutor requested 12 months and 8 months of imprisonment. Customs requested each to pay a fine of around \$2,000 US or € 1,760. The judgement is held in reserve. One month later, the court requested genetic testing to precisely determine the species of the victim. This decision satisfied the defense of the accused: "Some species are protected, while others are not." "You can't sentence someone based on just an assumption."

In French Polynesia live 5 species of sea turtles : the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I), hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*, Appendix I), olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*, Appendix I), and the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I). All these species are thus strictly protected. The meat of the adult green turtle is the most highly prized flesh in Polynesia. It provides between 20 and 30 kg of flesh. The loot of the 2 defendants came from several turtles. In Papeete, a kilo of this meat sells for between \$40 and \$85 US.

They held around 100 kg of the meat in their freezers. This does not match at all the lawyer's account of an absent-minded man who recklessly captured a turtle for Christmas festivities.

In the past, turtles were considered goddess of the ocean. Turtle consumption and fishing were steeped in specific rituals. On Tuamotu Archipelago, only the elders could eat them. Offenders were punishable by death penalty ("tapu"). King Pomare V repealed the tapu a century ago. Since then, it has become a custom to capture turtles and conserve their meat.

A few days before the trial in Papeete, Te Mana o te moana, the Polynesian NGO that protects and cares for marine turtles, issued a warning on the increase in poaching and violence inflicted on sea turtles. In 5 days, it found one hawksbill turtle and 2 green turtles pierced with arrows in the lagoons of Moorea. Te Mana o te moana, founded 10 years ago, is on alert. The environmental department, the gendarmes, and city hall have been informed.



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# Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

**Total from January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> :  
12,706  
tortoises and freshwater turtles seized**

## AFRICA

**Seizure of 95 Madagascar spider tortoises (*Pyxis arachnoides*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>1</sup>  
Antananarivo, Analamanga Region, Madagascar**

**February 22, 2015**

In the footsteps of the radiated tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and the ploughshare tortoise (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I), another turtle from Madagascar is being smuggled. In Madagascar, spider tortoises are called tsafakies. They sell for nearly \$5,000 US per unit in Asia. Traffickers risk fines running from 4 to \$76 US.

These turtles are distributed over an area covering about 500 km<sup>2</sup>. The island covers around 587,040 km<sup>2</sup> (cf. "On the Trail" n°4, p. 17).

## AMERICA

**Conviction for illegal import of 945 plastrons, 2,454 shells and 276 bags of shell pieces listed under CITES<sup>2</sup>**

**Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

**February 27, 2015**

Once again, overseas Chinese citizens are involved in wildlife trafficking. Carbo Herbal Supplies, run by Mrs. Qin Zhou, had imported 2 containers from Hong Kong via the port of Vancouver. The 2 containers had been searched by customs before traveling to Toronto. The headquarters of this company specialized in well-being and alternative medicine is based in Toronto. The 2 containers revealed that there is massive smuggling in turtle by-products. Experts of the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Alberta concluded that the shells and fragments came from 5 species of tortoise and 3 species of sea turtles. All 8 species are registered in the CITES appendices. Mrs. Qin Zhou and Carbo Herbal Supplies, the turtle-killing herbalist shop, have been sentenced to fines of 6,250 and 12,500 CA\$ (\$5,012 US and \$10,020 US).

**Seizure of a South American yellow-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II)<sup>3</sup>  
Guano Canton, Chimbo-razo Province, Ecuador  
March 2015**

The tortoise was found on a wasteland with holes in its shell and one eye wounded. It was supposedly left there by an individual who did not take care of it and didn't want it anymore. The tortoise was taken to a rescue center to receive care.



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## ASIA

**Seizure of 190 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) and conviction for trafficking<sup>4</sup>**

**Singapore Changi Airport, Singapore**

**January 7, 2015**



© AVA

A 16 month prison sentence was given to an Indian who tried to take the turtles from Dhaka, Bangladesh to Surabaya, Indonesia via Singapore. The black pond turtles were originally from India. The 42-year-old man said he was just a transporter. He was sentenced to an additional 3 month sentence for animal cruelty. AVA (Agrifood and Veterinary Authority of Singapore) observed that the turtles were in pitiful condition. Some of them were already dead. All of them had to be put out of pain. They were completely dehydrated. The luggage was lined with diapers and clothes to hide the reptiles and absorb their waste during the long trip. The estimated value of this kind of cargo in good condition is \$100,000 S (\$75,600 US).

**Seizure of 2200 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonia gangetica*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>5</sup>**

**Dhulagarh, State of West Bengal, India**

**January 11, 2015**

The truck was coming from Andhra Pradesh and was heading toward Bangladesh. After driving 1,500 km, the truck was stopped about 50 kilometers from the border. The softshell turtles are a delicacy in Bangladesh and in the Gulf countries as well.

10 big seizures of Indian softshell turtles have occurred since the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of "On the Trail," in July 2013. They live in the Ganges, Indus, and Mahanadi river basins.

**Seizure of 5284 and 2350 pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II)<sup>6</sup>**

**Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Banten Province and Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali Province, Indonesia**

**January 2015**

The 1<sup>st</sup> seizure was hidden in a shellfish cargo of which some were undersized (Cf. page 8). The 2<sup>nd</sup> seizure came from Timika, in West Papua, where smuggling activity is rampant. "On the Trail" n°4 (p. 18) cites 2 seizures of 8,368 specimens in all in January 2014. The 2014 Traffic report states that a total of 81,689 specimens were found between 2003 and 2012. 20% of the baby turtles were already dead



at the time of the seizures. Between September and February, village communities collect the eggs on sandbars in hundreds of rivers in Papua. Java brokers who are firmly established there organize increasingly efficient turtle collections with locals. They provide motorboats that can navigate in shallow water and go through the marshes that are invaded by floating seaweed. Turtle collecting is becoming industrialized, and can now reach aquatic systems that were previously inaccessible. The eggs are then incubated in illegal hatcheries. The female turtles are often captured to be consumed locally. The males that never leave the water are spared from this predation. The skewed male/female ratio decreases the ability of the species to reproduce. According to the Traffic report, the money that local communities make from this wildlife exploitation is particularly significant as the financial support that the Indonesian government has promised doesn't always reach its destination. The villagers make up for this by trafficking in turtles, crocodile skins, and agarwood.

At the beginning of the channel, an egg is sold to the wholesaler for \$0,11 US. At the end, a turtle that has just hatched is sold for 40 to \$50 US on the international market.

#### **Poaching of Annam leaf turtles (*Mauremys annamensis*, Appendix II)<sup>7</sup>**

**Hoa Vang District, Da Nang Province, Vietnam  
January 2015**

Hysteria. Annam leaf turtles live in the floodplains of central Vietnam. Their population collapsed back in the 1990s. This has been attributed to the food market and the increase in polluting pork farms.

Local authorities also consider that swine manure has caused the latest misfortune for Annam leaf turtles. These authorities say that a population living in a marsh was forced into exile due to the pig farm waste discharged into their habitat. "They have tried to leave for new accommodations."

Unfortunately, nosy people walking in the forest spotted the turtles. A turtle wholesaler heard about the find, and apparently bought them for VND 30 million, i.e. \$1,400 US per kilogram. The day before, Annam leaf turtles were selling for \$140 US per kg, and a few years ago, for \$14 US per kg.

In the following days, hundreds of poachers with sticks and backpacks swarmed to the rivers and marshes of the hills and forests to hunt down this animal. The authorities are trying to stop these deadly turtle treks.



#### **Seizure of 185 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I)<sup>8</sup>**

**Kalanchi, State of West Bengal, India**

**January 29, 2015**

The 152<sup>nd</sup> Battalion fiercely defends Indian turtles. A patrol identified 2 individuals preparing to cross an unfenced part of the border with Bangladesh. When they were about to be caught, they threw out 2 bags. They took advantage of the fog and escaped. 185 turtles were in the bags. Their total value was \$180,000 US. The turtles were given to the forest department.

Black pond turtles seek clear water. In addition to hunting, their main enemy has become pollution. In the turtle stomachs, the autopsies revealed grasses, cereals, plant fibers, shells, crab claws, shrimp and other shellfish, fish bones, insects, freshwater snails, and freshwater mussels.

#### **Seizure of 124 Philippine pond turtles (*Siebenrockiella leytenensis*, Appendix II)<sup>9</sup>**

**Palawan Province, Philippines**

**January 10, 21 and 30, 2015**

Locals call these turtles bacoco. They were found in a bag at the bus station. Herpetologists felt that the turtles were evasive, as they can spend months searching for the animals without finding any. But the traffickers knew everything about these turtles. On December 16, 2014, 27 of them were seized in Manila. In Tatay, in the northern part of Palawan Island, turtle seizures are on the rise: 35 on December 22, 2014. 18 on January 21, 2015. And 28 on January 30, 2015. In the forests of the island, there may be as little as 2,000 to 3,000 Philippine pond turtles. Originally a source of food for local tribes, they have risen to international status as pets, achieving the same stardom as blue-naped parrots (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*, Appendix II) and hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II).

#### **Seizure of 50 land tortoises and 27 freshwater turtles<sup>10</sup>**

**Vadodara, State of Gujarat, India**

**February 2015**

#### **Seizure of Afghan tortoises shells (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II) and South Asian box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II)<sup>11</sup>**

**Indonesia**

**February 25, 2015**

The Afghan tortoise is an extra-terrestrial tortoise. 2 Afghan tortoises were sent into space by Soviet space engineers in 1968. After one week in space, they returned alive and with a good appetite. They lost 10% of their weight in space.

Inspection of tortoises coming back from space.



**Seizure of 751 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I)<sup>12</sup>**

**Hong Kong, China**

**February 27, 2015**

The freshwater turtles were stranded in Hong Kong harbor. They are alive. They were found in a fishing boat in Hong Kong's territorial waters. Pakistan is 4,000 km by road from Hong Kong. By sea the trip takes 4 times longer. In fact these turtles would have been flown into Hong Kong and then loaded onto a fishing boat to be delivered to mainland China. Hong Kong would like to return the animals to Pakistan but the country of origin of the expats does not have the budget to fly them back home and release them in the wild. Cf. "On the Trail", n°6, p. 17.

**Seizure of 1,9 t of dried meat of freshwater turtle (Appendix I or II)<sup>13</sup>**

**Karachi Harbor, Sindh Province, Pakistan**

**March 5, 2015**

The dried fish was actually dried turtle. The meat seized in Karachi port was leaving for Hong Kong. It came from 4,000 freshwater turtles that were cut up. Hongda Trading Company was the exporter. The Director of Marine Fisheries notes that its services were victims of a misnomer. Another official, requesting anonymity, said that export cargo should be sealed in the presence of fisheries experts to prevent diversions of this kind. Turtles are caught in a hellish cycle in Pakistan. See "On the Trail" n°6, p. 17.

**Seizure of 97 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I)<sup>14</sup>**

**North 24 Parganas district, State of West Bengal, India**

**March 18, 2015**

The 152<sup>nd</sup> Battalion has struck again.

**Seizure of 492 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>15</sup>**

**Tiruchirappalli International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

**March 24, 2015**

Trichy is known as the gold smuggling airport. It is also establishing itself as the turtle smuggling airport as well. A retinue of 5 mules carrying suitcases containing turtles was intercepted at the gate of a flight departing for Bangkok. Each person was hired for \$159 US.

**EUROPE**

**Seizure of 27 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II)<sup>16</sup>**

**Genoa, Liguria, Italy**

**January 2015**

They were found behind a fake partition in a van in the port. The driver was Tunisian.



**Seizure of 101 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>17</sup>**

**Genoa, Liguria, Italy**

**March 2015**

101 Greek tortoises were found yet again in a van driven by a Tunisian. 14 of the tortoises were dead due to poor transport conditions. The inspection was conducted upon the arrival of the car ferry which operates the line Tunis-Genoa.

**Snakes**

**AFRICA**

**Conviction for illegal possession of African rock python meat (*Python sebae*, Appendix II)<sup>1</sup>**



**Mutare, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe**

**January 28, 2015**

The industrialist Archwell Maramba has back pains. "Makorokoza" (diamond hunters) advised him to eat python as a cure. "I only eat pythons," the man said to the court, adding "since I ate my first python, I have seen remarkable improvements." When the police went to his home, he was tanning python skin. Average sale price of python skin from Africa: \$300 US.

**Seizure of 112 ball pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) arrest and release of reptiles<sup>2</sup>**

**Togo**

**February 2015**

Saturday. 12:15. The 42-year-old man was heading home with the snakes. Monitor lizards were also found in his home.

50 ball pythons out of the 112 seized were set free in two different places of the Fazao-Malfakassa park on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March together with 6 tortoises. The other pythons would have been released elsewhere.





## AMERICA

### Seizure of a ball python (*Python regius*, Appendix II)<sup>3</sup>

San Luis Potosí State, Mexico

January 2015

There weren't vitamins in the package. But there was a ball python. The package had left Guadalajara (State of Jalisco) and was heading toward Tlaxcala (State of Tlaxcala). Its delivery was stopped when the delivery company realized what was happening. The python ended up in Tangamanga I Zoological Park in San Luis Potosí.



## ASIA

### Seizure of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) and arrests<sup>4</sup>

Karikuzhi, State of Kerala, India

January 16, 2015

A dismissed police officer from Tamil Nadu is one of the 8 accused.



### Seizure of 2 python skins (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>5</sup>

Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

January 18, 2015

The bungalow-hotel is under a search warrant. A Maldivian owns it, and a Sri Lankan manages it. 6 police officers left the bungalow with 2 python pelts 3 meters long and conch shells. Some of them are used for musical instruments in Sri Lanka. The holder was sentenced to a fine equivalent to \$566 US.

### Seizure of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>6</sup>

Parassala, State of Kerala, India

February 2, 2015

There were 7 people in the hotel room, and the snake too. 4 were there to buy, 3 of them to sell.

### Release of 2 pythons (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>7</sup>

Quang Nam Province, Vietnam

March 2015

ENV coordinated the rescue. The 2 former prisoners were released in a forest.

### Seizure of 32 king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) (84 kg) and arrest<sup>8</sup>

Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Vietnam

March 2015

According to the driver, a woman paid him VND 2 million (\$95 US) to drive the snakes to Hanoi and deliver them to restaurants.

### Seizure of a Burmese python skin (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II)<sup>9</sup>

Bidhannagar, State of West Bengal, India

March 16, 2015

While walking in the town center with the python skin under his arm, the clumsy man tripped. The 4.3 m long snake skin fell down and rolled out. Passersby stopped and asked what it was. The man panicked and fled, leaving the python skin behind him.



### Seizure of a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) and arrest<sup>10</sup>

Kanyakumari District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

March 17, 2015

The 2 men, aged 29 and 22, were foiled by policemen posing as buyers. The market for sand boas, with their supposed medicinal properties, is booming in India, on the internet and social networks.

## EUROPE

### Seizure of a mobile phone case in python skin (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>11</sup>

Regensburg, Bavaria Land, Germany

January 2015

The small package from the United States of America was inspected. The Regensburg customs inspectors found a cellphone cover in python skin. The intended recipient of the package ordered it online. As pythons are strictly monitored by CITES, the object was confiscated, and its addressee has 4 weeks to provide the documents required to bring it to the territory. "If he can not provide them, the federal bureau for nature protection will decide what happens next," said Carmen Bauer, the head of the Regensburg customs office.

# Sauria

## AFRICA

### Seizure of 149 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>1</sup>

Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

January 8, 2015

The man, protected by anonymity, did not come to Tanzania as a tourist. It was clear that he had very unusual contacts. He came to Dar es Salaam for swift business and left in a hurry with the monitor lizards, 15 of which were already dead. The head of the airport police estimates the value to \$3,700 US, or 6.33 million shillings.

## ASIA

### Seizure of 2 yellow monitor lizards (*Varanus flavescens*, Appendix I) and arrests<sup>2</sup>

Balakati, State of Odisha, India

January 11, 2015



Don't let them fool you! These young people are torturers. The 2 monitor lizards were in terrible condition. Their tails were tied around their heads. Their claws were broken and pierced so that the 2 catches couldn't move. The surgery veterinarians from OUAT (Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology) intervened to try to get the 2 victims back on their feet.

The skin of monitor lizards is used to make percussion instruments. Their oil is said to be an aphrodisiac. Spiny-tailed lizards (*Uromastix* spp., Appendix II) served these two purposes. As they are becoming extinct, yellow monitor lizards are used as a substitute.

## EUROPE

### Seizure of an iguana (Iguanidae family)<sup>3</sup>

Bastia Umbra, Perugia Province, Italy

January 2015



In January 2015, a 1.5 m long iguana was recovered by the forestry bureau. This iguana was accidentally found by someone walking in the forest near Bastia Umbra. The Forest bureau was informed, which then sent staff to recover it. They found the iguana in a state of advanced hypothermia, wounded, and half-paralyzed. They then put it under its care. The saurian was most likely released by its owner because it had become too large. Charges have been pressed.

### Seizure of 2 common chameleons (*Chamaeleo chamaeleon*, Appendix II)<sup>4</sup>

Genoa, Liguria, Italy

February 2015

Genoa customs officers found them in a box, in the midst of furniture on board a van coming from Tunisia. The driver is Tunisian and lives in Italy.



### Seizure of 165 turquoise dwarf geckos (*Lygodactylus williamsi*, not listed under CITES / Appendix B of the European regulation 1320/2014 of December 1<sup>st</sup> 2014) and arrest<sup>5</sup>

London Heathrow Airport, England, United-Kingdom

February 2015

More and more fires, clearings, illegal logging and charcoal production are devastating the gecko habitat. Gold and marble mining are finishing up the job. The geckos chased off their land are recovered by the international exotic pet market. Ruvu Forest is being sold on the Dar es Salaam market. In 2009, Germany alone imported a thousand geckos. The 41-year-old man was arrested in Swindon, between London and Bristol. The hotline for reporting to the customs police: 0800 59 5000.





# Crocodilians

## AFRICA

### Discovery of several Nile crocodile carcasses (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II)<sup>1</sup>

Tana River County, Kenya

January-February 2015



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Tana River Delta: Humans and crocodiles in danger. The Tana River is Kenya's longest river (700 km). The Tana River Delta stretches across 1,300 km<sup>2</sup>. It is registered in the Ramsar Convention as one of the most beautiful and useful wetlands. Wetlands are useful in supporting animal and plant biodiversity.

The Tana River Delta is highly prized and has been kidnapped by the sugar and biofuel industry. As for the sugar industry, Mumias



Sugar and Mat International are firmly establishing themselves on 120,000 ha of delta and neighboring land. As for the fuel industry, the Canadian company Bedford Biofuels has its eye on 65,000 ha. It is said that the sugarcane and jatropha fields would be irrigated by direct pumping from the Tana River. A public company, Tarda (Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority), is negotiating with industrial companies, and threatens to evict thousands of villagers, farmers, and nomadic shepherds.

For the past few months, mambas—as locals call the Nile crocodiles—are paying dearly their share of the disastrous final bill. And this is just the beginning. Ever since the river has been rerouted, the crocodiles have lost access to the large fish stocks in Sakanyancha and Guntu Lakes. The mambas have moved upstream and downstream. There have been conflicts with people living in the river area. The mambas are victims of retaliation. They are also being used in a new way—as bait in mgonos, the traditional fish traps.

For the past several months, there have been more and more mamba cadavers on the banks of the river. They have been poisoned or have died of an illness that has not been identified. Apparently hippopotamuses and fishes are not affected by it. The decrease in the crocodile population is helping the industry to colonize the delta.

Although KWS estimates that there are now half as many Nile crocodiles as in 2005, it is staying calm. "The situation can be controlled." Patrols along the rivers and its tributaries are increasing.

Description: The average length of the Nile crocodile is 4.8 m. Some individuals can be as long as 6 m. Their average weight is 220 kg. Specimens weighing 700 kg have been found. They prefer to feed on fishes. But they also feed on zebras, young hippopotamuses, birds, porcupines, and baby elephants. They also practice cannibalism. Female Nile crocodiles lay a few tens of eggs in riverside spawning beds. The eggs hatch after 2 or 3 months. Life expectancy is 45 years.

## REPEATED OFFENSE

### Seizure of 4 African dwarf crocodiles (*Osteolemus tetraspis*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>2</sup>

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

February 11, 2015

"He'll sleep in prison tonight," said the press. Will he still be there tomorrow? In his possession he not only had extremely rare crocodiles, he also had 3 pelts of sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekii*) and 34 freshwater turtles who were alive. The forest police said he was an veteran trafficker.



© AALF-Bénin

## AMERICA

### Seizure of a dead and cut Panama caiman (*Caiman yacare*, Appendix II)<sup>3</sup>

Joao Neiva, State of Espirito Santo, Brazil

January 8, 2015

It was not the only one. Other wild animals were seized. The lucky ones that were still alive went to the Center for reintroducing wild animals (CEREIAS) in Barra do Riacho in Aracruz. The remains of the other animals were burned.

The police officers also recovered guns, ammunition, hunting equipment, cages, and a turtle shell. 2 people were arrested.

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

### Seizure of 2 American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II)<sup>4</sup>

Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

January 2015

The alligator was illegally kept by the Mattson family in Los Angeles for 37 years. The alligators are originally from the marshes of Florida and Louisiana. They went a long way before reaching California. The veterinary services report that next to the reptile in the back of the garden, there were 2 dead cats in a box. They wonder if they were meant to be food for "Jaxson".

The lady of the house claimed that the alligator ate chicken. In any case, there is an ongoing investigation on the cats in the neighborhood.

Jaxson has been returned to the Los Angeles Zoo. He measures 2.44 m long. One of his like was seized 3 days afterwards, in a house 5 km away from Jaxson's previous home. He measures 91 cm long.



## ASIA

### **Release of 12 gavials (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Appendix I)<sup>5</sup>**

**Valmiki tiger reserve, State of Bihar, India  
January 21, 2015**



The State of Bihar in the north of India continues to reintroduce gavials into the wild (see "On the Trail" n°5 p. 29). The crocodiles were bred in the Sanjay Gandhi de Patna biological parc. 12 new individuals were taken to the Gandak river. This program benefits from the technical support of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). "One of the important objectives of any zoo is linking of ex situ conservation to in situ conservation" says Chandrashekar, director of the Parc de Palna.

Gavials feed exclusively on fish. Before being released into the Valmiki natural reserve, they practice chasing and catching live prey in a basin isolated from visitors. Only 200 sexually mature individuals presently live in the Ganges basin.

## Various Reptile Species

### AFRICA

**Seizure of 4 crocodiles (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 python skins (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix II) and 60 tortoises and sentencing to 6 month imprisonment, Gnf 90.000 in fine (\$12 US) and Gnf 20,000,000 (\$ 2,765 US) in damages<sup>1</sup>  
Ratoma, Conakry, Guinea  
January 23, 2015**



## AMERICA

**Seizure of 30 snakes, 5 iguanas (family Iguanidae), 5 turtles of the species *Trachemys dorbigni* (not listed in CITES), 5 frogs (class Amphibia), and an owl (*Strigidae* spp., Appendix II)<sup>2</sup>**

**Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil  
January 5, 2015**

The 31-year-old man had 50 wild animals in his home. He says that a relative who went off to Portugal left them in his care. He risks a fine of 500 R\$ to 2,000 R\$ (187 to \$ 750 US) per animal.



### **OPERATION LEGAL BEACH - WINTER 2014/2015**

**Seizure of 33 wild fauna specimens, including crocodiles (*Crocodylus* spp., Appendix I or II), green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), and freshwater turtles<sup>3</sup>**

**Mexico**

**January 2015**

ZOFEMAT, the operation aiming to check the sustainability of beaches and federal maritime land zones, ran from December 20, 2014 to January 5, 2015. 14 States. 36 towns. 158 beaches. Animal exhibitors were not the only people who were all over the beaches. "Legal Beach" also interrupted the activities of 278 peddlers and forced them to remove hundreds of objects such as tables, chairs, tents, sun umbrellas, and stalls. Similar operations are planned during peak tourist season—during the "Holy Week" and in summer.

**Seizure of 31 reptiles among which 5 Jackson's chameleon (*Trioceros jacksonii*, Appendix II), 2 common chameleons (*Chamaeleo chamaeleon*, Appendix II), 4 ball pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), a monocled cobra (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II), a green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix I or II) and 4 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II)<sup>4</sup>**

**San Luis Potosi, State of San Luis Potosi, Mexico  
February 2015**

Routine inspections at the transit center of San Luis Potosi. The 10 packages were sent from Monterrey (State of Nuevo Leon), and were heading for cities all over Mexico: Mexico City, Cancún (State of Quintana Roo), Guanajuato (State of Guanajuato), Celaya (State of Guanajuato), and Morelia (State of Michoacán). The animals were all wrapped up for their trip. However, some of them still had a hard time during their transport.

The authorities and delivery companies may conclude agreements to eradicate the illegal dispatch of animals, alive or dead.

"On the Trail" n°7, cites San Luis Potosi 3 times for cases of packages containing wild fauna specimens (p. 13, 16 et 18). In 2 cases, it was clear that the packages were sent from Monterrey.

**Seizure of 2 boas (*Boidae* spp., Appendix II), 7 tortoises and 20 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>5</sup>**  
**Arica and Parinacota Region, Chile**  
**March 2015**

29 reptiles detected on the border, in a bus traveling from Tacna, Peru, to Arica. Guillermo González Valdez, a Peruvian aged 35, was arrested.

## ASIA

**Seizure of 28 turtle shells and 8 snakes and arrest<sup>6</sup>**  
**Kampong Svay District, Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia**  
**March 18, 2015**

The loot seized in a minibus weighed over 50 kg. The driver and the owner are being prosecuted.

## OCEANIA

**Seizure of 2 pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II), 2 carpet pythons (*Morelia spilota*, Appendix II) and a Southwestern snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina colliei*)<sup>7</sup>**  
**Perth, State of Western Australia, Australia**  
**March 6, 2015**



The man was caught when he posted the sale of a pig-nosed turtle on the Internet, for 2,000 AU\$. When the police carried out the seizure, they found another turtle, preserved in formalin. The police also seized 2 python rugs and a southwestern snake-necked turtle, a rare species endemic to southwestern Australia.

# Amphibians

## AMERICA

**Seizure of 1000 Lake Titicaca water frogs (*Telmatobius culeus*)<sup>1</sup>**  
**Cabanillas District, Puno Region, Peru**  
**January 2015**



The bus with the license plate C7S - 472 was inspected at the customs post in Cabanillas District. There was a box in the luggage compartment. The frogs were spread across 7 compartments. None of the passengers admitted that the box was theirs. The box was put on the bus as a package, and was addressed to a certain Damilia Ccuno Mendozain in the city of Arequipa.

"Congratulations to the Peruvian customs officers for this seizure. Unfortunately, this is due to luck, and not to a joint effort to protect the Lake Titicaca water frog from illegal trade" Neotropical Primate Conservation says on its Facebook page.

## ASIA

**In China it is not easy to investigate on Chinese Giant Salamander (*Andrias davidianus*, Appendix I) banquets**  
**Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China**  
**January 26, 2015**

The 28 guests, most of whom were Shenzhen police officers, were enjoying a giant salamander, Asia's largest amphibian that is now on the brink of extinction. Old Chinese people just love it. Eating cooked giant salamander is thought to be a way to stay young, yet another myth in Chinese cuisine. When well-informed journalists wanted to take photos of the banquet, they were violently attacked.

14 police officers were suspended after the quarrel, and after this meal. A meal in doubtful taste that is out of line with Chinese President Xi Jinping's call for government officials to live simply. The officers who were suspended were finally reinstated in the police force one month later. A high-ranking police officer was dismissed.

Since April 2014, it is prohibited to eat endangered animals. This is an act punishable by fine and imprisonment. The giant salamander in question apparently was purchased in captivity.





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The giant salamander is an amphibian endemic to China. In 1988, it was registered in Appendix 1 of CITES. 2,200 years ago, a Chinese bestiary from the Warring States period considered that the giant salamander was a fish. It measures 1 m long—1.80 m at the most. It has a cylindrical body, a head, a trunk, and a tail. It lives in mountain rivers that are 300 m to 900 m high, and only rarely up to 4,000 m high, in Qinghai Province in central China. They feed on crayfish, worms, grub, crabs, small fishes, mollusks, toads, and frogs. The giant salamander needs clear water, yet now flounders about in silty water. Chinese biologists consider that the giant salamander is a living fossil that was around in the dinosaur age. In 1970, the giant salamander was spread across 17 provinces, in the Yangtze River, the Yellow River, and Pearl River. Between 1950 and 2000, the giant salamander disappeared from 90% of its original distribution range. The giant salamander is a victim of human appetite, chemical and organic farm pollution, and the increase in dams. They are now relegated to the rock cavities of subterranean rivers, where they can partially escape pollution and poaching grabs. These underground populations are isolated from one another. Their numbers are dwindling dangerously. Scientific larva sampling between 2004 and 2010 show that the population has dramatically decreased.

"In terms of the habitat transformation, in less than 50 years, the habitat of giant salamanders has undergone change comparable to the change in the habitat of giant pandas that took 3 million years" said Hu and Wei, prominent Chinese biologists.

## Birds

Total from January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>:  
7,296 birds seized

### AFRICA

**Conviction for trafficking of 72 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix II). A year and a half imprisonment<sup>1</sup>**



**Cameroon**

**January 2015**

"On the Trail" already provided an account of this traffic in "military" parrots on board a vehicle with an army license plate.



© Ofir Drori Facebook

**Arrest for poisoning of at least 200 blue cranes (*Anthopoides paradiseus*, Appendix II)<sup>2</sup>**

**Kimberley, Northern Cape, South Africa**

**February 2015**

Aldicarb is a pesticide that is prohibited in the European Union. Farm workers used it to coat the cereal seeds that killed the blue cranes. This malpractice had been going on for at least 3 years. It is thought that there have been nearly a thousand victims in all. NGOs and farmers' unions have condemned this "cruel and deliberate mass murder". In South Africa, the blue crane population has declined from 100,000 to 20,000 in 20 years.



© Arthur Chapman



## AMERICA

**Seizure of 14 birds including white-eyed parakeets (*Aratinga leucophthalma*, Appendix II), plain parakeets (*Brotogeris tirica*, Appendix II), blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II)<sup>3</sup>**

**Dracena, State of São Paulo, Brazil**

**January 3, 2015**

It was 2 PM. The military police received an anonymous call. The police went to the home of a young 23-year-old man, and discovered 14 wild birds there. He was not authorized to have them. The birds showed no signs of ill treatment. They were handed over to the care of APASS, the Assis association for the protection of wild animals. The man received a fine of 6,000 R\$, or \$2,252 US. Deforestation opens a highway for bird poaching.

Good news : Ezequiel Antonio Castanha has just been arrested. He was a big boss in illegal logging. His network would burn down State-owned forests and resell the land to private livestock farmers.

**Seizure of 3 red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), a white-crowned parrot (*Pionus senilis*, Appendix II), an orange-fronted parakeet (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) and arrest of a salesman on Sonora market<sup>4</sup>**

**Mexico City, Federal District of Mexico, Mexico**

**January 2015**



**Seizure of 100 slender-billed parakeets (*Enicognathus leptorhynchus*, Appendix II)<sup>5</sup>**

**Los Ríos Region, Chile**

**January 2015**

They were in cardboard boxes, heading toward the capital, Santiago. They had 900 km to cover by truck. They were dehydrated.

**Seizure of 2 slender-billed parakeets (*Enicognathus leptorhynchus*, Appendix II) and one austral parakeet (*Enicognathus ferrugineus*, Appendix II)<sup>6</sup>**

**Rancagua, Libertador General Bernardo O'Higgins Region, Chile**

**January 2015**

"Wild fauna specimens are not household pets," summed up Rodrigo Sotomayor, regional director of SAG (Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero), a government department supporting the development of agriculture, forests, and livestock farming. He added that "wild birds should not be fed like pet birds". "Anyone who purchases a protected wild fauna specimen is a party to the offence."

In 18 months, the SAG rescued over 160 specimens of various species. In 98% of the situations, individuals were in possession of the species. 24% of the specimens were returned to nature, 53% were taken to a rehabilitation center, to be returned to nature later, and the remaining 23% died of wounds they had suffered prior to their rescue.

**Seizure of a bronze-winged parrot (*Pionus chalcopterus*, Appendix II), 3 Pacific parrotlets (*Forpus coelestis*, Appendix II), 3 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), 2 American purple gallinules (*Porphyrio martinicus*), a giant cowbird (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) and a stuffed toucan (Ramphastidae family)<sup>7</sup>**

**El Cabo, Azuay Province, Ecuador**

**January 23, 2015**

Following an alert, the birds were found in the home of an individual. The birds were taken to the Puma-pungo rescue center to be quarantined. They'll be able to fly freely afterwards, but the toucan.

**Seizure of one scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), several white-fronted amazons (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), parrots (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II), one dead toucan (family Ramphastidae), rabbits, 2 goats, one raccoon and 6 dogs<sup>8</sup>**

**San Pedro Sula, Cortés Department, Honduras**

**January 26, 2015**

The odor coming from the house pushed the neighbors to alert the authorities. 30 animals were crammed together. After a veterinary consultation, the animals were put into the care of an animal welfare association. Witnesses assert that a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III in Guatemala) had also been detained a few days earlier. The investigators did not find any trace of his presence. The information so far suggests that the animals are bought on the market, and then resold.



*Amazona albifrons*

**Seizure of 650 canary-winged parakeets (*Protonotaria versicolor*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>9</sup>**

**Pedro Ruiz, Amazonas Region, Peru**

**January 2015**

The wildlife trafficker was arrested. He was questioned. The illicit trade needs to be tracked down, and their bosses must be arrested. The parakeets went to a rescue center for a few months, to give them time to recover. Their feathers had been cut.



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**Seizure of 6 red-lore amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 4 white-fronted amazons (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), 3 military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I), 2 white-crowned parrots (*Pionus senilis*, Appendix II) and 2 Aztec parakeets (*Aratinga nana*, Appendix II)<sup>10</sup>**

**Tuxtla Gutiérrez, State of Chiapas, Mexico**

**February 2015**

Hotel managers heard strange sounds on their premises. Bird sounds. They notified the authorities. When the authorities arrived in room 26, they found a 43-year-old man with 17 birds. The man was arrested. The birds were taken to ZOOMAT, the Miguel Alvarez del Toro regional zoo.

**Seizure of 105 wild animals<sup>11</sup>**

**Puebla, State of Puebla, Mexico**

**February 9, 2015**

Of the 316 animals of the ecological Parc Revolución Mexicana that were sequestered in October 2014 (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p. 106) 105 were finally seized. The people in charge were not able to produce the documents proving their origin. Martin Camacho Morales, the aviary manager, was arrested and faces a fine of \$11,303 US.

**Indictment for illegal trade of 6 birds among which 2 parrots, Appendix I or II<sup>12</sup>**

**State of Falcon, Venezuela**

**February 2015**

Article 77 of the environmental criminal code in Venezuela punishes illegal wildlife hunting and fishing. It specifies that "fishing or hunting wildlife and selling species that are prohibited, vulnerable, endangered, or threatened with extinction is punishable by 3 to 5 years of imprisonment, or by a fine." The maximum fine is Bs. 750,000, or \$119,197 US.

**Seizure of 3 scaly-naped amazons (*Amazona mercenaria*, Appendix II)<sup>13</sup>**

**On the Dagua-Cali Route, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia**

**February 2015**



**Seizure of 15 birds from the Psittacidae family, Appendix I or II<sup>14</sup>**

**Nueva Cajamarca District, San Martin Region, Peru**

**February 2015**

Found in an appalling state, they were put up for sale in a private house.

**Seizure of 2 blue-fronted amazon chicks (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), a cactus parakeet (*Aratinga cactorum*, Appendix II) and a green barred woodpecker (*Colaptes melanochlorus*)<sup>15</sup>**

**Santa Maria da Boa Vista, State of Pernambuco, Brazil**

**February 19, 2015**



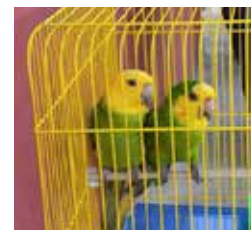
The federal highway policemen help a van parked on the side of the road. In the back of the van, they find the birds, divided in a bucket and a box. The 34-year-old driver risks 6 to 12 months in prison and a fine of \$1,550 US to \$15,500 US per animal seized.

**Seizure of a red-lore amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 3 green parakeets (*Psittacara holochlorus*), cardinals (Cardinalidae family) and Northern mocking birds (*Mimus polyglottos*). 2 men arrested<sup>16</sup>**

**Escobedo, State of Nuevo León, Mexico**

**February 2015**

Francisco Juan Carranza López and Jesús Alberto Roja Miranda could be imprisoned without remission, the punishment for the flagrant delicto of selling endangered species in a public area.





**Seizure of 2 toucan chicks (Ramphastidae family) and arrest<sup>17</sup>**

**Brazil**

**March 2, 2015**

The 2 men, aged 44 and 45, were arrested and inspected by the highway police after an unauthorized overtaking. The passenger threw out a cardboard box, thinking that the police wouldn't notice. The young birds were inside.



**Seizure of 2,500 birds including Psittacidae family birds, Appendix I or II and arrest<sup>18</sup>**

**State of Bahia, Brazil**

**March 3, 2015**

The birds were seized in 2 distinct operations. The first one was in Ubaitaba (State of Bahia), on the road between São João do Paraíso (State of Minas Gerais) and Feira de Santana (State of Bahia) around 3 in the morning as the military police were looking for bank robbers. There were 1,500 birds in cardboard boxes in the pick-up truck. In the afternoon after investigating on the case, a house in Mascote (State of Bahia) was searched. 1,000 birds were found there. The owner was arrested. It turns out that he was the biggest wildlife trafficker in Bahia. The birds were to be exported abroad. The traffickers drugged the birds for their transport.



**Seizure of several tens of animals including parrots (Psittacidae spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>19</sup>**

**Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Department, Bolivia**

**March 5, 2015**

Surprise inspection. The shops that broke the law have a few hours to put their situation in order and produce the documents required for the sale of the animals. "We know that 90% of these shops do not have the city permits for this activity," commented Sandro Fernandez from SOPREMA (the animal protection society of Santa Cruz).

**Seizure of 6 toucans (Ramphastidae family)<sup>20</sup>**

**Lima Jorge Chavez International Airport, Peru**

**March 2015**

The 6 rare birds were about to take off for another continent. Customs officers caught them just in the nick of time. After a quarantine and recovery period, the birds should be released into forests.



**Seizure of 2 parrots (Psittacidae spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>22</sup>**

**Santo Amaro das Brotas, State of Sergipe, Brazil**

**March 12, 2015**

He admits that the birds were to be exhibited in his bar. However, he denies that he wanted to sell them. He was arrested.

**Seizure of an indigo macaw (Anodorhynchus leari, Appendix I)<sup>23</sup>**

**Macaé, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

**March 2015**



The police were informed that a man had left a box on the side of the road, and that it was moving. They first thought that an abandoned child was inside. But when they opened it, they found the macaw. The macaw is in poor condition. Its wings were damaged in captivity. This is probably why the man decided to abandon it. The bird has been put in quarantine. It is supposed to join a reproduction program.

The species is threatened. It has been strictly protected since 1987. There are only 1,200 species left in northwest Bahia. How this specimen came to Macaé is anybody's guess. In the year 2000, the Brazilian management organization said that it had never granted the permit to authorize the capture or export of the indigo macaw. It also claims that only 2 of them—pre-CITES specimens—were legally kept outside of Brazil in Busch Gardens (in the United States of America). One bird could be sold around \$50,000 US.

### **Seizure of 14 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II)<sup>24</sup>**

**San Luis, San Luis Province, Argentina  
March 2015**

The 2 men from Cura Brochero (province of Córdoba) had 14 birds crammed into 3 shoe boxes, in a Volkswagen Gol. The smugglers went to the trouble of making holes so that the birds could breathe. It was a miracle that none of the birds were dead when the box was opened.



### **Seizure of 2 salmon-on-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I)<sup>25</sup>**

**Sabinas Hidalgo, State of Nuevo León, Mexico  
March 2015**

Point of departure: United States of America: Destination: Guadalajara (State of Jalisco). Interception in Sabinas Hidalgo, around a hundred kilometers after the border.

## **ASIA**

### **Bustard and falcon dance<sup>27</sup> Pakistan**

**January-February-March 2015**

In Pakistan, the "tiloor" has been considered as a threatened species since 1912. Hunting them has been strictly prohibited since 1972. The species has been registered in Appendix I of CITES since 1979. However, a decree in 1972 authorized the government of Sindh Province to grant special permits in areas and sanctuaries where hunting is prohibited. These permits could involve quotas for each of the

targeted species. With this decree, members of the royal families of the Gulf countries could hunt bustards with falcons. The falcons themselves were illegally captured in the wild, and then domesticated. On January 2, the High Court of Sindh Province declared that the granting of permits to hunt the houbara bustard—known locally as "tiloor"—was illegal. The decision of the High Court should normally end this practice.

A few days afterwards, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan asked the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the other stronghold of the last remaining bustards, to authorize falconry for "tourists" from the Gulf countries. The Gulf countries provide a lot of financing to Pakistan. The Pakistani government has a stake in giving in to pressure from the royal families. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province does not want to humiliate them. It says that "No one is above the law." In November 2014, the High Court of Balochistan Province cancelled all the bustard hunting permits that had been granted to foreign hunters. In the beginning of February 2015, the prince Fahad bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud disembarked from a private plane on the tarmac of Dalbandin Airport (Balochistan province). The Saudi prince and his retinue immediately went to their camp and their falconry base in Ek Mach Desert. In the beginning of 2014, the same governor prince of Tabuk Province already hunted over 2,000 houbara bustards. The special permit that he had been granted came with a maximum quota of 100 bustards. The Balochistan government is embarrassed about this new incursion. For the time being, it has not provided any explanation for this illegal hunting, otherwise called poaching.

- 4 falcons were released near the Peshawar-Karachi highway. A roadblock was set up near the capital. The police officers are usually well informed. They were expecting some large illegal falcon cargo to come through. The guilty passenger was sentenced to pay the equivalent of \$198 US. He was supposed to deliver them to a "man" in Karachi. The falcons had been captured near Tharparkar, 400 km away.

- 2 falcons in a wooden cage in the compartment of a bus going from Peshawar to Karachi were also seized in an intervention by the special wildlife forces. Falcons often take the bus between Peshawar and Karachi. "The arrested man and the birds would be produced before a local court on Friday." "We will release these birds once permission is granted by the local court."

-As regulations in Pakistani provinces have chased out the hunters from the Gulf countries who love bustards and falcons, they have fallen back on Iran. 9 poachers from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar were intercepted in the arid plains by a wildlife guard patrol. The convoy of poachers was hiding 6 falcons. Iceboxes were full of cut up birds, which were most likely bustards. An Iranian hunter and hunting assistant was arrested.





### Calao Southeast Asia<sup>26</sup>

In poacher jargon, “black” means rhinoceros horn, and “white” means elephant ivory. There is a new addition to the color

code—red for the helmeted hornbill.

Helmeted hornbills (*Buceros vigil*) with wingspans of over 1.50 m live in the forests of Sumatra and Borneo. Figurines carved from their beaks are sold by their weight. Their price of 1 kg is 5 times higher than that of ivory. Although helmeted hornbills and their parts have been registered in Appendix I of CITES since 1975, international trade in them is booming. As EIA confirms, in the bird world, hornbills are like the elephants and the rhinoceroses in the pachyderm world: victims of fashion and stupidity.



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### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**Seizure of 12 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*, not listed in CITES), 17 parakeets (*Psittacula* spp., Appendix II) and arrests<sup>28</sup>**

**State of Tamil Nadu, India**

**January 7, 2015**



© The Hindu

The parakeets' wings were cut. The 2 brothers aged 22 and 24 were selling the “merchandise” near a bus stop. The merchandise was in a cage.

The same day, in the same State, Tamil Nadu, several inspections in shops and homes in Idayarpalayam resulted in the release of 12 rose-ringed parakeets.

Sworn wildlife guards and a local NGO, the Environment Conservation Group, led the operation. In the same street, there were 4 homes, without any inhabitants, which could not be visited. They may have been full of parakeets.

**Seizure of carcasses of 24 demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*, Appendix II) and 2 spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*, Appendix II)<sup>29</sup>**

**Mangrol, Gujarat State, India**

**January 11, 2015**

The dead birds were found in an all-terrain vehicle after the police chased the poachers. Gujaratis are very familiar with the “demoiselles”, and call them “koonj”. The cranes land on the beaches and coastal marshes in the winter. These cranes are widely cited in Gujarati poetry and folklore. Their population is declining for being caught with poaching nets.



© Sumeet Moghe

**Conviction to 2 years imprisonment and Rs. 500 (\$8 US) fine each for poaching of 4 peacocks (*Pavo* genus)<sup>30</sup>**



**Sehore, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

**January 2015**

**Rescue of 1,509 birds and 105 dead birds, including vultures, kites (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II) and owls (*Strigidae* spp. and *Tytonidae* spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>31</sup>**

**Gujarat State, India**

**14 and 15 January 2015**

In the West, balloons released into the air are an environmental disaster. The ties and remains of balloons entangle, strangle, and poison animals. On the Indian subcontinent, the kite festival Uttarayan is a time of mourning for birds. In Ahmedabad, it's the mid-January frenzy. Locals cram onto roofs, terraces, and balconies. The goal of the game is to make the kite fly as high and as long as possible. The kite strings are made of nylon with crushed glass reinforcement. Each string is a potential weapon that can cut the string of a “competing” kite.



© Ashit Desai

The birds entangle themselves in the strings of the flying kites. For several months and years afterwards, they may become entangled in balls of very long and sharp-edged string, abandoned and lingering behind.

Last year, one NGO alone, the Jivdaya Charitable Trust, rescued 2,394 birds during the “festival”. 490 of the birds died. The damage to the birds started in November, when people started to train for the festival.



© Sherwin Everett

Spurred on by the festival and leisure industry, kite festivals are increasing all over the country. Several cities including Bombay and Amritsar prohibit Chinese manjas—strings that tear, break, and cut birds. They recommend strings made of natural fibers. They are less damaging.

Uttarayan originally celebrated the Gods’ awakening, opening the gates of the heavens wide open. Like abandoned fishing nets, kilometers of lost kite strings continue to ghostly hunt after birds and small land mammals.



© Soham Mukerjee

**Discovery of 55 carcasses of vultures including 3 slender-billed vultures (*Gyps tenuirostris*, Appendix II), 19 Asian white-backed vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, Appendix II) and 29 Himalayan griffon vultures (*Gyps himalayensis*, Appendix II)<sup>32</sup>  
Sivasagar District, Assam State, India  
January 23, 2015**



© Mayur Bawri

A local family stumbled across a mass grave of poisoned vultures. Some of them weren’t completely dead yet. Close to there, the corpse of a cow full of concentrated and lethal pesticide had served as bait for the vultures. Stray dogs were the real target of the ploy mounted by the farmers. The Sivasagar vulture colony was the only one in Assam State to survive despite the use of Diclofenac, a vermifuge that is still widely used in

India although it is prohibited. It transforms cadavers of cattle and other livestock into toxic bombs. Woe to vultures, jackals, and scavenger fauna! Vultures feed on animal carcasses in groups. 3 species of vultures were eating away. A single individual, a Himalayan griffon vulture, managed to survive with the help of a veterinary team. A “clinic” at Kaziranga National Park provided intensive care to the miraculous survivor. It was then released close to where it had almost died. Several tens of villagers, in a circle, participated in its release.

The average mortality rate in Assam is 100 vultures per year. Each poison sequence wipes out at least 25 individuals. The year 2015 is not looking good. 100 victims have already been reported between 1 January and 1 March. There may have been other massacres that have gone unreported.

Sachin P. Ranade, a vulture rescue specialist since 2002 in Assam State and West Bengal State sums up the situation:

“The poisoning is done by farmers and cattle owners. It begins when the cattle owner loses any of his cattle or goat to dog bite. The cattle owner, blind with anger, decides to kill the dog. The chemicals—especially pesticides that are used in agriculture—are sprayed on the dead cattle to kill dogs. But, unfortunately, vultures feed on the carcass that was poisoned, and die in large numbers. In this way, it causes vulture deaths.” “The cattle owner may not intend to kill vultures, but ultimately becomes a cause of vulture mortality. Felines can also fall victims to this.” “We mainly try to raise awareness. Our efforts have certainly yielded some results, but the challenges are growing day by day. More lethal pesticides and more intolerance to wildlife and the increasing human population in rural areas could be blamed for some of the problems.” “If all species of vultures vanished, there would be consequences like the rise of different communicable diseases and an increase in problematic scavengers like feral dog, rats and flies.”



### Seizure of 2794 ornamental birds<sup>33</sup>

**Saudi Arabia**

**February 12, 2015**

Thousands of pet birds stuffed into 3 cars coming from Bahrain tried to enter illegally. Saudi customs would not give details on the traffickers.

### Seizure of 32 hill mynahs (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) trapped in nets and arrest of the 2 poachers<sup>34</sup>

**Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India**

**February 21, 2015**

### Discovery of 35 poisoned Himalayan griffons

(*Gyps himalayensis*, Appendix II)<sup>35</sup>

**Palashbari, State of Assam, India**

**March 10, 2015**

New mass poisoning of scavengers. 21 of the birds died. The 14 survivors of the poisoned veal feast were released in Jarasal Reserve Forest by the Vulture Conservation Breeding Center (VCBC).

### Seizure of 20 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix II)<sup>36</sup>

**Kalyani, State of West Bengal, India**

**March 22, 2015**

The poachers fled when they saw the border guards. They left the cages full of the birds. The estimated value of the seizure is Rs. 9.5 lakh (\$15,000 US).

## EUROPE

### Conviction to 4-month imprisonment for a goshawk poaching (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) and the capture of a goshawk and a buzzard (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix II)<sup>37</sup>

**Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom**

**January 2015**



© Krzysztof Wiśniewski

### Seizure of 33 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*)<sup>38</sup>

**Bremen Airport, Bremen Land, Germany**

**January 14, 2015**

Customs inspection at Bremen Airport. Found in the sports bag of a Turkish traveler, aged 40. The 16 males and 17 females transported in a cage were turned in to the Bremen nature protection authority.



© German Customs

## GANG

### Conviction for illegal capture of a Eurasian pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium passerinum*, Appendix II)<sup>39</sup>

**Gap, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, France**

**January 15, 2015**

The survey goes back to 2012, when several chamois heads were found along a river. The 5 men and the one woman in the group have been sentenced to 300 to 1,500 € in fines, and community work. One taxidermist was also found guilty. The man who captured the Eurasian pygmy owl was only sentenced to 500€ in fines, 300€ of which was suspended.



### Conviction for European goldfinch poaching (*Carduelis carduelis*)<sup>40</sup>

**Pau, Aquitaine Region, France**

**February 3, 2015**

2 passerine trappers placed twigs covered with glue in the snow. They were each sentenced to 200 € in fines, and to jointly pay 890 € in compensation to SEPANSO ("Société pour l'Etude, la Protection et l'Aménagement de la Nature dans le Sud-Ouest"). The European goldfinch population has decreased by 50% in 10 years. In France, this species is protected by the decree dated October 20, 2009, which specifies the list of birds that are protected on the entire French territory. Other poaching cases were cited in "On the Trail" n°3, 4, 6, and 7. A specimen sold on the black market for birds around Pau sells for between 50 € and 200 €. The 2 poachers claimed they captured the birds to hear them sing in their trailer.



**Discovery of 3 dead Spanish imperial eagles (*Aquila adalberti*, Appendix I)<sup>41</sup>**

**Doñana National Park, Huelva Province, Spain**

**February 11, 2015**

The corpses were found within a 1 km radius. There was one couple and one female. "The fact that 3 cadavers suddenly appeared in the same area, 2 of which were under their aeries, most likely means that they died from poisoning," says Carlos Davila, a technician from SEO/Birdlife. The remains were handed over to specialists for analysis. On several occasions, the association has informed the Park authorities, the IUCN, UNESCO, and the Ramsar Convention secretariat about the problems the Spanish imperial eagle is facing, especially for its food. Rabbits are the eagles' favorite prey. The rabbit population has dropped 90% due to a variation of a viral hemorrhagic disease that appeared at the end of the 1980s. At the same time, there is an increase in poisoning in the National Park, which caused reproducing Spanish imperial eagle couples to disappear.

**Release of a red-kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) victim of poaching<sup>42</sup>**

**Torsac, Poitou-Charentes Region, France**

**March 9, 2015**

With its 1.5 m of wingspan, the red kite had a gunshot wound. Tourists picked it up in the Pyrenees Mountains in the south of France. They then put it into the care of a specialized center in Torsac, in Charente-Maritime. The main enemies of the bird of prey are hunters and bromadiolone, a poison that is often used to kill coypuses in France. This species is considered to be a pest.

The miracle survivor recovered after a few weeks, and was only released in March, after the end of the hunting season. "We are wary of hunters' misconducts" said an officer from the regional wildlife center. 2 buzzards and 2 common kestrels also were able to fly free again.



**OPERATION PORCUPINE**

**Seizure of 25 animals among which a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix II) and a Senegal parrot (*Poicephalus senegalus*, Appendix II)<sup>43</sup>**

**Bullas, Murcia Region, Spain**

**March 2015**

Exotic animals (birds, reptiles, and porcupines) were for sale on the internet. The 2 owners of the premises could face up to € 50,000 in fines. To make more profit, they were also trying to breed the birds.



*Poicephalus senegalus*

**Conviction for illegal trade in peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix II)<sup>44</sup>**

**Autonomous community of Catalonia, Spain**

**March 2015**

A minutely detailed investigation conducted by the Generalitat of Catalonia revealed a well-organized trafficking operation. The 2 men diverted permits from the United Kingdom by forging the identification rings. This trick was used to make the wild birds of prey look like bred ones. The investigators used DNA profiling to show that the victims of this trafficking were not from their alleged lineage. The culprits were sentenced to stiff fines, from € 5,000 to € 50,000. The 18 falcons were seized. The authorities are looking for places to rehome the birds.





# Pangolins

The 8 pangolin species *Manis* spp. (4 African and 4 Asian) are listed in CITES Appendix II.

**The seizure from January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> is equal to 13,494 pangolins**  
Taking the average weight of 3 pangolins for 1 kg of scales.

**“On the Trail” n°8**  
**The value of scales on the black market, according to media or customs sources**

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	India	300	18
	Nepal	500	7
	China	650	24

**The value of pangolin on the black market, according to media or customs sources**

Continent	Country	US\$/animal	Ref.
Asia	Thailand	603	13
		2 210	21
	China	760	26
		de 322 à 2939	11
		270	9
	Vietnam	268	15
Europe	Russia	3 000	29*

\* Cf. chapter Primates.

## AFRICA

### Arrest of 12 pangolins poachers<sup>1</sup> Zimbabwe

#### From January to March 2015

According to Tikki Hywood Trust -THT-, 12 pangolin traffickers were arrested in January, February, and March 2015. 8 of them were sentenced to 9 years of imprisonment.

### Seizure of a pangolin and arrest of 5 people<sup>2</sup> Zimbabwe

#### January 17 and 18, 2015

The THT in Harare took in a new wounded patient. She was grazed and is in intensive care, under antibiotics. She had been living in captivity for 3 weeks. She was supposed to be sold on the market. 5 men were arrested. Their release on bail was rejected. The Tikki Hywood Trust is also taking care of Bambanani, the nickname of a small pangolin born in the Harare police station (see “On the Trail” n°7, p. 32).



Female saved on January 18

### Rescue and release of a pangolin<sup>3</sup> Togo

#### January 2015

Due to the Ebola epidemic raging on in West Africa, Togo has prohibited hunting and consuming bushmeat for nearly a year now. However, investigations on the local markets over several months have shown that the bushmeat market is still active. After cross-checking information, the Franz Weber Foundation in Togo managed to contact a bushmeat dealer. On January 27, 2015, in the town of Sokodé, this person was caught in the act of selling cane rat meat that was already smoked, and selling a live pangolin. The gendarmes, with the support of the health services of the hospital of Sokodé, were notified. They arrested the offender. As the entire catch had to be burned for health reasons, the Foundation was able to arrange for the care of the pangolin, to have it freed the next day in Fazao-Malfakassa National Park. It was thus saved from certain death.



### Release of a pangolin and arrests<sup>4</sup> Liuwa Plain National Park, Western Province, Zambia February 2015

This pangolin has come a long way! He was released by forest rangers after staying 5 days in the poachers' bag.



**Seizure of 3 bags of pangolin scales and arrest<sup>5</sup>  
Yengo, Shanga Department, Congo  
February 2015**

The 3 big bags of scales were transported by 2 Chinese workers working in the port of Brazzaville. They were identified by a sniffer dog at a customs checkpoint. The 2 suspects tried to hush up the affair by putting a large amount of money on the table. The bundle of money was submitted to the court as additional incriminating evidence.



**Seizure and destruction of bush meat including 2 pangolins<sup>6</sup>**

**Allangouasou, N'zi-Comoé Region, Côte d'Ivoire  
February 27, 2015**

No sooner seized then burned! The gazelle, agouti, and pangolin meat that the restaurateur was preparing to cook and serve was destroyed in front of the deputy commissioner of the region, as part of the fight against Ebola fever.

Pangolins in Uganda  
see "Taxidermists' inheritance" p.42

## ASIA

**Seizure of 4 kg of pangolin meat and 7.5 kg of pangolin scales, and arrest<sup>7</sup>**

**Herbertpur and Rajaji National Park, Uttarakhand State, India**

**January 2 and 4, 2015**

The Ganges River runs across the Park. Pangolins are disappearing amidst elephants, tigers, and leopards. Seizures of pangolin scales and meat are increasing. Villages of the Kanjar ethnicity hunt down pangolins with their dogs. A kilogram of scales sells to Nepalese forwarding agents for about \$500 US. Once the pangolins arrive in China, the retail price of the scales is 10 times more.

Last year, the seizure of 40 kg of scales already raised flags on pangolin pillaging. The park rangers are overwhelmed. The poachers own the place.

There is only one anti-poaching officer. The park covers 800 km<sup>2</sup>.

Baby elephant in the Rajaji National Park.



**Conviction to 1 year and a half imprisonment and 5000 Yuan fine (\$805 US) for the purchase and illegal transport of 7 dead pangolins and a dead masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India)<sup>8</sup>**

**Yangdong District, Guangdong Province, China  
January 2015**



**Conviction of a trafficker of 21 pangolins to 3 years imprisonment and a 200,000 Yuan fine (\$32,236 US)<sup>9</sup>**

**Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, China**

**January 2015**

The estimated worth of the living merchandise was 35,070 Yuan (\$5,653 US), or \$270 US per pangolin.



**Seizure of 2 pangolins<sup>10</sup>**

**Guihai Road, Guangdong Province, China**

**January 5, 2015**

The anteaters were in a snake skin bag in the back of the car.

**Conviction for the sale of one pangolin<sup>11</sup>**

**Xianju Xian, Zhejiang Province, China**

**January 5, 2015**

Ni was a restaurant owner in Pan'an Xia where he had a permit to sell wildlife cuisine for the past 10 years. The permit does not allow him to sell protected species, however. Spring 2013, Ni went to the farmers market to purchase food, and a stranger convinced him to buy a dead pangolin for 2000 Yuan (\$322 US). Ni understood that it was illegal, but he wanted to make a profit off the pangolin. Then, he went back to the restaurant and froze the pangolin, sending out business cards to advertise his stock of wildlife. Ying and Fan were from a neighboring town. They opened a local restaurant together. In November, some tourists asked to eat pangolin. Ying called Ni's phone number on the business card, and Ni sold the pangolin to them for 9800 Yuan (\$1579 US). The two sold part of the pangolin, around 1.5kg, to the customers for 11400 Yuan (\$1837 US). They sold the rest of the pangolin to other restaurant customers for 6840 Yuan (\$1102 US).

In court, all three suspects admitted to their crimes. Ni and Ying were convicted to 7 months in prison and a fine of 10,000 Yuan (\$1611 US). Fan was convicted to 8 months in prison and a fine of 6000 Yuan (\$967 US).



**Sale of fake pangolin meat<sup>12</sup>**

Pangolin meat is so popular in China that a street peddler said he was selling it. But it was actually just pork meat.



**Seizure of 151 pangolins<sup>13</sup>**  
**Chiang Mai Province, Thailand**  
**January 17, 2015**

The 3 transporters escaping to China were arrested by the Thai army during their patrol near the border with Burma. One of them was a woman. 2 pick-up trucks were racing at full speed. At least one female pangolin had a little pangolin with her. Their estimated market value is 3 million baht, or \$91,150 US.



**Seizure of 263.78 kg and 10 kg of pangolin scales<sup>14</sup>**

**Cibinong, West Java Province and Jakarta, Special Capital Territory of Jakarta, Indonesia**  
**January 26, 2015**

Around 700 ex-pangolins were in 14 18 kg bags. This catch that the special services made was a follow-up to a preliminary 10 kg seizure in



Jakarta. By the end of 2012, the Ministry of Forestry had destroyed 64 kg of scales and buried 7.4 t of meat. The 2 pieces of smuggled cargo were awaiting departure at Tanjung Priok Port. 2 Chinese citizens planned this smuggling operation.

**Seizure of 42 pangolins (201 kg) and resale by the authorities<sup>15</sup>**

**Bac Ninh Province, Vietnam**  
**February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015**

The 42 pangolins were alive when police seized them near Hanoi. The authorities resold them in auction to restaurateurs. The head of the forest department of the province hid behind a regulation from 2006. This regulation states that pangolins, just like other species, may be sold by government departments in certain situations. Through this sale, the province made VND 1.2 million, or \$56 US per kilogram. "They were in a bad state." "They could not be saved."

ENV (Education for Nature - Vietnam) has strongly condemned this transaction. "The authorities have become 'a link' of the trading of the animals". The *Manis javanica* is going extinct in Vietnam.

**Seizure of 7 pangolins from Myanmar including 2 dead<sup>16</sup>**

**Kunming, Yunnan Province, China**  
**February 2015**

**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**Conviction for illegal transportation of 3 pangolins<sup>17</sup>**

**Xiuying District, Hainan Province, China**

**February 2015**

In her car, she had 3 force-fed pangolins that were alive, ready to be cooked. She had already been arrested in October of last year (see "On the Trail" n°7, p. 33). She has just been sentenced to 15 months of imprisonment and 6,000 yuans ( \$960 US) in fines.



**Seizure of 10 kg of pangolin scales and arrest<sup>18</sup>**  
**Kohima, State of Nagaland, India**  
**February 20, 2015**

The 45-year-old woman was going to Manipur. The final destination of the cargo was China. Its estimated value was the equivalent of \$3,000 US, or \$300 US per kg. According to the police, 50 pangolins



paid for this traffic with their life.

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**Seizure of 4 kg of pangolin scales and arrest<sup>19</sup>**  
**Attarpur, Central Development Region, Nepal**  
**February 24, 2015**

The couple aged 60 and 74 years were taking the scales to the Chinese bazaar of Khasa.

**Seizure of 5 living pangolins<sup>20</sup>**

**Chaozhou, Guangdong Province, China**  
**March 2015**

The taxi driver had 5 odd customers. An unidentified intermediary hired him to deliver them.

**Seizure of 70 pangolins<sup>21</sup>**

**Pathiu District, Chumphon Province, Thailand**  
**March 9, 2015**

The local value of the 70 scaled mammals is estimated to be 5 million baht (\$155,000 US). Trafficking in live pangolins is on the rise between Malaysia and Thailand. The Malaysian suspect, aged 35, admits to making about 10 trips between the Hat Yai District (Songkhla Province, Thailand) and Samut Songkhram Province (Thailand). Nearly 900 km. Hat Yai District is near the Malaysian border. He earned 6,000 baht (\$185 US) for each trip.

## **Seizure of 83.5 kg of pangolin scales and 3.1 kg of ivory<sup>22</sup>**

### **Zhangjiagang, Jiangsu Province, China**

The boatmen were delivering wood from Cameroon to China, and they had traded some instant noodle for ivory and bought some pangolin shells. The inspection officers found in the corner of the compartment bags of smuggled products. The 10 boatmen will be convicted with charges for the illegal smuggling.

## **Seizure of a pangolin<sup>23</sup>**

### **Xiangtan, Hunan Province, China**

**March 11, 2015**

"An animal covered with scales" was in the trunk of the car, stuck in a net. Examination confirmed that it was a pangolin.

## **Seizure of 2 tons of pangolin scales<sup>24</sup>**

### **Kwai Chung, Hong Kong, China**

**March 17, 2015**

The container came by sea from Nigeria. There were 60 bags of scales inside. Hong Kong customs estimated the value of the cargo to be nearly \$1.3 million US.



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## **Seizure of a pangolin and arrest of 7 men<sup>25</sup>**

### **Zhangping, Fujian Province, China**

**March 18, 2015**

7 deforestation workers on Youtou Mountain accidentally found a pangolin, so they brought it back to the village to prepare to cook it. The police received reports on this case and arrested the 7 men. Later, the pangolin was released back to the wild.

## **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

## **Seizure of one frozen pangolin<sup>26</sup>**

### **Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China**

**March 2015**

Chen opened a teahouse in Oubou town. He heard that in a neighboring town, Guo was selling pangolins for 4700 Yuan (\$760 US), so he bought one and froze it in the freezer in his teahouse. Guo is 64-years old and has been selling wild animals such as boars, snails, fish, and Chinese soft-shelled turtle for the past 10 years. He argued that he bought the meat on the corner and thought that it was boar's meat. His argument was unreliable because his wife Xia had admitted in 6 out of the 9 investigations that she knew her husband purchased pangolins. He had told her that the pangolins were going to be sold. The couple had sold 31 pangolins in total in the past 10 years. They are currently awaiting trial.

## **Seizure of 56 pangolins<sup>27</sup>**

### **Halong, Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam**

**March 27, 2015**

Around 2 p.m., the municipal officers were on duty

on national highway 18A near the city of Ha Long. That's when they inspected the car with the license plate BKS 14P-3283. Its driver was Đoàn Mạnh Hùng, born in 1980, and a resident of Cam Pha. The car was driving toward Hạ Long-Cam Pha, with the illegal "merchandise" on board. It was heading for China.

## **2 pangolins rescued<sup>28</sup>**

### **Guoxingxiang Area, Nantou County, Taiwan**

**January and March 2015**

In January, Lin was hiking in the Guoxingxiang Mountain Area when he accidentally ran into some merchants who were selling pangolins. Worried about whether the little animals could survive, Lin saw that one of the pangolins was hurt severely on its right back leg. He decided to buy it from the merchants and sent it to the animal protection agency. Because of the worsening wound, the professionals had no choice but to amputate the right back leg. In March, Lin again did the same. After having been treated this second pangolin was sent back to the nature. This event raised some turbulence on Internet forums. Some people feel that buying the animal creates profit and more motives for the traffickers. Others think that it is needed to consider all living creatures with equity and to be education-alist about his matter.



## **Conviction for illegal transportation of 2 pangolins<sup>29</sup>**

### **Fangchenggang, Guangxi Province, China**

**March 2015**

The 26-year-old, unemployed Chen was convicted to 5 months in prison and a fine of 30,000 Yuan (\$4,832 US) for smuggling 2 pangolins. He borrowed a small car to transport the animals, but as he was entering the freeway, he was stopped by the police.



## **EUROPE**

## **Seizure of pangolins meat<sup>30</sup>**

### **Franz-Josef Strauss International Airport, Free State of Bayern, Germany**

**March 2015**

During an inspection of passengers coming from Ghana in Munich Airport, pieces of smoked pangolin were found in a paper bag in a traveler's suitcase. The man declared that this was "refined" traditional bush food. The object of the offense was confiscated so it could be destroyed. The offender was taken to Court.



# Primates

From that issue, "On the Trail" opens its pages to NGOs specialized in the fight against international wildlife trafficking. One of the vocations of the AAP Rescue Centre for Exotic Animals based in the Netherlands is to prevent the trafficking of Barbary macaque between North Africa and the European Union.

## Illegal Trade Will Lead Unique Species To Extinction

Barbary macaques could be wiped out in 15-20 years



The Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*) is the only primate species north of the Sahara desert, the only macaque species in Africa and the only primate living in the wild in Europe (Gibraltar).

In the last 30 years, this unique primate species has seen its population in Morocco and Algeria dwindle from approximately 23,000 to an estimated 8,000 nowadays. The largest wild subpopulation, which inhabits the mixed cedar forests of the Middle Atlas mountains in Morocco, has been decimated: only 5,000 remain, a **65% decrease in just three decades**.

This dramatic population loss led the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to include Barbary macaques in the IUCN Red List of threatened species, under the 'endangered' status, in 2008. It is also protected by national legislation in Morocco and Algeria, and the subject of an import ban in the EU. However, the species is still listed under Appendix II of CITES. Moreover, **Barbary macaque trafficking is still rampant**.

### The Impact of Illegal Trade

While the decline in Barbary macaque population has different causes, including habitat destruction due to overexploitation by humans, illegal trade alone could lead to the extinction of the species.

An estimated **200 macaques, mostly infants, are illegally captured from the wild and traded every year**. This number is above population replacement rate in the region of Azrou-Ifrane of the Middle Atlas, where most of the poaching takes place. Progressive fragmentation and dispersion of the populations, a decline of genetic variability, and the negative impact of the loss of individuals on the group are biological by-products of this trade which only make the problem worse. **Experts predict that the population could be gone within 15-20 years.**



France: Juma was found wandering the streets

### The Perpetrators

Confiscations and rescue data indicate that a majority of the animals have historically ended up as domestic pets in Europe, a situation which leads to severe welfare problems for the animals and serious health and safety risks for humans, such as the possibility of rabies contagion. A recent survey conducted at the Port of Algeciras shows that **an estimated 3,000 Barbary macaques are currently being kept as pets in Europe**. Additionally, a significant number remain in Morocco, where they are exploited in the tourism industry as props for photographs and shows. While in the past this industry was mainly maintained by Western European tourists who took animals with them after their holiday, there is growing evidence that the trade in Barbary macaques is now increasingly organized and sophisticated, involving **criminal bands with international networks and connections to other illegal activities**, such as drugs and counterfeited products. Moreover, Morocco is the gateway to Europe for other illegal wildlife products and live specimens, for example of tortoises. Tackling Barbary macaque trafficking would presumably help other endangered species as well.

## Regulatory and Enforcement Shortcomings

Despite all the aforementioned legal provisions currently in place, Barbary macaques remain the most-seized CITES-protected mammal in Europe, accounting for almost 25% of live mammal-related seizures between 2001 and 2010. These confiscations are nonetheless a small fraction of the total illegal trade, due to **enforcement shortcomings**.

In Europe, **effective control at the Southern borders is lacking**, because of lack of priority but also due to limited resources. In Morocco, according to recent research, there is evidence of **plain negligence, but also straightforward corruption** among the authorities: "Customs officers could be bribed for around 200 to 500 dirham (20 to 50 euros) and the smuggling process can continue".<sup>1</sup>

A macaque can be bought in Morocco for €250, whilst in Europe the final buyer can pay up to €2,000. According to traders, it is possible for an organization to enter agreements to deliver more than 50 monkeys per year to Europe. The potential profit for such an operation would amount to €100,000. This amount is around 42 times the average minimum yearly wage in Morocco.



Aurora was in a private home in Spain.

Moreover, whilst a rhino poacher found guilty of having killed 3 calves in South Africa's Kruger National Park was recently sentenced to 77 years in prison, the fines in Morocco for macaque trafficking are between 1,000 and 5,000 euros, and rarely ever enforced. In Spain the highest recorded penalty ever imposed was €7,000. When combining the **high profit margin with the low risk**, the incentives for smuggling macaques become even more obvious.

## A Roadmap for Action

AAP Rescue Centre, in cooperation with our partners in the Barbary Macaque Coalition, is taking action to save Barbary macaques from extinction. By supporting an anti-poaching project by NGO Moroccan Primate Conservation in Ifrane National Park we aim to stop the problem right at its source. And by working closely together with the Spanish police authorities we strive to enhance enforcement efforts that will prevent the macaques to keep being smuggled into Europe.

Moreover, in the next two years we will upscale our efforts on the political side of things. With CITES CoP17 on the horizon, we will pursue an 'uplisting' of the species from Appendix II to I. We will also keep engaging with national and European authorities to allocate specific funds for conservation of Barbary macaques in the context of the EU Communication on Wildlife Trafficking and to improve the recording of seizures and sharing of information among Member States. Higher fines and penalties upon confiscation of specimens and stricter and more regular border controls both in Morocco and in Europe must also be part of the solution.



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<sup>1</sup> van Uhm. D. (2014). "The illegal trade in Barbary macaques", Willem Pompe Institute, Utrecht University, commissioned by Stichting AAP.



Gorilla (*Gorilla* spp.), chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), orangutan (*Pongo* spp.) are listed in CITES Appendix I. Macaque (*Macaca* spp.) is in Appendix II.

## AFRICA



### Rescue of a baby chimpanzee<sup>1</sup> Democratic Republic of Congo January 10, 2015

Depressed, emaciated, and frightened. It will take a long time for him to recover from what he saw and heard, and cannot tell. He was taken in by the Lwiro Primate Sanctuary.



### Seizure of 3 gorilla skulls and one chimpanzee skull and arrests<sup>2</sup>

**Djoudj, Southern Region Sud, Cameroon  
January 17, 2015**

"No, these are not human skulls, these are monkey skulls". This is all that the 2 suspects could say to the gendarmes in the entrance of the hotel in Djoudj. Djoudj is a hot spot for ivory and bone trafficking.

### Seizure of a chimpanzee<sup>3</sup> Cairo International Airport, Egypt February 2015

The live baby chimpanzee was sneaked into the bag of the passenger on the Egypt Air flight heading for Kuwait. His skeleton showed up on the security control screen. The stowaway passenger stolen from central Africa is temporarily staying in Giza Zoo. The smuggler was able to continue traveling. This makes great ape protectors seethe with anger.



### Seizure of chimpanzee skulls and a gorilla skull and arrest<sup>4</sup>

**Ambam, South Region, Cameroon  
February 13, 2015**



14 chimpanzees and 4 gorillas looking at you.

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

### Seizure of 4 chimpanzee skulls and arrest<sup>5</sup> Manjo, Littoral Region, Cameroon March 24, 2015

The 2 brothers aged 30 and 41 tried to sell the skulls of the 4 chimpanzees. LAGA (The Last Great Ape Organisation) helped to arrest them. A witch doctor reassured them that the transaction would go well. They were coming from Mangamban, 200 km from Manjo. The skulls were approaching Douala, a port of export. Chimpanzees in Cameroon are becoming extinct.

## AMERICA

### Seizure of 2 spider monkeys (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) and one capuchin monkey (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II)<sup>6</sup>

**Lima, Lima Province, Peru  
January 2015**

Neo Primate Conservation (NPC) based in Lima, launched the operation "DenunciaFauna. It found a lead concerning 3 monkeys that a circus was exploiting, despite regulations to the contrary from 4 years ago. The circus usually toured in various neighborhoods of the Peruvian capital on week-ends.

The 3 animals were seized upon the request of the environmental prosecutor. They were taken to a safe place, to sanctuaries in the wild for the modest sum of S/ 100, or \$33 US. A veterinary escort was included. On this issue, the Peruvian organization NPC has criticized Animal Defenders International (ADI), based in the United States of America. ADI said that its campaign "emptied" circuses in Peru of wild fauna. NPC lamented that "this is not true", highlighting the fact that a few months earlier, ADI had launched a public campaign to raise S/ 10,000, or \$3,300 US, the amount required to transfer a spider monkey that had been removed from a circus to a sanctuary in Peru. "International NGO seeking to tackle a problem such as this on a national scale should work with local groups in the future in order to see the best outcome for the animals in the most cost-effective way possible."

**Seizure of 2 Geoffroy's spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II)<sup>7</sup>**

**State of Oaxaca, Mexico**

**February 2015**

The female and young male were in a cage in someone's home. Administrative proceedings have been launched against him.

**Seizure of a saddle-back tamarin (*Saguinus fuscicollis*, Appendix II)<sup>8</sup>**

**Bongará Province, Amazonas Region, Peru**

**March 2015**

The roadside check was successful. A stowaway was found in a box in the back of the car. It seemed to be in good health. After it was observed, it was released.



**Seizure of a white-tailed titi (*Callicebus discolor*, Appendix II), a ma's night monkey (*Aotus nancy-mae*, Appendix II), a white-fronted capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*, Appendix II) and a boa (*Boidae* spp., Appendix II)<sup>9</sup>**

**Laguna Azul-Sauce, San Martin, Peru**

**March 14, 2015**

They attracted tourists who paid to pose with them. The animal abuse

comes with child exploitation. Instead of going to school, the child tried to sell a photo with a monkey to tourists.

**ASIA**

**Seizure of more than a hundred long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and arrest of 11 suspects<sup>10</sup>**

**Changsha, Hunan Province, China**

**January 2015**

The 100 prisoners were bought in Vietnam. After 1,000 km on the road, they were waiting to be sold in a pet shop. The natural habitat of long-tailed macaques is Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the Nicobar Islands. Capturing and raising macaques has truly become a business. The main driver of the business is animal experimentation. Vietnam officially exported 60,000 long-tailed macaques between 1999 and 2008. There is

also demand for the macaques from the pet market. This operation was preceded by the November 2014 seizure of 6 owls that were also registered in CITES Appendix II.



**Release of a macaque<sup>11</sup>**

**Da Nang, Da Nang Province, Vietnam**

**January 2015**

Directly from a cage in a restaurant to the local forest, thanks to the alertness of ENV.

**Seizure of one yellow-cheeked crested gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I)<sup>12</sup>**

**Dak Nong Province, Vietnam**

**January 2015**

The ENV specialist knew how to talk gibbon. He recognized and located the gibbon through his vocalizations.

**Voluntary handing over to the authorities of a loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I)<sup>13</sup>**

**Vietnam**

**January 2015**

She had bought the loris in Huong Pagoda. It was the New Year Festival. She felt guilty about it and contacted ENV.



**Acquittal of rhesus macaque monkey tamers (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II)<sup>14</sup>**

**Xinye County, Henan Province, China**

**January 2015**

Monkey exhibitors say that they practice one of the world's oldest trades. Xinye is the birthplace of the profession. Several hundreds of monkey breeders, trainers, and exhibitors live in this county and go all around China.

In addition to a breeding and a domestication license, monkey exhibitors must have a wildlife transport license. As this document was missing four of them were turned away from the city of





Mudanjiang, and received a symbolic sentence from a local court. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> instance, the monkey exhibitors were acquitted by the People's Court of Xinye County. They considered that the macaques were not physically abused during transport or demonstrations in public areas.

**Seizure of hoolock gibbon meat (*Bunopithecus hoolock*, Appendix I), arms, ammunitions and arrest of 3 men<sup>15</sup>**

**Nongkhylllem Reserve Forest, State of Meghalaya, India  
January 2015**



**Release of a red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I)<sup>16</sup>  
Vietnam**

**January 2015**

The langur is sometimes called the king of monkeys because of the elegant colors of its coat but many times is ending up as a pet or a preserved decorative object. However, the "masters" of this one have set him free.



**Illegal transport of monkeys (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II) in 2 buses<sup>17</sup>**

**Vietnam**

**January 26-28, 2015**

1 - 2 monkeys that were living, and 2 that were dead were traveling in the luggage compartment of a bus going from Quang Tri to Hanoi. Planned travel time: 11 hours.

2 - 20 dehydrated monkeys, probably langurs. They were in such terrible condition, it was difficult to identify them. The bus leaving Hanoi was heading toward Cao Ban, 50 km from the border with China. The 2 illegal transport reports are yet another example of the south-north wildlife trade, because China loves poached products.



**Seizure of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II)<sup>18</sup>**

**Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam**

**February 3, 2015**



Another macaque exhibited in a restaurant made a guest lose his appetite. After the NGO ENV was notified, it worked with the local authorities to free the animal. Freed the macaques! 1800 1522.

**Transfer of a macaque to the authorities<sup>19</sup>**

**Binh Phuoc Province, Vietnam**

**February 2015**

The young man gradually saved up to buy the imprisoned monkey off of his neighbor. After the transaction was completed, the rescuer called ENV. The monkey was put into the care of a shelter, to de-stress before the big adventure in the forest. ENV is both happy and unhappy. "When one is bought, another is caught."



**Discovery of 10 carcasses of dead bonnet macaque (*Macaca radiata*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>20</sup>**

**Mulund, State of Maharashtra, India**

**February 7, 2015**

It all happened near Bombay. There was rice on the spot. Apparently the monkeys were poisoned and used as bait for leopards that came to the lake to drink. Kites and crows were flying in circles above the grave. You could say that they were the ones that raised the alert. When the veterinarians and the NGOs arrived, 2 of the monkeys were still alive. A dead crocodile was found nearby. It seems that the death of the crocodile had nothing to do with the monkeys.

**Seizure of a Sumatran orangutan<sup>21</sup>**

**Sumatra Island, Indonesia**

**February 8, 2015**



SOS (Sumatran Orangutan Society) for orangutans! The individual was not having fun in the garden. He is no longer behind the big rebars.

**Seizure of an orangutan<sup>22</sup>**  
**Manis Mata, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**  
**February 2015**



She is 3 years old and weighs 6 kg. She still has her jungle instinct. In her transit cage, she was building herself nests. She was “picked up” in a field and recently adopted by a guy who put a rope around her neck. She was a captive pet. She had wounds around her neck and a fat and swollen abdomen due to an inappropriate diet. After 12 hours of traveling, she reached Ketapang sanctuary, and quickly conveyed her independence by trying to bite the therapists who were holding her in their arms, taking her for a walk.

**Seizure of a loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) and arrest<sup>23</sup>**  
**Pattaya, Chonburi Province, Thailand**  
**February 18, 2015**



100 baht (\$3 US) for a photo with a tourist or children, and a drugged loris in a costume. The report states that the primate was completely dazed. He was taken immediately to zoo veterinarians. The loris exhibitor (23 years

old) is liable for several offenses, including animal cruelty.

**Voluntary handing over to the authorities of a baby Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*, Appendix I)<sup>24</sup>**  
**East Kotawaringin District, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**  
**February 18, 2015**

3 months. Separated from his mother very early on, in circumstances that were most certainly criminal, near an oil palm plantation.

Although orangutans are strictly protected under Indonesian law, it is said that 2,500 orangutans are killed each year in Kalimantan alone (544,150 km<sup>2</sup>). Kalimantan is riddled with mines and industrial plantations. 6 to 7 per day.

**Seizure of 6 slow lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) and 2 iguanas (Iguanidae family) and arrest<sup>25</sup>**

**Phuket, Phuket Province, Thailand**  
**March 3, 2015**

For the amusement of tourists from the world over, Phuket Gazette reported this new seizure of protected animals that were exploited. They were released in the nature reserve of Phang Nga.

**Release of 8 slow lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I), 5 macaques including 2 Northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) and a rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II)<sup>26</sup>**  
**South Central Coast and Central Highlands Regions, Vietnam / Binh Thuan, Lam Dong and Quang Tri Provinces, Vietnam**  
**March 2015**

The lorises were in an “ecovillage”.

The northern pig-tailed macaques were there to amuse the crowd.

The 2 other macaques were attractions in a restaurant and with a beach peddler. The elusive vendor was tracked down after ENV volunteers searched for him for 15 days.



Northern pig-tailed macaques



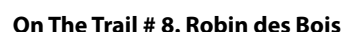
Rhesus macaque



## A small, light-brown monkey is sitting on a sandy or dusty ground, holding a piece of food (possibly a banana) in its mouth and using its hands to peel or eat it. Two human hands are visible in the frame, one on the left and one on the right, suggesting the monkey is being fed or supervised. The monkey is wearing a thin chain around its neck. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

**Release of a loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Annexe I)  
held captive in a café<sup>28</sup>  
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
March 31, 2015**

Exotic Zoo, in a trendy Moscow neighborhood, has all the documents for naturalizing the new addition to your family. Russian orangutan sellers say that they source from circuses, zoos, and animal exhibitors. "Sold in Russia", "Born in Russia", the orangutans in Moscow and Volgograd are portrayed as cut off from the world and their Asian jungles. Exotic Zoo is not in the CITES registries. Exotic Zoo sells pangolins for about \$3,000 US, and bottle-nosed dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II) for \$57,000 a piece.



## Felines

**Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*) and ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) are in Appendix I. Lion (*Panthera leo*) and puma (*Puma concolor*) are in Appendix II.**

**Total from January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> :  
77 skins and stuffed or frozen animals  
24 live animals  
244.2 kg of bones seized**

### AFRICA

**Conviction for the poaching of a serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Annex II)<sup>1</sup>**

**Kasungu, Central Province, Malawi**

**January 30, 2015**

Kovu, the orphan serval kitten that Lilongwe Wildlife Trust collected had been set free in the 2,316 km<sup>2</sup> National Park in July 2014. One month later, its GPS collar stopped sending signals. The last signals came from a roof of a house in Munye. Kovu was poached. The accused was sentenced to a fine of MK 450,000 (\$1,000 US), or 4 months in prison if he could not pay. Kovu is dead. The man is in prison. Kasungu is also home to around a hundred elephants.



**Seizure of a leopard skin<sup>2</sup>**

**Brazzaville Maya Maya Airport, Republic of the Congo**

**February 2015**

The lawyer was returning from Ouessou, in the department of Sangha. He works at a very well-known law firm in Brazzaville and Ouessou. He was released after a brief arrest. This premature release has sparked questions and indignation from PALF (Project for the Application of Law for Fauna).



**Seizure of 4 lion teeth and arrest<sup>3</sup>**

**Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya**

**February 27, 2015**

The dog teeth were actually lion teeth worth KSh 100,000 (\$1,093 US) in all. Zhou, 53 years old with a Chinese passport, was taken to court. The trial was postponed as there was no interpreter.

**Arrest of the “owner” of 2 lions<sup>4</sup>**

**Mogadishu, Banaadir Region, Somalia**

**March 2015**

Mogadishu is in a panic. 2 lion cubs attacked a young girl. This is reminiscent of what happened 2 years ago, when 2 lions that the Libyan ambassador was taking care of in the Somali capital escaped. They seriously disturbed public order.

### AMERICA

**Kid Rock poses with a freshly shot puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I or II)<sup>5</sup>**

**January 2015**

Hard rock was having fun. Ted Nugent published a photo of his friend Kid Rock proudly showing the corpse of a slaughtered puma in the snow. “Hail my Motor City boy Kid Rock for saving all those muledeer elk and livestock by whacking this magnificent mountain lion.”



**Seizure of a lion<sup>6</sup>**

**Guadalupe, State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico**

**February 2015**

The 19-year-old woman said she bought the lion cub—that is now 7 months old—in a pet shop in Monterrey. She showed the receipt. The document can not be used to establish the legal origin of the feline. The General Wildlife Law requires the lion cub to be identified. Simba—that’s how the young woman named him—managed to escape from her house. She hid in a neighbor’s garage. The lion cub was put into the care of La Pastora Zoo.

**Sequestration of a lion<sup>7</sup>**

**State of Queretaro, Mexico**

**February 2015**

The PROFEPA officers inspected an individual that had SEMARNAT authorization to be in the possession of 4 lions—2 females and 2 males. The SEMARNAT authorizations for having such animals in one’s possession are regulated. But there was a hitch for one of the 2 males, named Zeus : the identification number of his microchip was different from the one registered with SEMARNAT. There was no documentation proving that the chip would have been changed either.





### Poaching of an ocelot<sup>8</sup>

**Natural National Park Farallones de Cali, Valle del Cauca Department, Colombia**

**February 2015**

The reputation of the engineering company Proing S.A. has been tainted. Photos of men wearing uniforms with its name and proudly showing off the body of the poor cat circulated in the press and on social networks.



In response to the outcry, Proing S.A. published a press release on February 15, stating that conserving natural resources is part of its policy, and that an investigation would be launched immediately to determine whether its operators were involved in the feline's death. If proof of their involvement is found, they will be turned in to the authorities. The press release even says that if it turns out that its operators didn't really kill the ocelot, the photos are still reprehensible, and require disciplinary action. Proing S.A. says that men wearing the company uniform were actually from a community in Valle del Cauca. They were subcontracted by the company to work on the construction site. The company went to the trouble of mentioning that according to the information collected on-site in this community, the ocelot was hunted and sacrificed because the workers said they had been threatened for several weeks.

### Seizure of 4 jaguar skins<sup>9</sup>

**Apiacas, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil**

**February 14, 2015**



The farm inspection operation led to the seizure of pelts, 2 rifles, and various kinds of ammunition. The owner of the premises and 2 employees were arrested. They

could each face fines of \$60,000 R or \$23,100 US.

### Teeth repair of 2 former circus lions<sup>10</sup>

**Peru**

**February 20, 2015**

In Peru in 2014, Animal Defenders International (ADI) released 21 lions that were exploited in circuses. 2 of the lions aged 7 and 17 years were cared for. The ultimate goal is to restore their teeth. "In the circuses they often break their teeth and remove their claws." "They do not use anesthesia and those doing it are not veterinarians."



Peter Emily, veterinarian from the Peter Emily International Veterinary Dental Foundation, said that King should be receiving additional care in Denver. The initial care had been provided in Peru. A few days later, Peter Emily worked on the teeth of 26 monkeys that also were removed from circuses in Peru.

### Poaching of a Geoffroy's cat (*Leopardus geoffroyi*, Annexe I)<sup>11</sup>

**Rincón del Cinto, Gualguaychú Department, Entre Rios Province, Argentina**

**February 21, 2015**

The police on a routine operation heard explosions in the night. They hid until they saw a boat in the river arrive, with a 34-year-old man on board carrying a gun, and 2 younger men, aged 16 and 17. They were all from the city of Concepción del Uruguay, 70 km from there. They did not show any sign of resistance during the check. The police quickly found the feline on the boat. Their car was in the vicinity.

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**Results of convictions in the Loncarich versus pumas (*Puma concolor cougar*, Appendix I) and bobcats (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II) case<sup>12</sup>**



**Denver, State of Colorado, United States of America**

**March 11, 2015**

Christopher W. Loncarich, his daughters, and his assistants held lynx and puma hunting parties that could rightly be called massacres (cf. "On the Trail" n° 7, p. 77). The felines were trapped, mutilated, put in cages, and freed when the clients would come near them. Sometimes a trap was attached to the paw of the wildcat to be sure that the client wouldn't miss it. The trap would be promptly removed before the hunter would get a hold of their trophy.

Even after 17 years of career, Wade Hovinga—the veteran inspector from US Fish and Wildlife—was traumatized. "It's been the most egregious protected wildlife case I've been involved with or heard of, really." With Loncarich, anyone could pretend to be a sharpshooter. The fraud cost \$7,500 US per puma. The profit was split between the assistant guides and the members of the family.

In March 2015, the assistant guide Nicholaus Rodgers was sentenced to 36 months of probation, 6 months of house arrest, 50 hours of community service, and \$5,000 in fines.

November 2014. Christopher Loncarich was sentenced to 27 months in prison without remission and is banned from hunting and fishing for 3 years. The court also required him to obtain psychiatric counseling.

In September 2014, his 2 daughters were sentenced to one year of probation, fines, and community service in Colorado Parks and its Wildlife Hunter Education program.

Three clients had to pay \$13,100 US in fines. At least 30 pumas and lynxes were victims of the barbaric acts and the masquerade.



### Charging for illegal trade of tigers and forging of documents<sup>13</sup>

**Phoenix, State of Arizona, United States of America**

**March 2015**

The mechanic known as Shawn Rafi posted photos of 2 young captive Bengal tigers on social media (cf. "On the Trail" n°4, p. 51).



### Discovery of an ocelot carcass<sup>14</sup>

**X-bec, State of Yucatán, Mexico**

**March 2015**

It was 5 or 6 years old. One or 2 hunters shot it dead— It had 3 visible gunshot wounds in its neck. The perpetrators have not been identified yet.

## Taxidermists' inheritance<sup>15</sup>

### India

The tiger skin bears the seal of Van Ingen, the taxidermy enterprise that has been passed down from father to son since 1911. It is in Mysore in Karnataka State. It is said that the company "stuffed" 500 tigers per year until 1960. The trophies were sold to nobility and large fortunes the world over. Van Ingen was specialized in tigers and leopards. The piece that the 2 men were carrying was thus particularly rare. They were aged 37 and 58. The 1<sup>st</sup> man was a furniture seller. He told the 2<sup>nd</sup> man to sell the animal. It is said to be worth \$80,000 US. Its origin is unknown. As it is in good condition, it may have been stolen from a palace.

Naturabuy is a French controversial auction website that sells hunting trophies. In March, it exhibited a tiger head that was in poor condition and that was presented as the work of Van Ingen. The upset price was 1,800 €.

### Uganda

Smith Ewa Maku, the head of Smico Skin Crafts Industries Ltd., is trying everything possible to export 7 t of pangolin scales. He supposedly collected some of the scales from village communities. He received a license to import and export wild animal trophies from UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority). According to Maku's himself, they "died naturally, from fire, from the impacts of deforestation, farming practices, and other forms of human colonization." Maku is also a taxidermist. He started learning the trade in 1968 with the Jonas brothers in Seattle, in the United States of America. He created his company Smico in 1973. The firm Jonas Brothers was founded by 5 brothers who immigrated from Hungary in 1908.



© Vic Condiotty / The Seattle Times

Jonas Brothers. Seattle



## ASIA



### **Seizure of a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) <sup>16</sup>**

**Lang Son Province, Vietnam**

**January 2015**

Wounded and to be sold off on Facebook, rescued by ENV.



### **Seizure of a skin and 4 clouded leopard teeth (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I) and arrest of a 27 years old man <sup>17</sup>**

**Gongabu, Central Development Region, Nepal**

**January 5, 2015**



### **Discovery of a tiger carcass <sup>18</sup>**

**Bardia National Park, Mid-Western Development Region, Nepal**

**January 6, 2015**

It is said that the 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the Park—a relict of the hunting property of the royal family—is home to 40 tigers.

## **GANG**

### **Seizure of tiger and leopard skins <sup>19</sup>**

**Muse, State of Shan, Burma**

**January 2015**

The city of Muse is in northern Burma. China is on the other side. In a garage, the police seized tiger, leopard skins, and claws, horns, fangs, and bones of wild animals.



## **GANG**

### **Seizure of leopard skin and bones, and arrest <sup>20</sup>**

**Oddanchatram, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

**January 6 and 20, 2015**

137 cm from head to tail. Around 2 and a half years old. The president of the Tamil Nadu Green Movement and 2 forest rangers laid a trap for the gang. The first meeting point was planned to be in Devadahanapatti. The sellers then changed the meeting point to Sempati. They changed it yet again, for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time, to Oddanchatram, where the leopard pelt was seized with the help of the police. The cat and mouse game lasted the whole day. They finally met at nightfall. Ganesan, the ringleader, was there with the pelt. The leather tanning was the work of an expert. Oddanchatram is a den for traffickers. 2 leopard pelts and Sambar deer antlers had been seized in the area in September 2014 (cf. "On the Trail" n°6, p. 119).

After this seizure, shrewd sleuths followed the clues. It was extremely difficult, because as usual felines trafficking is highly compartmentalized, to unmask the 2 poachers. They conducted their activities in the Pachalur Hills. They had poisoned the remains of a prey that the leopard had tasted. The investigators found bones there. The 2 poachers whose activities also included skinning and tanning pelts were arrested on January 20, and were held for questioning for around 2 weeks.

### Seizure of a leopard carcass<sup>21</sup>

**Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

**January 9, 2015**

Sukhrum had been abandoned by his accomplices. A park ranger patrol was tailing the gang. Sukhrum was carrying a weapon, and the body of a small leopard.

### Seizure of a tiger carcass, 53 kg of animal bones, 3 kg of tiger bone glue, and 3 kg of turtle shells, and arrest<sup>22</sup>

**Bac Kan Province, Vietnam**

**January 15, 2015**

The refrigerated truck was in the parking lot of Bac Kan Hotel. In the trailer, the 303 kg tiger was cut into 5 portions and split into 5 bags. The hotel manager was questioned. The package was intended for him. His bedroom was concealing firearms, claws of birds and other animals, and bones. The truck driver himself was also "grilled" by the police. As for him, he was carrying a set of kitchen utensils to make the tiger "glue".



### Poaching of one leopard<sup>23</sup>

**Allahabad District, Uttar Pradesh State, India**

**January 17, 2015**



The 3 "idiots" straddling their trophy.

### GANG

#### Tiger caravan<sup>24</sup>

This is an international affair. It ties into the Far-Western Development Region in Nepal and Uttar Pradesh in India.



Dulal Mandal, from Uttar Pradesh, was arrested in Nepal a few kilometers from the border. He was carrying a tiger pelt that was 3.35 m long and 91 cm wide, and 18 kg of

bones.

Another Indian citizen from Uttar Pradesh was arrested in turn by the Nepal police, in the same district as Kanchanpur. He was carrying a tiger pelt that was 2.44 m long and 61 cm wide. Like the 1<sup>st</sup> tiger, it was poached in Pilibhit Reserve in India (720 km<sup>2</sup>), near the border with Nepal. Anuj Kumar Pandey had 2 pistols on him. He and the 3 accomplices who escaped wanted to sell the pelt and skins for slightly over \$11,000 US.

The information that the Nepal police collected has been transferred to the National Tiger Conservation Authority in India. The investigation moved forward quickly. 8 poachers were arrested near Pilibhit Reserve. Bones (10 kg), teeth, meat (17 kg), and other tiger by-products were found. The favorite tactic of the thugs was to lure the tigers with poisoned buffalo meat.

In 15 months, at least 5 tigers were poached. "Actually, we think that they've taken double that number of tigers," said the investigators from New Delhi.

For a single tiger pelt export to Nepal, the gang earned between Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 lakh (11,000 to \$16,000 US). The ringleader turned himself in to prison. 3 or 4 accomplices are still at large. The network is being dismantled through legal cooperation on wildlife crime in Southeast Asia. The offices of the network are in Kathmandu. Nepal is a transit country between India and China.



8 poachers were arrested around the reserve of Pilibhit



### **Seizure of a leopard pelt and arrest of 2 men (30 and 34 years of age)<sup>25</sup>**

**Narayangaon, Maharashtra State, India**

**January 22, 2015**

It seems that the 2 young men purchased the pelt in Aurangabad and were preparing to sell it in Narayangaon.

### **GANG**

### **Attempted escape of a tiger parts trafficker<sup>26</sup>**

**Narayangaon, Maharashtra State, India**

**January 23, 2015**

Minar was already arrested in August 2013, at the same time as her 8 accomplices. She was the “mule” for a poaching gang (cf. “On the Trail” n°2, p. 37). She transported the skin and bones. Aged 38, she escaped the surveillance of 2 police officers as she jumps out a train pulling into Badnera Station. She was not handcuffed. She had just been through a hearing as part of an investigation, led by a Nagpur judge. She was being escorted to Akola Prison. She managed to clear off at dusk. She was arrested again the next morning, in a Pardhi camp near the train station. The Pardhis are nomads. Hunting is an age-old activity of the Pardhis. The Minar gang was hunting tigers, in addition to leopards and bears. Sarju and Chacha, the main ringleaders, are also in prison (cf. “On the Trail” n°7, p. 51).



### **Seizure of leopard skin and arrest<sup>27</sup>**

**Gadchiroli District, Maharashtra State, India**

**January 24, 2014**

Katange was using the skin of a young leopard that he captured last fall in the forests of Malewada for black magic.

### **Seizure of tiger skin and arrest<sup>28</sup>**

**Balaghat District, Madhya Pradesh State, India**

**January 25, 2015**

Aged 40 and 46, Ranglal and Pradeep were trying to sell the tiger skin for Rs. 1.5 lakh, or \$2,420 US.

### **GANG**

### **Arrest of a gang of tiger and leopard poachers<sup>29</sup>**

**Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh State, India**

**January 2015**

The 7 members of the Bawaria clan were attempting to infiltrate the forests of Lansdowne and Ramnagar, and in Corbett Tiger Reserve. They were from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan. They were in possession of traps, and

are trap experts. Last year in this area, another Bawaria gang was dismantled, and its leader Bheema Bawaria was arrested. He was suspected of poaching around 30 tigers.



Bheema Bawaria

### **Seizure of a leopard jaw and claws, and arrest<sup>30</sup>**

**Dang District, Gujarat State, India**

**January 2015**

Carcasses that had been sitting around for about 2 weeks were 25 km far apart from each other. They didn't have jaws or claws.

“There were maggots in both the bodies. Since maggots were found it is clear that it is not a case of poisoning,” said the deputy conservator of the forest.

4 villagers from Tokarda in Dang District were being pursued by judicial authorities. With the exception of 2 claws, the remains of the leopards were found in their homes.

### **Discovery of 2 leopard carcasses<sup>31</sup>**

**Gurgaon, State of Haryana, India**

**January 2015**

7 in 1 year. Violently and cunningly killed. Goats were tied to a tree. The guys were on the lookout, waiting for the leopard they were hunting. They killed the leopard. Using live bait is a practice from time immemorial. It's winter time. The leopards are roaming near villages, looking for prey that it easy to catch.

### **Seizure of a leopard skin and arrest<sup>32</sup>**

**Katmandou, Central Development Region, Nepal**

**February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015**



114,3 cm  
One of the traffickers was 17 years old

**Seizure of 3 skins, 29 teeth, 24 tiger bones and 19 deer skins and counterfeit money. Arrest of 14 poachers<sup>33</sup>**

**Bangladesh**

**January-February 2015**

There has been plan after plan to save the tigers in the Sundarbans. All the plans have failed. January and February were deadly for the tigers. In 15 years, at least 55 tigers have been poached in Bangladesh. 32 of them were poached in the Sundarbans. Around 20 skins were found on the smuggling route. The bones and teeth are trafficked.

The last estimate of the tiger population is from 2004—440 tigers spread across 6,017 km<sup>2</sup>. Locals in the Sundarbans say there are many more dead tigers than what the official statistics say. The mangrove to the east and west is infested by poachers. The most sought after teeth are the canines, which are said to be talismans.



**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**Seizure of a tiger skin and arrest<sup>34</sup>**

**Edavilakom, State of Kerala, India**

**February 2, 2015**

Because they were able to “work hard”, as the T-shirt of one of the accused says, they obtained the tiger skin. It is said that sitting on tiger skin gives positive energy. Its sells for 7,000 to \$10,000 US. A member of the trio has already been involved in several fauna cases, and even floral cases. “He is a seasoned criminal having links with the inter-State sandalwood mafia,” an official said.



**Tiger Temple, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand<sup>35</sup>**

**February 3, 2015**

A Buddhist temple or a trafficking temple? The Tiger Temple has been under scrutiny for several years. It has been accused of being a zoo, a tourist trap, and even a mecca for tiger trafficking.

Entry fee: \$15 US, and a signature to discharge responsibility in the event of an attack. The risk of attack is slim, apparently. The exhibited wildlife is limp and chained. Trainers sit on them as if they were couches. The monks say that all the money is used to take care of the menagerie, re-adapt the tigers to life in the wild, and when possible, to release them into nature.

143 tigers are shut in the temple and its sheds. Only a few examples are exposed and available for selfies and photographs (for an additional fee—yes please!).

The charity—or business—started in 1999, when the temple took in Bengal tiger cubs that police seized at some poachers' home. The lineage has reproduced in captivity. New arriving refugees regularly enriched the gene pool of the Buddhist tigers. For several years now, Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand and Care for the Wild have accused the temple of animal cruelty and international tiger trafficking. In China, a tiger sells for between \$15,000 to 25,000 US in China, frozen or alive. Everything has its price on the black market for tigers: the meat, bones, whiskers, penises, teeth, and the coat.

On February 5, the temple was raided by the police and the wildlife protection services of the Kingdom of Thailand. 64 birds including 38 hornbills (Bucerotidae family) were seized. The tigers stayed there after the inspection, which lasted 3 hours. The superior monk was not present because he was held up in Bangkok for health reasons.

A week after the inspection, the regional director of the Department of National Parks Wildlife and Plant Conservation declared that its services were informed of each birth, and that the tigers were treated properly. An electronic chip traces each individual. “The results of the inspection will be reported to the department’s director-general, who will decide whether the government will step in to take care of the tigers.” “The cost of handling the animals will be about more than 20 million baht (\$612,000) a year, and we would have to build a new facility to support them.”

This does not bother anyone at the temple. “Nothing has changed at the Tiger Temple; it is business as usual. The Tiger Temple is under Royal Thai patronage to Princess of Thailand, so nobody can close it down.”

The Tiger Temple has become a monstrous opaque thing that is impregnable and unmanageable. Within its walls, tigers will continue to be crammed with testosterone and sedatives. And between their prayers, monks will continue telling the public that the tigers take such sound naps because they’ve just had a nice meal.

In March 2015, the veterinarian who resigned from the temple asserted that 3 tigers were missing. The Wat Pha Luang Ta Bua temple spokesperson responded that this is a false accusation.





**Seizure of 2 leopard skin and various animal bones<sup>36</sup>**

**Jalpaiguri, State of West Bengal, India**

**February 4, 2015**

The skins were indeed ripped off leopards. It's been proved. However, there is uncertainty concerning the bones. There are many imitations out there.

**Seizure of a skin, a skull, and leopard bones valued at \$10.500 US and arrest of 3 persons<sup>37</sup>**

**Devprayag, State of Uttarakhand, India**

**February 5, 2015**

**Release of a sand cat (*Felis margarita*, Appendix II)<sup>38</sup>**

**Khvaf, Khorasan-e Razavi Province, Iran**

**February 2015**



The sand cat is becoming extinct. All-terrain vehicles go all over the desert. The sand cat is no longer king of the dunes. This sand cat was caught in a trap set by poachers specialized in capturing

houbara bustards alive. He quickly cleared the scene when he was freed.

The plantar soles are hairy as protection from the burning sand.



**Seizure of 6 leopard skins and poaching of 2 leopards<sup>39</sup>**

**State of Himachal Pradesh, India**

**February 3 to 9, 2015**

1 - Bilaspur: The 2 suspects were on a motorcycle. The 4 skins were in a plastic bag. In the hills covered by the winter snow, the leopards widened their hunting grounds, going toward villages. Here again, it was high season for poaching via traps, electrocution, and poisoned bait. The police said that one of the leopard skins was disguised as a tiger skin, so it could be sold for more.

2 - Bilaspur: 2 other leopard skins were seized.

3 - One leopard was found dead in a trap near Solan, close to the border with China and Pakistan.

4 - Near Kangra, a leopard stuck in a trap died during the ranger rescue operation.



**Seizure of a leopard skin<sup>40</sup>**

**Palamau Tiger Reserve, State of Jharkhand, India**

**February 9, 2015**

She was hidden in the thickets. Apparently the crime was

committed 5 days beforehand.

**Release of 2 leopards by the Indian Forest Service<sup>41</sup>**

**Hassan District, State of Karnataka and Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India**

**February 10, 2015**

The same day! 1,000 km away. Saved from traps set by poachers.

**Seizure of 11 leopard skins, 94,37 kg of leopard bones, a tiger fat piece and 9 oriental small-clawed otter skin (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>42</sup>**

**Mukerian, Hoshiarpur District, State of Punjab, India**

**February 11, 2015**

The bones were drying on the rooftop of the house. The leopard skins were 2.40 m long and 1.20 m wide on average. The block of tiger fat weighed 80 g. The police were tailing the semi-nomads from the Bawaria tribe who have been tiger trackers and profiteers for generations. Totaram, Sanju, Rohtas, and Sadhu were arrested. The investigation was difficult. The Bawarias move around a lot. They speak in code. Sanju's uncle is the famous Sarju who is jailed since 2 years. He is a linchpin of the black market for tigers in India, with connections in Nepal, and even further, in China. WTI (Wildlife Trust in India) and IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) have helped to make the operation a success.

**Seizure of stuffed tiger, a stuffed Javan leopard (*Panthera pardus melas*, Appendix I) and 4 stuffed Sambar deers (*Cervus unicolor*, not listed under CITES) and arrest<sup>43</sup>**

**Palembang, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia  
Announced on February 12, 2015**

Sumatran tigers have a new prospect. They are stuffed. A trafficker has just been arrested by BKS-DA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam - Nature Conservation Agency Indonesia). He apparently sold 100 stuffed tigers in 10 years. Sumatran tigers are becoming extinct. The most optimistic estimates consider there are between 300 and 400 individuals. The dead tiger wholesaler sourced his skins and his stuffed specimens from taxidermists in the provinces of Lampung, Bengkulu, and Jambi, and the northern part of the island of Sumatra. He also sold leopards and Sambar deer. His main clients were on the island of Java and in Jakarta. The investigation started in 2009, with the arrest of an intermediate link in the network. "On the Trail" cites 2 cases of seizures of stuffed tigers in Indonesia (cf. n°5, p. 123 and n°7, p. 49).

The suspect identified as KSM was caught in the act. He was handling the transport of 2 cats and 2 deer. The value of the seizure is estimated at \$16,000 US. KSM could serve 5 years in prison and pay a fine of \$10,000 US.



**Seizure of a leopard skin and arrest<sup>44</sup>  
Gurnawa, State of Uttar Pradesh, India  
February 14, 2015**

They bought the skin in Nepal, on the other side of the border, for Rs. 1 lakh (\$1,615 US). The poachers were caught in their village, Gurnawa. They were planning to sell the pelts for 5 times more in Gorakhpur. But the profit vanished into thin air. Both of them are in prison now.

**Seizure of 19 kg of tiger bones and a skin piece and arrest<sup>45</sup>  
Chandrapur, State of Maharashtra, India  
February 16, 2015**

The police set a trap for Pun. The neighborhood they planned to meet in was encircled by the police, to prevent the suspects from escaping. Pun's car was intercepted. Inside the car there were kilograms of bones, a square piece of tiger, a kind of sample meant to prove that the bone was authentic. An accomplice who was following Pun on his motorcycle managed to escape. It was at nightfall. The next day, at dawn, Pun led the investigators into Visapur Forest, where all the tiger bones had been buried. They recovered 19 kg of bones, the entire skeleton except for a few ribs, and a paw. The

murder was very recent. The bones were still red. They stank. The tigress had been electrocuted. The experts believe an amateur did the job, judging from the way the bones were torn out. The home of the poacher whom Pun denounced was searched, with the help of a sniffer dog. They didn't find anything there. The tigress skin was gone. A kilogram of tiger bone sells for \$150 -370 US on the black market in China.

**Seizure of 4kg of bones and a tiger skin and arrest<sup>46</sup>**

**Dharchula, State of  
Uttarakhand, India  
February 17, 2015**

A Nepalese smuggler was arrested. He did not reveal the place where the tiger was killed. At least 15 kg of bones were missing. About the skinning, it was a professional job.



2,20 m long

**Theft of a tiger, a leopard and a jaguar<sup>47</sup>  
Saudi Arabia  
February 2015**

The wildcats disappeared from a breeder's enclosure. The farmer is terribly upset about losing his \$154,000 US. "They were all trained to make perfect pets." The robbers were hired. Syringes were found in the cages. The wildcats were sedated. They were then taken away, and disappeared without any trace at all.

**Discovery of a young Siberian  
tiger carcass and seizure of 7  
living tigers<sup>48</sup>  
Pingdu, Shandong Province,  
China  
February 18, 2015**



Firecrackers kill tigers. A young 7-month tiger was terrified by Chinese New Year firecrackers. He managed to flee from his cage at the top of an 11 floor building. He crashed to the ground in a pool of blood. The investigation revealed an illegal Siberian tiger farm involving 3 lawyers and a real estate developer who owned the building on top of

which 3 tigers were raised. These 4 people were well known and respected members of the People's Congress in the city. Each of them was sentenced to a fine of Yuan 3,000 (\$480 US). On the black market in China, a cut-up adult tiger, including its by-products, sells for \$66,000 US. 2 forestry bureau officers were also mixed up in the affair. They were housing 4 illegal tigers. They were fired.



## **GANG**

### **Seizure of a tiger skins and bones (9 kg) and arrest<sup>49</sup>**

**Sarolangun, Jambi Province, Indonesia  
February 2015**

The 3 of them are experienced poachers. It was not easy to nab them. The skin of the male tiger is 1.31 m. He was about 2 years old. 2 years, 9 kg of bones. The trio was "working" in Karinci Seblat National Park, in the middle of Sumatra. The tiger first fell into a trap. It was then killed point-blank by a rifle. There are also elephants and rhinoceroses in the park (14,000 km<sup>2</sup>). Mount Kerinci is 3,805 m at its highest point. The Sumatran Tiger Conservation Program patrol dismantled 55 traps in 2014 within the actual Park, as well as within its buffer zone. 165 to 190 tigers are surviving there.



### **Discovery of a beheaded tiger carcass<sup>50</sup> Khatima, State of Uttarakhand, India February 25, 2015**

### **Seizure of 3 leopards skins, teeth and claws and arrest<sup>51</sup>**

**Greater Noida, State of Uttar Pradesh, India  
February 25, 2015**

All the remains of the leopards were in a jumble in their bags. They went there, near New Delhi, to hand over the job to associates. The value of the remains was at least Rs. 5 lakh Rs (\$8,100 US).

### **Seizure of 21 kg of tiger bones, a tiger skin and arrest of an Indian and 2 Nepalese people<sup>52</sup> Kanchanpur District, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal**



**February 28, 2015**

A large adult was disemboweled. 21 kg of bones and 3.30 m of tiger hide were left of it. The tiger lord seems to have been

killed in the forests of Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh State, around 100 km from the place of arrest. 65 tigers have been poached in Pilibhit in the past few years. Since the beginning of the year, 62 kg of bones and 3 tiger hides have been seized by the Nepal police. The Indian hired 2 Nepalese smugglers for Rps. 50,000 each (\$500 US). The loot was supposed to be sent to China. The first stop was Tibet.

## **GANG**

### **Arrest of 5 tigers poachers and seizure of ivory and turtles shells<sup>53</sup>**

**Katni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, and Tehsil of Chhuikhadan, State of Chhattisgarh, India**

**March 3 and 14, 2015**

The 3 poachers are professionals. The arrest was eventful. The Indian police are happy about this choice seizure. It could have been even more triumphant, if the 2 other people being tracked down had not escaped in the fray. They had all come together in their native village to celebrate Holi, the Hindu festival during the spring equinox. Women from the clan threw stones at the police. 3 people were hurt. Gunshots were fired into the air to calm people down. Stoning is part of the Baheliya arsenal. Kuttu was quickly exfiltrated from his stronghold. He gave a few details on how the clan works: "We throw a big stone at the head of the tiger to kill it." "The rifle shots make holes in the skin. That sells for less." Before the tiger is stoned, it is caught in a trap. The Kuttu gang is the cornerstone of a hellish system that kicks out tiger skins from Mahārāshtra and Madhya Pradesh, into Nepal, China, and other Asian countries. Kuttu also admitted to be involved in the death of 5 or 6 tigers in the forests of Melghat Tiger Reserve. Held for questioning for 12 days, Kuttu, via his lawyers, was against extending the proceedings, and asked for his release on bail. He went before the court in tears, feeling sorry for himself. This is a behavioral strategy that tiger poacher nomads often use. He was finally placed in preventive detention, after the neighboring State of Mahārāshtra issued an arrest warrant for him, for a tiger poaching case from 2007. Another incident does not play in Kuttu's favor. His 2 stooges were arrested a few days after his arrest. "They had 2 tractors, land, a bungalow, and a cushy bank account." Spears, knives, and ivory were seized. They brought the federal police to the scene of the 6<sup>th</sup> tiger murder. However, the war against tiger poaching has yet to be won. Keru (cf. "On the Trail" n°3 p. 43 and 44, n°6 p. 53, n°7 p. 53) is still on the run, with 23 accomplices, catlike men who use several names, who do not really have a fixed address. 17 other people are still in prison but these experts in bailing and escaping could have the last word. Kuttu's price for the 2 tigers is Rs. 3 million (\$4,860 US).

### **Seizure of a leopard skin and arrest<sup>54</sup>**

**Baripada, State of Odisha, India  
March 5, 2015**

Elephants aren't the only ones being poached in Similipal Tiger Reserve. Leopards are too (cf. "On the Trail" n°1, p. 18 and n°3, p. 42). Baripada borders the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It covers 5569 km<sup>2</sup> with in the middle the Similipal sanctuary and 52 endangered fauna species. Among them Asian palm civets, Bengal tigers, elephants and leopards.

**Seizure of a skin and 11.79 kg of tiger bones, a skin and 6.745 kg of leopard bones and arrest<sup>55</sup>  
Birendranagar, Mid-Western Development Region, Nepal  
March 7, 2015**



The leopard and the tiger hanging on the wall, above the heads of the couple of traffickers.

**Seizure of a lioness<sup>56</sup>  
Sharjah, Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates  
March 2015**

Complaints from the neighbors were pouring in. They were afraid of the captive wildcats, hyenas, scorpions, and spiders, here and there in the neighborhood of Al Qarayan. A lioness was recently seized, just like many other captive animals and pets before her.

**Seizure of 6 frozen leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>57</sup>  
Nghe An Province, Vietnam  
March 17, 2015**

33-year-old Oanh told the police that she bought the dead cats from hunters near Pu Mat Forest. She was arrested with the 6 frozen victims on the luggage rack of her motorcycle. She was on her way to sell them in Vinh, 100 km away. Leopard cats are hunted for fur, meat and pet market.



**Seizure of a fake tiger skin and arrest of 2 artists<sup>58</sup>  
Coimbatore, State of Tamil Nadu, India  
March 18, 2015**

Buyers: Beware of fakes! Fake rhinoceros horns are taking over the black market. Fake tiger skins are showing up as well. Sellers were caught in the act by buyers actually

forest and environmental officers. But it took them some time to realize that the tiger skin was indeed goat skin. The investigators said that clever artists did the work. The duo was asking for the equivalent of \$20,000 US at the beginning of the transaction.



**Seizure of a skin and 25.3 kg of tiger bones and arrest<sup>59</sup>  
Guwahati, State of Assam, India  
March 2015**



**Seizure of a 229 cm by 88,4 cm tiger skin, a 229 cm by 67 cm leopard skin and arrest<sup>60</sup>  
Thakurmunda, State of Odisha, India**

March 25, 2015

**Sentencing to prison time and a 10.000 Rs (\$160 US) fine for illegal possession and attempted sale of a leopard skin<sup>61</sup>  
Delhi, India  
Mars 2015**



**Discovery of a tiger carcass and arrest<sup>62</sup>  
Bandhavgarh National Park, State of Madhya Pradesh, India  
March 2015**

The 20 hectares of land of the Deputy Speaker of Madhya Pradesh Assembly are full of traps that villagers and the bailiff set. The land is in the buffer zone of the national Park, which is said to be home to around 50 tigers.

As the politician wanted to get out of this dirty business, he claims that he's only been there 2 or 3 times. He has owned the property for around 20 years.

**Poaching of a tiger<sup>63</sup>  
Nagarhole National Park, State of Karnataka, India  
March 26, 2015**

The 5-year-old tiger has several fractures in its front right paw. It needs to be amputated. It was shot from a distance of 10 to 15 cm, with a homemade firearm. It managed to flee. Park wardens found it.





SKINNING A TIGER.

(From Rowland Ward's "Sportsman's Handbook.")

### **Tiger, where are you going?<sup>64</sup>**

When good news is not sufficiently backed up, it is probably not true. It makes public opinion and all people involved—including judges and poachers—believe that a species that was going downhill is on the right track. The Indian minister of environment published a press release reassuring that the tiger population has risen by 30%, from 1,706 individuals in 2010 to 2,226 in 2014. "Our reserves are an example for the entire world for the management of tiger populations."

These words should be taken with a grain of salt. At the Indian Statistical Institute and Wildlife Conservation Society based in Oxford in the United Kingdom, scholars have issued a warning about the reliability of the statistical model that Indian biologists used for the last tiger census. According to Ullas Karanth, a respected tiger specialist, member of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), and big cat protection advisor to the government of Karnataka, "the study exposes statistical weaknesses in sampling, calibration and extrapolations that are at the core of the tiger census methodology used by the government to estimate India's numbers, thus undermining their reliability."

The last census shows that even in Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (Uttar Pradesh), there is an increase in the population, even though a high-ranking police officer recently described Pilibhit as a "safe haven" for the poachers.

The tiger reserves and buffer zones cover 68,676 km<sup>2</sup> over 18 States, or 2.06% of India's territory.

In Karnataka, bulldozers are also enemies of the tigers. A new road and bridge are being built within the Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve. The construction is illegal, and continues on. It is prohibited to change the natural habitat of wildlife within the reserves without an impact assessment, and without the opinion of the NTCA—for this case. This infrastructure building is fragmenting the tiger's territory. It will help poachers to make their incursions.

In Rajasthan, 85 illegal stone quarries are active around the Sariska Tiger Reserve. Several of the quarries that use dynamite are less than 100 m from the outer limits of the reserve.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Minister of Agriculture considers that it is urgent to reopen a knacker's yard that had been abandoned for around 10 years. The minister considers that this is all the more urgent as the vultures have disappeared. Wildlife activists are concerned about the effluent discharged into Bhadner River, a tributary of Narmada River, right where tigers go to drink water. "The plant should be shifted at appropriate location otherwise we will move the high court". The forest services are supporting the Minister's remarks. "The machinery inside the plant comes from Denmark." "So no waste goes outside."

**Siberian tigers: to this day failure of the release of 2 and success for 3<sup>66</sup>**  
**Russia**  
**February 2015**



Oustine

Tikhon, 2-and-half years old, is not made for life in the wild. He found himself alone, gaunt, and almost dying of hunger in the forest. He was captured and reintroduced to Primorsky Safari Park, 50 km from Vladivostok. He is in shape, but he is too accustomed to humans. He wouldn't be able to find food for himself. The forest is no longer his kingdom.

Oustine encountered the same disappointment. "On the Trail" spoke about his incursion in China and his dealings with chicken and goat farmers. Oustine was freed in May 2014, under the supervision of President Putin. Like Tikhon, Oustine didn't have enough energy, nor the hunting instinct to capture wild prey that it is increasingly rare in a biologically impoverished natural environment. Oustine was also handicapped as his 4 paws were wounded, probably because of barbed wire. Oustine was placed in Rostov Zoo, with a tigress who is older than him. It is hoped that they will produce offspring.

Based on GPS signals, 3 other specimens released in May 2014 seem to be doing well and moving around freely, despite an exceptionally cold winter. There are less than 450 Amur tigers in the Russian Far East.

**EUROPE**

**Seizure of a tiger head and skin, an Amur leopard, and 50 kg of meat<sup>65</sup>**  
**Moscow, Central Federal District, Russia**  
**January 2015**

2 of Vladimir Putin's favorite animals were to be eaten in 2 Vietnamese restaurants on the southeastern outskirts of Moscow. The Vietnamese were not the only ones to think that tiger meat improves performance "from the boardroom to the bedroom." A kilogram of tiger meat sells for 1,230 €, and a tiger head sells for 2,500 €. Authorities in Moscow believe that the remains of these tigers were sold as traditional Asian medicine. The 2 restaurants are under the control of the enormous Cherkizovo market, which is supplied by and used by the Asian community in Moscow.



**Conviction for sale of jewelry made of tiger teeth and claws<sup>67</sup>**  
**Sheffield, England, United Kingdom**  
**March 2015**



Catherine Emberton confessed to selling jewels online. Her ploy was discovered in June 2014. Released on bail, she recently appeared in Sheffield Crown Court. She pleaded guilty. On March 30, she was sentenced to 120 h of community work and 60£ (93US\$) fine.





## Bears



Georges Lucien Guyot (1885-1973) "Etude d'ours brun"

### AMERICA

**Arrest of 8 people suspected of poaching American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and moose (genre *Alces*, not listed in CITES)<sup>1</sup>**  
**Fort Fairfield, State of Maine, United States of America**  
**January 20, 2015**

Manhunt on the border between Canada and the United States. 60 counts. At least 6 people accused. The bear/moose trade was dismantled via a partnership between New Brunswick officials and their colleagues in Maine. The trial is in April. At the beginning of March, the charges came flooding in: illegal possession of bear penis bones and gall bladders, moose meat and antlers, and deer carcasses.

**Conviction for illegal possession of American black bear claws (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II)<sup>2</sup>**  
**Atikokan, Province of Ontario, Canada**

**January 29, 2015**

Remember that any remains of a wild animal that may be found must be reported to the authorities. If there has been an infraction or anything suspicious, call the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry at 1-877-847-7667, or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS. 4 Wisconsin and Minnesota residents were wandering along the Canadian shore of Loon Lake. They were caught with bear claws on them. In their defense, the 4 men claimed they had come across the bear carcass based on information from the manager of Loon Falls Resort, where they were staying. The bear was killed and was left there because it is said trying to enter the center of the resort. The 4 claw snatchers were each sentenced to 250 CA\$ in fines (\$207 US).



**Seizure of bear paws and a bear bile bottle (*Ursus spp.*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>3</sup>**  
**Eugene International Airport, State of Oregon, United States of America**  
**March 3, 2015**

His explanations were not very clear. He admitted he was a hunter; he didn't know where he got the paws from; he might have killed it himself; someone may have given him the paws; he often receives

paws as gifts; he had forgotten . . . The authorities said that he was going to Taiwan to sell them. In Oregon, a permit is required to kill bears— and he did not have a permit. When his house was searched, the head of a bear was found in his freezer.

**Court appearance for shooting 3 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II)<sup>4</sup>**  
**Missoula, State of Montana, United States of America**  
**March 30, 2015**

The judge stated that the right to self defense in the event of an attack by a protected species does not cover the defense of one's goods. Dan Calvert Wallen claims that the 3 grizzly bears were attacking his poultry. The farmer has been freed on bail until his trial.

### ASIA

#### REPEATED OFFENSE

**Seizure of sloth bear meat and skin (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) and arrests<sup>5</sup>**  
**Bargarh District, State of Odisha, India**  
**January 4, 2015**



The victims were electrocuted in their Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary. The 4 accused people poached regularly. They were aged 30 to 65. This time, they went into the forest for Pousha Purnima, the Harvest festival in Odisha State. For this festival, the meat of endangered wild animals sells well. It's about satisfying human stomachs and divinities.



**Killing of a domesticated Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I)<sup>6</sup>**

**Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**

**January 11, 2015**

It is dangerous to keep a wild animal at home, even if the animal is mainly vegetarian. In the middle of the afternoon, a young boy's arm was snatched by the bear in the cage. The grandmother was nearby. To free the victim's hand, the bear was electrocuted. The bear was not reported on the list of pet bears. It may have come from a farm raising bears to extract their bile. The boy was the 3rd child in 2 years mutilated by a bear in captivity. Bears are neither pets nor farm animals.

**Pursuit of bears 'ordeal (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I)<sup>7</sup>**

**Halong Bay, Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam**

**January 2015**

4 bears dead on a bile farm. Bo, the manager admits that "they died of hunger." "At the height of the bile trade, I had 40 bears." "After it was banned, I only had 5 bears."



Autopsy of a victim

A farm employee says that the survivors eat a bit everyday of feed for farm pigs! "When my bears were farmed for bile, they used to be fed with stewed pork bones and pumpkin." It seems that 108 bears died of hunger in 2014 in the farms of Ha Long Bay. At the same time are rising here and there claims from farmers. They want financial compensation for every bear taken from the farms where they were submitted to the regular bile extraction. Bear farmers, who are usually pig farmers as well, ask for VND 40 to 50 million of compensation (between 2,000 and \$2,500 US), for each bear, before "giving" them to the authorities. ENV stands against any form of solidarity with these exploiters who are violating the 2006 legal ban. No one knows exactly what the Ministry of Agriculture does with the ex-bile producing bears. The solution that ENV and Animals Asia recommend is handing them over to the Tam Dao Bear Sanctuary. It seems that there are still 2,000 bears in the farms. It is believed that many of them are exhibited in makeshift zoos or sold as pets. The vice Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development finally set

the deadline on September 15 of this year for bear farmers in the Quang Ninh to transfer the animals to the Tam Dao facility.

10 years ago, regulations required all captive bears to be registered. The goal was to prevent bears from being captured in forests, and being enslaved on farms. This regulation was never strictly enforced. Instead of being seized, the illegal bears were kept in their workplaces, and the farmers of Ha Long Bay continued to receive busloads of South Korean tourists looking for sex tonic and anti-arthritis potion : bear bile, of course!

**Seizure of bear bile-based product (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I) and arrest<sup>8</sup>**

**Vietnam**

**February 2015**

Last October, ENV was notified about a pharmacy that was supposedly selling products containing bear bile. ENV and local authorities led the investigation. They discovered that the sales license authorization expired in 2011. The manager was interrogated and the products were seized.



**Seizure of 4 frozen paws of an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>9</sup>**

**Urumqi Diwopu International Airport, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China**

**March 2015**

Customs detected the bear paws during a luggage X-ray scan. The man was coming from Kazakhstan, where there are no Asian black bears. The average bear paw weighs 2.7 kg. Each paw sells for up to Yuan 5,000 (\$800 US).



**Seizure of a bear skin (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and arrest<sup>10</sup>**

**Rangamati, State of Odisha, India**

**March 16, 2015**

He must have been around 2 years old. 2 poachers were arrested.



**Seizure of a sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I)<sup>11</sup>  
Devariya District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India  
March 2015**

Is the tradition of dancing bears really dead? It is not easy to break with a tradition that has been around for 400 years. The 10-week-old bear cub was on its way to Nepal. He was to be delivered to the Nat community, a nomad cast that roams in North India and Nepal. They are destined to become acrobats and animal exhibitors in public areas. Its muzzle was pierced. It was infected. After intensive care, the sloth bear will be handed over to the specialized rescue center Agra, managed by SOS Wildlife and Uttar Pradesh State.



**Transfer of 3 bears to the Tam Dao Bear Sanctuary, Vietnam<sup>12</sup>  
March 2015**

3 bears were taken in with the consent of the farmers by Animals Asia and brought to the Tam Dao Natural park where they will be cared for in an adapted enclosure. They all 3 travelled 2000 km by truck. One of them has been nicknamed Berne, a tribute to the ambassador from Switzerland, an ardent defender of the captive bears in Vietnam.

**EUROPE**

**2 alcoholic bears<sup>13</sup>  
Sochi, Krasnodar Krai, Russia  
February 2015**



2 bears are suffering from an addiction to alcohol after several years of being on exhibit in the back of a crummy gambling den in Sochi. They were but cubs when they landed in this hell.

The possibilities of returning them to their natural habitat or setting them in a zoo cannot be considered. The Fondation Brigitte Bardot and Big Hearts Foundation, UK, have stated to take steps- this is the last chance for the 2 victims- to transfer them in Romania to a parc caring for bears damaged by life, ex-attractions on the roadside or in restaurants, slaves to animal trainers or animals mistreated as pets. If CITES certificates are issued, Russia isn't opposed to this scheme.

**Conviction for a polar bear poaching (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) in April 2014<sup>14</sup>  
Autonomous District of Nenetsia, Russia  
March 25, 2015**



On March 25, Andrei Ilyushin was sentenced to pay a fine of RUB 300,000 (\$5,200 US), 9 months of correctional labor, and a 20% decrease in his salary. The hide of a polar bear sells for around \$20,000 US on the black market.

A few days later, a new hide was found and seized in the same place, Vaygach Island (cf. "On the Trail" n°5, p. 67). It was stashed away in a hunting cabin facing the Barents Sea.

# Rhinoceroses

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 Swaziland 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: *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

222 rhinoceros killed in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe and India from January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>

## "On the Trail" n°8

The value of horn on the black market, according to media or customs sources

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref.
Africa	South Africa	43,735/horn	22
Asia	China	40,000 /kg	46
Europe	Sweden	500,000 to 1 million/horn	55

## Death after horns

January 2015 death toll<sup>1</sup>



War has been declared. Violence has doubled. Many attacks take place at night. In India and South Africa, rangers in national parks are authorized to shoot if they believe their life is in danger. For several months, deaths in the poachers' camp has been on the rise. In January, they became increasingly frequent. 13 deaths and loads of survivors who managed to escape, and who will return later with new members, renewed determination, new tactics, and new weapons.

### - Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India.

4 in the morning. The 1<sup>st</sup> day of the year. 5 to 7 poachers. Encounter with a rangers patrol. Exchanged gunfire. 2 poachers killed. Recovery of a .303 caliber rifle, blank and full cartridges.

### - Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India.

At dawn, in 2 different places of the park (430 km<sup>2</sup>). Wednesday, January 14. 3 poachers killed. Recovery on-site of 2 .303 caliber rifles, 2 firearm silencers, and one pistol.

### - Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India.

During the nighttime on Friday, January 16. 6 to 7 poachers. Confrontation with the rangers. Exchanged gunfire. One poacher killed. Recovery on-site of one .303 caliber.

### - Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India.

Dawn on Sunday, January 11. No poachers killed, but next to the dehorned rhinoceros, bullets of AK47 submachine guns and LMGs (Light Machine Guns). The rangers heard initial muffled shots around 2 in the morning. The firearms had silencers.

ColtM16A3 automatic rifle / Light Machine Gun



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LMG submachine guns are particularly light and appropriate for interventions on the field. Most member states of NATO (North Atlantic Trade Organization) use these guns.



**- Orang National Park, State of Assam, India.**

Dawn on Sunday, January 11. One poacher was killed. Two others fled into the fog. Recovery on-site of a .303 caliber rifle, cartridges, and provisions. "Pressure is high during Magh Bihu [the festival for the end of the harvests]," observed a forest expert.

**- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, State of Assam, India.**

Tuesday, January 20. Gunfire exchanged between the ranger patrol and 2 poachers. One of them was killed. Recovery on-site of a .303 caliber rifle and cartridges.  
24 poachers killed in 2014 in Assam.

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

January 5. The rangers clashed with 3 poachers, or perhaps it was the poachers who clashed with the rangers. 2 poachers were killed. The 3<sup>rd</sup> fled after gunfire. Recovery on-site of the rhinoceros dehorning axe.

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

Tuesday, January 13. Confrontation between rangers and 3 poachers. A young man was killed. Another man, 21 years old, was taken prisoner. He was unharmed. The third man, 26 years old, was taken to the hospital. Recovery on-site of a .458 caliber rifle, blank cartridges, an ax, and 2 horns.

These operations resulted in 13 dead on the poacher side - 10 in Assam in India, and 3 in Kruger National Park, and in 6 victims on the rhinoceros side - 4 in India and 2 in South Africa.

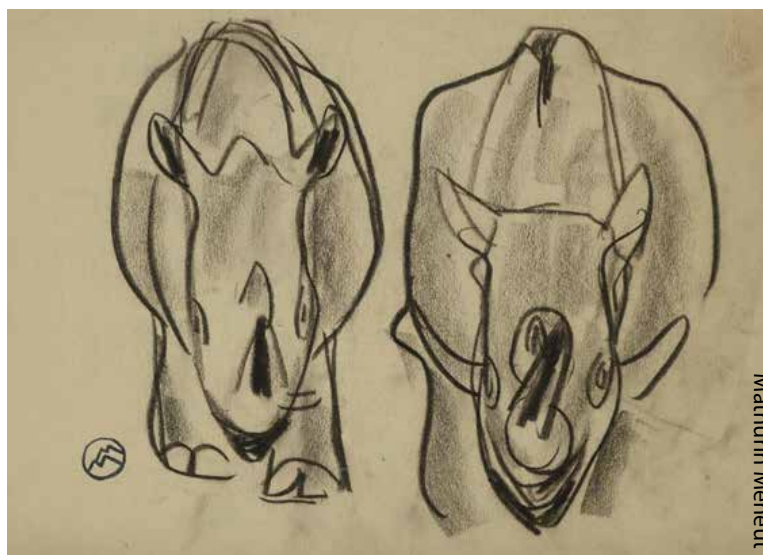
After all these outbreaks, the guards cleaned out the area within a radius of several kilometers, and sometimes found the bodies of dead and dehorned rhinoceroses several days afterwards. The odor of decomposition helped to find the carcasses.

Human rights lawyers and defenders are outraged by this situation—there were poaching suspects, no one knew if they already had committed the act at the time of the attempted arrest, and they were shot on sight. Nevertheless, these men were agile and determined, were armed and knew how to work an ax, and didn't meddle in a wildlife sanctuary to contemplate the stars at night, or to gaze at the ears of rhinoceroses at dawn. In these specific cases, the alleged poachers are the spitting image of poachers.

In the national parks of Assam in northern India, near the border with Bhutan, Myanmar, and China, the poachers now have AK47s, AK56s, and M20s. The guards are armed with .315 caliber rifles.

According to the crime investigation department, the main instigator of rhinoceros poaching in Kaziranga National Park is the Karbi People's Liberation Tigers which demands the independence of Karbi State, carving it out of Assam. The All Assam Students Union (AASU) demands army intervention to support the forest guards. A request to this end has been submitted to the judges in the districts of Nagaon, Golaghat, and Karbi Anglong.

In India and South Africa, communities living around the parks where the rhinoceroses are besieged are divided in 2. The communities themselves are also besieged by doubt, suspicion, betrayal, and retaliation. The families themselves are divided. Cousins poach, and brothers-in-law are rangers. The prosperity of some cities and towns depend on poaching revenue. Families of rangers feel threatened in their homes. Horn trafficking is tearing apart the social fabric. Young 20-year-olds would be offered between 4,000 € and 9,000 € for bringing back 1 to 2 kg of horns snatched from a carcass or from a dying rhinoceros weighing 2 tons. The rangers themselves are increasingly torn between loyalty and greed.



Mathurin Méheut

## AFRICA

### Poaching of 7 rhinoceroses<sup>2</sup>

**Limpopo Province, South Africa**

**Between December 29, 2014 and January 4, 2015**

Poaching has been widespread in this province since the start of the year. General alert for private reserves!

### Release on bail of a man suspected of rhino poaching and arrest<sup>3</sup>

**Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia**

**January 2015**

The former football paramedic from Namibia has been involved in several crimes. A man has died, and 4 black rhinos too. Kandjii and 3 other people have been arrested in Kamanjab District. A gun with a silencer and a large sum of money were found in their car. Another member of the gang was caught at the entrance of Etosha Park, with an ax and knives. That was at the end of 2014. In 2014, 27 black rhinoceros deaths were reported in Kunene Desert. 16 of them were reported as poached, compared to just one poached black rhinos in 2013. These statistics are from the Ministry of Environment. The figures do not include the 4 specimens in Etosha Park, which is next to Kunene Desert. Kandjii is suspected of being involved in the death of 4 black rhinos. He was freed on \$1,749 US bail. He has just been arrested again, for complicity in the murder of a retired German industrialist.



### Poaching of 2 rhinos<sup>4</sup>

**Weenen Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

**January 2015**

Lethally poisoned and dehorned. Weenen sustained 6 losses in 2013 and 2014.

### Arrest of a policeman involved in rhino horn trafficking<sup>5</sup>

**Mkuze, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

**January 8, 2015**

Gumbi, 48 years old, held up 2 fake poachers, and fled with 2 real horns. Gumbi is a real Jozini police officer (Jozini has 2,400 inhabitants). The fake poachers were real Durban anti-poaching inspectors. Gumbi was stopped after a nighttime car chase near Ubumbo (1,300 inhabitants), 20 km from Jozini. Gumbi was driving a police car. The license plates had been modified for this occasion. Gumbi was released on bail for R 50, or \$43 US. The Durban police spokesperson mentioned "endemic corruption" and suspected that poaching syndicates have infiltrated the judicial system. On behalf of the National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa, Natasha Ramkisson said that "The prosecutor is

the person who formulates the charges by applying the law to what is contained within the docket." The trial is scheduled for the end of February.

### Discovery of 4 rhinoceros carcasses<sup>6</sup>

**Private Mkhuze Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

**January 10, 2015**

The figures speak for themselves. -333 in 2010, -448 in 2011, -668 in 2012, -1,004 in 2013 and -1,155 in 2014, including 92 in KwaZulu-Natal. The bodies of 3 adults and one young rhino have just been found. The 3 adults were dehorned.

### A survivor gave birth to a baby rhino<sup>7</sup>

**Kariega Private Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

**January 13, 2015**



The little one on the left, with her big ears, is a miraculous survivor. She emerged from the thickets after 15 days of hiding, behind her mother. The mother has also come a very long way. At the beginning of March 2012, she was found in a pool of blood. Her horns had been taken out with a machete. A male rhino shared the same fate. He was already dead. A third rhino died from drowning in a watering hole that he had fallen into. After this tragedy, a new male was introduced to the reserve in September 2013. The Kariega veterinarian was pleasantly surprised to see that the survivor was pregnant. 16 months afterwards, the little one was born. 40 to 50 kg. In about 15 years, she will weigh over a ton. In 7 years, she will be able to give birth to a rhinoceros herself. As an adult, she will have a front horn around 30 centimeters long, and a nose horn around 60 centimeters long. She will live for 40 or 50 years, and will feed on grasses after being suckled for one year. Throughout her all life, she will need to watch out for hyenas, lions ... and poachers. Her very mobile large ears will be her acoustic radar, in addition to her nose, an essential organ that detects the smell of humans, of other animals, and of fellow rhinos up to 1 km away. Kariega Reserve covers 100 km<sup>2</sup>.



**Discovery of 3 rhinoceros carcasses<sup>8</sup>**  
**Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia**  
**January 2015**

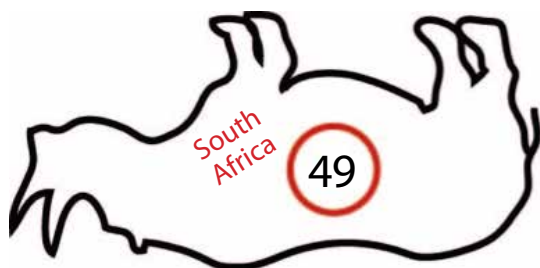
Out of the 3 of them, at least one was killed for his horns. The 2 others are said to have died “naturally”. 23 rhinos and 86 elephants were poached in Namibia in 2014.

**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**Arrest of 2 people suspected of rhinos horn trafficking<sup>9</sup>**

**Kruger National Park, South Africa**  
**January 20, 2015**

The 2 men aged 36 and 39 were driving through Kruger National Park in 2 stolen cars. Large sums of money were found. The 2 of them were released on bail for various offenses, including transporting horns and explosives.



**Seizure of a rhinoceros horn and arrest<sup>11</sup>**  
**Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**  
**January 24, 2015**

Arrested in Sandton, “South Africa’s richest square mile”, the man aged 33 claiming to be a Chinese national was preparing to sell a horn to a client who did not show up. This story was published in the crime section of the website, jumbled with news of the arrest of 10 Nigerians in possession of cocaine and heroin in an apartment and the holdups of the day.

**Poaching of one rhinoceros<sup>12</sup>**

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

**January 29, 2015**

They thought they were taking a photo of a sleeping rhinoceros. They were taking the picture of a dead rhinoceros. Wounded by gunshots at the shoulder, he had walked a long time before collapsing. He was finished off right there, and “the body was removed to prevent harvesting of the horn”.



**Trans<sup>10</sup>**

In response to the inability to control the killing and the trafficking, the South African government is transferring the rhinoceroses, selling them, and exporting them, running the risk of physical and psychological disturbance, territorial disputes, and food shortages.

Things are spiraling out of control. Ecological engineering knows no boundaries. Prehistoric pachyderms are no longer free from administrative barriers. But that’s no problem! They just have to fly over them. Their death rate is under 5%. After helicopter and plane crashes, the most common cause of rhinoceros deaths is an overdose of tranquilizer at the beginning of the operation. White rhinos—the largest rhinos—are hoisted up by their 4 legs and their head. Black rhinos are lighter. Their head and tail are left dangling. Rhinos Without Borders estimates that the cost of moving a single rhinoceros is \$ 45,000 US. WWF was the first organization to work with the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency to send the rhinoceroses into the air. Sometimes the horns are cut off to avoid injury during the flight and the rest of the transfer. Who knows what war chest the horns will be sent to. After the first leg of the trip, via helicopter, the rhinos still have a long way to go. They then go on a truck or a cargo plane. The selected black rhinos are grouped in strongholds that poachers supposedly cannot find or break into. This acrobatic and genetic handling results in taking individuals that are originally healthy and attached to their natural habitats, and subjecting them to high-risk deportations. People say that this is done to create new populations. But are these vast operations a foretaste of the militarized breeding of rhinoceroses, and of the horn cartel that South Africa dreams about? Remember that South Africa is already the world’s leading diamond producing country.



**Moving:**

- 33 black rhinos were transferred from South Africa to Zambia between 2003 and 2010.
- 19 black rhinos were recently transferred inside South Africa according to the WWF within the framework of the Black Rhino Range Expansion Project (BRREP) in cooperation with the Parc and Tourism Agency of the Eastern Cape province.
- According to the South African authorities, 100 rhinos have already been transferred to neighboring countries, 56 have been transferred inside Kruger Park to the special protection zones and in 2015, 200 rhinos will be transferred to “specially protected areas”.
- 30 bids to the call for tenders for the sale of rhinoceros from the Kruger Park have been received by the South African administration. Bids are coming from private reserves and are being considered.
- Project to transfer 100 rhinos to Botswana in 2015 according to Rhinos Without Borders.
- 4 white rhinos were transferred from a zoo in Pretoria to the Center for the Conservation of Tropical Ungulates in Miami.

### **Arrest of 2 man suspected of rhinoceros poaching<sup>13</sup>**

**Pongola, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa  
January 2015**

They were preparing to enter the private Safari Parks reserve with cartridges, a caliber 375 with a silencer, and an ax. They could be released on bail in the coming days.

### **Trial adjournment for suspected rhinoceros poachers<sup>14</sup>**

**Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
February 2015**

The trial was postponed for the second time. The 5 defendants don't have a lawyer. 2 of them remain in custody, release on bail rejected, a third one too, waiting for the payment of his bail of R 1,500 (\$126 US). For the 2 remaining accused, release on bail was upheld.

### **Poaching of a rhinoceros<sup>15</sup>**

**Hoedspruit Zone, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

**February 13, 2015**

A female was killed near Hoedspruit. According to OSCAP (Outraged South African Citizens Against Rhino Poaching), her baby just a few weeks old was found and taken into care. He is doing well.

### **Poaching of 2 white rhinoceros<sup>16</sup>**

**Tyityaba Private Reserve, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

**February 14, 2015**

An adult female and her baby were shot with a large caliber rifle. Their horns were snatched with a machete.

Hotline to report wildlife predators: 078-696-9494.

### **Arrest of 14 suspected poachers<sup>17</sup>**

**Limpopo Province, South Africa  
February 9 to 15, 2015**

4 in Lephalale.

4 near Timbavati.

2 in Gravelotte.

4 on a farm in Cumberland.

Judged in March, 3 of them were sentenced to 11, 6 and 4 years in prison.



### **Conviction of a policeman for active corruption<sup>18</sup>**

**Gaza Province, Mozambique  
February 2015**

The police officer, along with 2 watchmen from a private security company, had arrested poachers and offered them release against Mt 400,000 or \$12,230 US. The deal was completed, the poachers disappeared and the police officer is now in jail for a year.



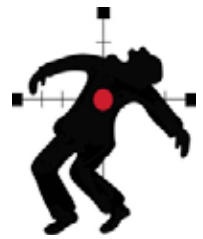
### **Arrest of 2 suspected poachers and death of a third<sup>19</sup>**

**Kruger National Park, South Africa**

**February 2015**

**Février 2015**

The Volkswagen and Audi distributor in South Africa is funding an anti-poaching unit since September 2011. With this initiative, sniffer dogs were hired and trained. 2 of the dogs, Chico and Kombi, have recently helped to arrest 2 poachers. Unfortunately, during a violent clash with the rangers, one of the poachers died. Unite Against Poaching Trust also helped to seize weapons and a horn.



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### **Trial adjournment for 2 suspected poachers<sup>20</sup>**

**Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
February 16, 2015**

The trial was adjourned upon request of the lawyer of the accused. They face 23 charges, including possession of 2 rhino horns and firearms (cf. "On the Trail" n°5, p. 70). A new hearing is scheduled for June 23. The 2 defendants have been released on bail.

### **Poaching of 2 rhinoceros<sup>21</sup>**

**Save Valley Conservancy, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe**

**February 22, 2015**

The first victims reported this year: a female and her little one, dehorned. In 2014, at least 5 rhinos, including 2 babies, were killed in this reserve covering 3,400 km². In Zimbabwe, the estimation of surviving rhinos is around 500.

### **Seizure of a rhino horn and arrest of 4 suspects among which 2 policemen<sup>22</sup>**

**Irene, Gauteng Province, South Africa  
February 24, 2015**

4 men were arrested in the shopping mall. They were about to sell to the investigators a horn which was seized in the back of their car. 2 of the suspects, Mothupi and Khumalo, are police officers. One of them paired up with a dog specifically





trained to detect horns. The value of the seized horn is estimated to be R 500,000 (\$43,735 US). The suspects were freed on bail of R 15,000 (\$1,312 US).

### **Seizure of a rhinoceros horn and arrest<sup>23</sup>**

**Nairobi, Kenya**

**February 24, 2015**

The man pleaded not guilty in Kibera court, and was freed. The bail is said to be KSh 5 million (\$54,655 US).



### **Poaching of 2 rhinoceros<sup>24</sup>**

**Kloof Farm, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

**February 24, 2015**

Killed for its horns, and abandoned with its horns.

### **Discovery of 2 black rhinoceros carcasses<sup>25</sup>**

**Chipinge, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe**

**February 25, 2015**

Amai ("mother" in the Shona language) and her little daughter Tamba were found dead next to a waterhole. They were poisoned. Preventive dehorning was not enough to save them.



### **Arrest of 5 presumed poachers<sup>26</sup>**

**Limpopo Province, South Africa**

**February 26, 2015**

Their car was stopped on the road between Modjadiskloof and Polokwane, despite the fact that the 3 Mozambicans and 2 South Africans on board did try to ward off back luck. In addition to the usual guns, ammunition, and poaching equipment, they were also transporting in their car several plant and animal preparations prescribed by traditional healers. Muti witchcraft is supposed to move away conflicts and the risk of trial. Sangomas say when the smoke from the skin of a burnt python is inhaled, conflicts between fighting parties are eased.



### **Poaching of 2 rhinoceros<sup>27</sup>**

**Mount Camdeboo Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

**March 3, 2015**

There were 3 victims. The 14-year old mother was 2 weeks away from giving birth and a 2-year-old male calf.



### **Arrest of a man accused of arms theft<sup>28</sup>**

**Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

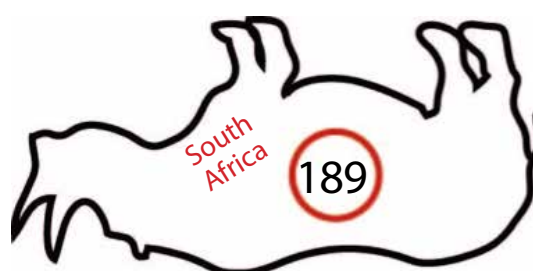
**March 3, 2015**

The suspect works for a gunsmith. In his home, police found silencers and dismantled guns in the process of being transformed and repaired. He is suspected of transporting arms and ammunition for rhinoceros poachers.

### **State Secret**

Will poaching become more and more opaque? The South African Minister of Environmental Affairs, Mrs. Edna Molewa, told critics that there is no legal deadline for publishing statistics on rhino deaths. "The department staff's time was better utilised to pursue other, more important activities". She then reluctantly and publicly lashed out that the statistics will be published almost every quarter.

As of March 5, 189 rhinoceroses in South Africa have been killed since the start of the year. This is an unofficial figure. This figure does however confirm that 2015 could beat the unenviable 2014 record, and confirm what "On the Trail" says— the less rhinos there are, the more are killed. By mid-March 2014, 172 rhinos had died.

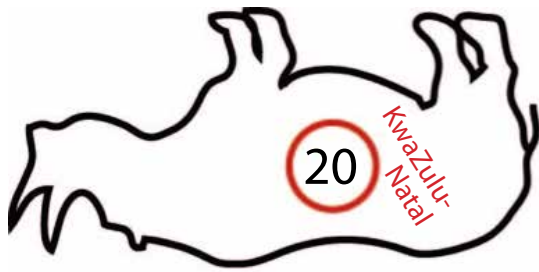


### **Poaching of 6 rhinos, arrest of a poacher, death of a poacher and seizure of a horn<sup>29</sup>**

**KwaZulu-Natal Province and Limpopo Province, South Africa**  
**March 6 to 8, 2015**

A Wilderness Foundation officer noted that poaching syndicates are much more mobile now than 8 years ago. They go to places where security is weak. They come to places where they are not expected.





**Seizure of a rhinoceros horn (600g) and arrest<sup>30</sup>  
Nairobi-Namanga Highway, Kenya  
March 10, 2015**

One of the 3 suspects is a police officer. The release on bail was rejected. The police officer threatened to shoot prior to being handcuffed. He was arrested on the road between Nairobi and Namanga. It is assumed that he was heading for Tanzania. A Congolese man was part of the trio.

**Poaching of 2 white rhinos<sup>31</sup>  
Ol Jogi Ranch, Laikipia Province, Kenya  
March 12, 2015**

It seems that the private 235 km<sup>2</sup> ranch is a victim of strengthened protection in national parks. Pachyderms are poached wherever they are accessible. They made the incursion in the night. One of the 2 rhinoceroses killed was not dehorned. The poachers were hurried. These were the first 2 cases of the year. William Kiprono, KWS director, recently published rhinoceros poaching statistics for Kenya: 5 in 2007, 30 in 2012, 59 in 2013, and 35 in 2014.

**Arrest of 5 persons suspected of rhinoceros poaching<sup>32</sup>  
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
March 2015**

5 months after the incident—7 dead and dehorned rhinos and 1 missing—5 suspects were arrested by the elite police, the Hawks. 3 of them were released after being interrogated. 2 of them were sent to jail. They are asking for release on bail. They admitted to killing 2 rhinoceroses.

**Poaching of a rhinoceros<sup>33</sup>  
South Africa  
March 20, 2015**

Shot to death! The horns were just too beautiful . . .



**Nocturnal poaching of 2 rhinoceros<sup>34</sup>  
North-West Province, South Africa  
March 22, 2015**

**Seizure of 5 kg of rhinoceros horn and abalone.  
Arrest of a 32 years old Chinese citizen<sup>35</sup>  
Cape Town International Airport, Western Cape  
Province, South Africa  
March 24, 2015**

**Poaching of a rhinoceros<sup>36</sup>  
Tyityaba Private Reserve, Western Cape Province,  
South Africa  
March 2015**

5 in one month. The last victim had been dehorned to prevent a poacher attack. Illusionary! They killed the rhino to get the horn stumps.

**Poaching of 2 rhinoceros<sup>37</sup>  
South Africa  
March 2015**



Rescue, watering, blind-folding, sedative injection, caring for wounds. The 2 victims of attempted murder and horn removal might pull through.



© Saving The Survivors



**Questioning about the competence of police dogs<sup>38</sup>**  
**Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**  
**March 25, 2015**

Killer the police dog is being questioned by the lawyer of the 2 alleged rhinoceros poachers. Killer had no problems driving out the 2 poachers in the thickets near a dead and dehorned rhinoceros. "On the Trail" has already talked about Killer's feats in the past.

In 1920, a suspect was questioned and then indicted after a police dog tracked him down. The South African Court of Appeal rejected the indictment. The court considered that there was not enough scientific proof of the ability of some dog races to detect and follow the scent of a man. In 1986, the Court of Appeal amended the 1920 judicial precedent and considered that recognition of a suspect by a police dog can not be accepted as a piece of evidence, unless other clues or presumptions back it up.

The Nelspruit Magistrate's Court will need to issue a new ruling on the legal admissibility of the olfactory system of dogs.

One of the suspects is from Mozambique. He introduced himself as a hairdresser's assistant. He says he was going to South Africa to look for work. "The fence had a hole in it" "Wherever I travelled between Mozambique and South Africa, I never saw any signing indicating I was in a national Park." For the conflicting version of the Kruger rangers and information on the intervention of Killer and his master, refer to "On the Trace" n° 7, p. 65.



Is Killer unfailing ?

**Death of 2 persons suspected of rhinoceros poaching attempt<sup>39</sup>**  
**Nakuru National Park, Nakuru County, Kenya**  
**March 27, 2015**

The knife, ax, ammunition, and the meager provisions were found near the bodies. It is said that the poachers refused to turn themselves in despite the demands. They were lying in ambush in the rhino range section. 7 rhinoceroses were killed in the park between February and April of last year.



**Seizure of 17 rhinoceros horns and arrest<sup>40</sup>**  
**Matola, Maputo Province, Mozambique**  
**March 2015**

The horns were in a Toyota Land Cruiser heading toward Pemba, a port for exports to Asia. The driver and the 2 people with him say that they didn't know anything about the loot hidden in the back of the car. The driver is from Pemba. 2 of his Vietnamese friends from Maputo contacted him. His sole task was to take the car to Pemba.

It seems like the 17 horns came from a series of poaching incidents in Kruger Park. Maputo is around a hundred kilometers from Kruger Park; and is 2,500 km from Pemba.



**ASIA**

**Seizure of a rhinoceros horn<sup>41</sup>**  
**Bahuaripidari, Central Development Region, Nepal**  
**January 5, 2015**



Chhotelal Sah, aged 55, was walking along a road along Gandak Canal. He had a horn in his bag.

**Discovery of 3 rhinoceros carcasses<sup>42</sup>**  
**Jaldapara National Park, State of West Bengal, India**  
**January 24, 2015**



The rangers consider that the death of 2 of the 3 was due to natural causes and a fight between rhinos. Pabitra Rava and Sunder Singh Rava, the elected heads of Mendabari gram sabha and Kurmai gram sabha\*, doubt this. "We strongly suspect the involvement of a section of forest staff in rhino poaching." They also wonder why the 3 carcasses were found a few days after the rhinos counting in the Park. An annual census of the rhinoceroses is performed by several parties. An expert on this case file deplores that "most people are there to take photos of the forest, not to count the rhinos." "If the work had been done properly, the 3 dead rhinos would have been found during the counting." Last year, at least 4 rhinos were poached in Jaldapara National Park.

\*Gram sabha is the popular assembly of a community, composed of men and women over 18 years of age. It meets twice a year.

**Arrest of a rhino poacher<sup>43</sup>**  
**Malaysia**  
**January 30, 2015**

Not quite a good news : Nepal celebrates 4 years of zero poaching of its emblematic species, including rhinoceroses. In fact, as stated in "On the Trail" n°5, p. 78 and "On the Trail" n°7, p. 92 and 51, a rhinoceros was poached in May 2014, an elephant was shot dead in November, and a leopard died from a head injury in December. A minimum death count.

Real good news: Rajkumar Praja, aged 31, (cf. "On the Trail" n°3, p. 48) had been on the run since 2013. He is said to have poached 15 rhinoceroses in Chitwan National Park, and was sentenced in absentia to 15 years in prison. Interpol had a red notice on him and he was arrested in Malaysia where he had been staying for ten days. He was promptly extradited to Nepal.



**Poaching of a rhinoceros<sup>44</sup>**  
**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**  
**February 3, 2015**

At dawn, the guards hear gun-fire and rush to the scene. Militiamen greet them with AK47 shots, before fleeing to the Karbi Anglong hills. The dehorned male is found a little further. He is the 5<sup>th</sup> rhino killed this year in the Park. The government considers using the army to back up rangers in order to protect the rhinos. In Assam State, 32 rhinos were killed last year, and 41 in 2013, mostly in the Kaziranga Park.



**Discovery of a rhinoceros carcass<sup>45</sup>**  
**Jaldapara National Park, State of West Bengal, India**  
**February 7, 2015**

Again an adult male was found shot dead with his horn cut off, the second casualty this year in the Park. During the autopsy, 2 caliber 303 bullets were extracted from his flank and head. It seems that the strengthened armed surveillance in Kaziranga pushes the poachers toward Jaldapara, 500 km further in the neighboring State. In Bengal, the on-sight shooting of poachers caught in the act is discussed. This strategy has been used in Assam, where the death toll comes to 6 poachers against 5 rhinos since the beginning of the year - a merciless war between rhinos protectors and killers.

**Conviction for rhino horn trafficking<sup>46</sup>**  
**Qiaocheng District, Anhui Province, China**

**February 7, 2015**

Sentenced to 5 years. Yuan 600,000 in fines (\$96,000 US). Weight of the horns: 2.581 kg. Value per kg: CNY 250,000 (\$40,000 US).



**Seizure of a rhino horn and arrest<sup>47</sup>**  
**Fatapukur, State of West Bengal, India**  
**February 10, 2015**





The forest rangers of the Baikunthapur division seize a rhino horn, a motorcycle, a Maruti Omni van and arrest 5 suspects. Hamidul Sarkar, Rasidul Islam, Pafizuddin Mian, Jalil Mian, and Bajla Rehman, residents of Cooch Behar and Alipurduar, are remanded in custody for 14 days. They were planning to take the horn to Siliguri to sell it.

**Poaching of a rhinoceros and arrest<sup>48</sup>**  
**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**  
**February 27, 2015**

At dawn, he was shot dead with an automatic rifle. Ammunitions and a machete were found near its carcass, dehorned. Atuwa Munda, the new Forest & Environment minister of Assam, ordered an investigation during his visit to Kaziranga. 5 suspects were arrested, including Dimbeswar Borgohai, a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Forest Protection Force.

**Poaching of a rhinoceros and arrest<sup>49</sup>**  
**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**  
**March 3, 2015**

7 in the park since the start of the year. It happened in a deathly silence, around midnight. Prints were found the next day. They went through Brahmaputra. The Assam government is in crisis. The Ministries of the Environment, Agriculture, and Finance have been holding one meeting after another. Rumors are circulating about the complicity and corruption of some of the security staff. The governor has been asked to request reinforcements from the Indian army. The police are interrogating an assistant professor of a regional university.

**Seizure of a rhino horn and arrest<sup>50</sup>**  
**Nagaon District, State of Assam, India**  
**March 6, 2015**

The 3 men had a horn. They were arrested 70 km from Kaziranga National Park.

**Death of a ranger and of a poacher<sup>51</sup>**  
**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**  
**March 11, 2015**

A deadly encounter. One poacher and one member of the Assam Police Rangers Group (aged 27) were killed. .303 caliber bullets, AK47 cartridges, batteries, and an ax were found at the scene of the clash.



**Poaching of a rhinoceros<sup>52</sup>**  
**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**  
**March 13, 2015**

The carcass of the dehorned rhinoceros was found in the Park. It was the 9<sup>th</sup> victim on rhino side in Kaziranga National Park since the beginning of the year.

**Seizure of 1.39 kg of rhino horn and arrest of 2 Vietnamese passengers<sup>53</sup>**  
**Ho Chi Minh City Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Vietnam**  
**March 17, 2015**

1.39 kg of horn was cut up into pieces and split up into the heads of frozen lobsters.



**EUROPE**

**Charging of 3 suspects for rhino horns trafficking<sup>54</sup>**  
**Prague, Central Bohemian Region, Czech Republic**

The dismantling of the South African-Czech network is in progress. Czech customs conducted 2 spectacular seizures.

1 - 24 horns worth € 3.85 million as of July 2013. The investigators believe that at least 25 rhinoceroses in Limpopo Province alone were killed cold-bloodedly, point-blank, by the men who claimed to be Czech hunters, or by hit men provided by Dawie Groenewald—the notorious trafficker with 1,736 charges against him in South Africa, and wanted in the United States for breaching wildlife regulations (cf. "On the Trail" n°6, p. 62 and "On the Trail" n°7, p. 72, and 75).

2 - 2 horns hidden in a spool of steel wire in December 2013. 3 Vietnamese citizens have been charged. Exhibits and compromising documents were found in the homes of the suspects in 2 Czech towns, and in Sapa Market in Prague. The 3 Vietnamese suspects were indicted after 16 Czech nationals were found and indicted in December 2014. Genetic analysis of the 2 horns seized in December established that they came from a white rhino killed by

a Czech hunter in a hunting reserve near Lephalale (formerly Ellisras) in Limpopo Province in South Africa. The hunting reserve seems to belong to a Czech couple.

**Seizure of a rhinoceros horn and arrest<sup>55</sup>**  
**Stockholm, Sweden**  
**March 2015**

10,000 km from South Africa and 7,000 km from As-sam, Sweden thought it was safe from rhinoceros horn trafficking. Yes, the Rathkeale Rovers did prow around in Sweden, and horns had been stolen from museums such as the Goteberg Natural History Museum in July 2011. But this was the first time Swedish passports were mixed up in the trafficking. It is not known where the horn came from. The horn is large. It is said to be worth around \$500,000 US. One source says it is worth \$1 million US.

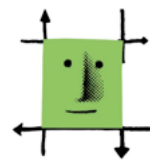
**Seizure of 2 rhinoceros horns<sup>56</sup>**  
**Milan-Malpensa Airport, Lombardy Region, Italy**  
**March 30, 2015**



During a luggage inspection of a Chinese national on his way to Pu Dong (China), customs officers found 2 rhinoceros horns. They were inside 2 wooden Buddha statues. This is the 2nd catch in 20 days. (See "Rhino-elephants" p. 67)



**Rhino traffic transits through Cherbourg**



ROBIN DES BOIS

Press release, April 13, 2015

John Slattery, a member of Rathkeale Rovers (Rathkeale vagrants), was arrested on 6 April 2015 in the port of Cherbourg by the border police. He was landing from a car ferry arriving from Ireland. He was subject of an international arrest warrant. He is in custody for a period of 60 days, the time for justice of the United States to transmit its request for extradition.

The Rathkeale Rovers come from a community of people originating from Rathkeale in Limerick County in Ireland. They are sought by Europol and police worldwide. They specialize in theft, receiving stolen goods and illegal sale of antiquities. They are suspected of having participated in several rhino horn thefts from European museums. A horn of 8 kg was stolen from the Museum of Natural History of Rouen (Normandy) in March 2011. The neighboring Museum of Le Havre was also robbed but the stolen horn was in resin, as museum curators had, as a precaution, removed the authentic horn from the exposed trophy.

John Slattery is suspected of being an accomplice for his brother Michael Slattery sentenced to 14 months in prison by a court in Brooklyn (New York, USA). The case concerned an illegal transaction of black rhino horns between a taxidermist of Texas, the Slattery brothers and co, and a Chinese antique dealer living in New York charged with smuggling horns into China.

The horns (4.985 kg) were seized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as part of "Operation Crash" to dismantle networks of illegal trafficking of rhino horns from the United States. "Crash" is the common name of a rhino herd. On the Asian market, the 4 horns would reach a value of € 205,000.

Illegal trafficking of rhino horn has taken alarming proportions in 5 years. Rhinos in Africa and Asia are threatened with extinction due to poaching. Rhino horns are wrongly considered to have anti-cancer and aphrodisiac. Analyses show that they are made of keratin just like the human species nails.

Defended by powerful lawyers, protected by countless homonyms within their clan, their apparent insolvency and mobility, Rathkeale Rovers often manage to slip from justice nets. In this regard, the case of John Slattery is exemplary. It will show the will of the French justice department to fight uncompromisingly the international wildlife crime network.



# Rhinos and Elephants

## AFRICA

### GANG

#### **Arrest of a gangster involved in the poaching of elephants and rhinoceroses<sup>1</sup>**

**Near Simiyu, Tanzania**

**January 5, 2015**

Businessman is a very vague term. The businessman is the man whose profession, declared or not, is to do business and make a profit. Importation, exportation, extortion are often among the modus operandi of businessmen and businesswomen. Some are specialized, others multi-skilled. That's the case of John Njile, a businessman from Bariada (population 40,000) who, with a gang at his disposal, robbed restaurants, grocery stores, shops, cell-phone stores and... the reserves sheltering pachyderms with tusks and horns.

Mister John is 46 and trigger happy. During a night of secret hunting for elephants and rhinos in the reserve of Maswa, coupled with Serengeti National Park (751 km<sup>2</sup>) and sought after by international hunters to shoot zebras and buffalo, he also killed one of his accomplices. It wasn't a hunting accident. Mr. John does his business with his automatic weapon. He was arrested on January 5.

#### **Seizure of 29 elephant tusks (300 kg), 2 rhinoceros horns and a giraffe tail<sup>2</sup>**

**Katombora, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

**February 22, 2015**

As part of a joint operation, Zambian and Zimbabwean authorities are conducting an investigation on the murder of 2 rhinos, a mother and her little one, and horn theft in the Save Valley Conservancy. 12 Zambian poachers near Zambezi National Park were tracked down. They fled, abandoning their encampment. No arrest was made, but \$ 50,000 US of ivory was found on-site.



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## AMERICA

### **Appearance for rhino horns and elephant tusks smuggling<sup>3</sup>**

**State of Florida, United States of America**

**January 2015**

Elite Estate Buyers, a Florida auction house, and its director Christopher Hayes are on the radar screen of Operation Crash (cf. "On the Trail" n°1, 3, 5, and 6). Hayes is accused of having planned the escape of 6 black rhino horns, ivory and coral objects. Elite purportedly helped foreign traffickers forge certificates and other documents to US Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. customs. Elite in particular had an ongoing relationship with a Texan resident, a key link in horn trafficking to China. Elite sold him 2 horns for \$80,500 US, with over \$ 15,000 US in commissions. The horns that Elite sold to outlaw exporters in China are valued at \$ 400,000 US. In 2012 alone, Elite organized 6 auctions of horns, ivory, and coral.

Hayes pleaded guilty. Hayes revelations to the investigators about the smuggling network toward China earned him a reduced sentence of only 3 months probation. The fine was hefty. Elite must pay \$ 1.5 million US.

Elite is one of the oldest auction houses in the United States of America. Elite's Facebook page offers giant elephant tusks and rhinoceros horn libation cups for sale. Elite says that these items were brought to the territory of the United States over 100 years ago, a dating opening the doors to commercialization.

### **Conviction for trafficking of rhinoceros horn, elephant ivory and coral<sup>4</sup>**

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

**March 25, 2015**

2.5 years of imprisonment without remission for Xiao Ju Guan (cf. "On the Trail" n°6, p. 107 and "On the Trail" n°7, p. 72) also known as Tony Guan. The man who called himself an "antique dealer" in British Columbia illegally exported carved ivory from the United States. He pleaded guilty for trafficking in ivory, and in rhinoceros horns and coral. The Canadian police also found 50,000 pills of ecstasy in his shed. A New York court issued the sentence.



© U.S. Department of Justice

## Arrest for rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory trafficking<sup>5</sup>

**St. Cloud, State of Minnesota, United States of America**

**March 31, 2015**



The philosophy professor, specialist of the French writer Jean-Paul Sartre and of Chinese religions was also a horn, libation cup, and ivory trafficker. Yiwei Zheng's double life is disturbing for St. Cloud State University. His passport was confiscated and he was released on bail

for \$ 25,000 US. He will be able to resume teaching, until his trial and his imprisonment without remission—the usual sentence that American courts issue for ivory and rhinoceros horn traffickers.

Via eBay and his online business called "Crouching Tiger Antiques", Zheng is accused of introducing and exporting carved ivory and other antiques made of rhinoceros horn to and from the United States of America, between 2006 and 2011. Summing up the situation, the prosecutor Laura Provinzino said that such activities feed into the black market and thus threaten vulnerable animal species. "On the Trail" notices how Zheng bought a libation cup at the renowned auction house Christie's, in Paris. He then illegally had it sent from France to the United States

via FedEx. This is just one of his offenses. Zheng was in contact with his accomplices of Chinese origin. They also lived in the United States or were in transit. He sold his suspicious "antiques" to them. The 2 rhinoceros horn transactions took place in a McDonald's in St. Cloud/ Minnesota.

## EUROPE

### Seizure of an ivory Christ crucifix, an elephant tusk section and 3 rhinoceros horns<sup>6</sup>

**Milan Malpensa Airport, Lombardy Region, Italy  
March 2015**

The Chinese citizen was going back home.



## All together for the elephants

37 European African, American and Asian NGOs wrote on January 20, 2015 to Mrs. Royal, Ecology Minister in France asking her to ban any trade and export from France of raw ivory in the shape of tusks or cut tusks (cf. "On the trail" No. 7p. 95). Auctions of post-colonial ivory are increasing in France. The high quotation rate of ivory brings out elephant ghosts from attics. On 28 January 2015, Ms Royal has in a first measure suspended sine die export of raw ivory. France hopes that every European country take the same initiative like Germany, Austria, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden. This encouraging position is however not sufficient.





On March 7, Cannes Auction sold 500 kg of raw elephant tusks. Potential customers were informed by auctioneers they could circumvent the French legal decision by getting an export certificate outside the European Union in Belgium using the bad offices of Art on the Move based in Brussels and specialized in transport and logistics for "works of art". Most tusks were bought by a young Asian man.

Cannes Auction used the CITES logo in watermark in its catalog. Informed by Robin des Bois (Robin Hood), the CITES Secretariat expressed dissatisfaction with the French Ministry of Ecology. An unannounced visit of Customs the eve of the auction registered 17 breaches of CITES regulations on animal parts other than raw elephant tusks. The details of these particular offenses relating to crocodilians, turtles and carved ivory has not been revealed yet.



To block the maneuvers of Cannes auctions or other auction houses in France and Europe, a letter signed by 41 NGOs was sent on March 23 to the competent authorities in all European countries asking them to suspend in turn export of raw ivory from their territory. The aim of these NGOs is to lead to the complete closure of the export from the European Union. In the absence of response, 21 countries were contacted again on April 23 by Robin des Bois, coordinator for this campaign. The Ministers responsible for the implementation of CITES in France, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden have also written to this effect to their European counterparts.



On March 30, the Dupont and associated auction house in Morlaix, Brittany region in western France, intended to auction "3 tusks of the last elephants of Senegal, taken from poached elephants." Catalog stressed "the high historical and scientific value of these tusks belonging to the last elephants in Niokolo-Koba Nature Park". Pictures and descriptions of the tusks were accompanied by the following statement: "Regarding the export from the European Union, the future buyer will have to learn about the legal restrictions in particular in France, which now prohibits any re-export outside the European Union". Attentive to the calls of Robin des Bois and many other NGOs and their supporters, the Dupont house has withdrawn from their auctions all elephant tusks expressing the wish not to be confused with the Cannes Auction "rascals".

On April 13, a letter coordinated by WildAid in Hong Kong and Robin des Bois in Paris signed by 52 international NGOs asked the Secretary for the Environment of Hong Kong to suspend all import and export of raw tusks. Hong Kong imported 206 elephant tusks for the single year 2013, including 191 from the European Union. The letter emphasizes the complementarity of the suspension of export from the European Union and of the suspension of import and export in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

"Such a step would reduce the trafficker's room for maneuver and will facilitate the control of the legality of ivory in the numerous retail shops in Hong Kong."



\* WildAid Hong Kong, Robin des Bois France, ADM Capital Foundation Hong Kong, Amboseli Trust for Elephant Kenya, Animals Asia Foundation Hong Kong, Animal Defenders International United Kingdom, Aqua-Meridian (ACE Foundation) Hong Kong, Association pour la Protection des Animaux Sauvages (ASPAS) France, Awely Des animaux et des hommes France, Born Free Foundation United Kingdom, Born Free USA, The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Kenya, The David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation United Kingdom, EAGLE Network (Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement) Cameroun, Eastern Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness (ECCEA) Dominica, Ecovision Hong Kong, ElephantVoices Norway / USA, Elephant Action League USA, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) United Kingdom, Ecologie sans frontière France, Energy Saving & Environment Concern Alliance (ESECA) Hong Kong, Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis France, Fondation Brigitte Bardot France, Fondation Franz Weber Switzerland, Friends of the Elephant (Vrienden van de Olifant) Netherlands, Greenpeace East Asia Hong Kong, Greensense Hong Kong, Humane Society International USA, Humane Society of Canada, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Institut Jane Goodall France, Jane Goodall Institute China, Jane Goodall Institute Hong Kong, L214 France, Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux France, Lilongwe Wildlife Trust Malawi, Mille Traces France, OSCAP (Outraged South African Citizens Against Rhino Poaching) South Africa, PETA Asia Pacific Hong Kong, Performing Animal Welfare Society USA, Prowildlife Germany, Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas e.V Germany, Save The Elephants Kingdom / Kenya, Sens Afrique Solidaire France, Species Survival Network (SSN), SOS Elephants Chad, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Hong Kong, WILDAFRICA Save African Animals Czech Republic, Wildlife At Risk International (WAR) Netherlands, Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand, Wildlife Friends International Netherlands, WildLifeRisk Hong Kong, WWF Hong Kong.

Letter available at : <http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/Common-letter-Hong-Kong.compressed.pdf>

# Elephants

The African elephant, *Loxodonta Africana*, is listed in CITES Appendix I, except populations from South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe which are in Appendix II. The Asian elephant, *Elphas maximus*, is listed in Appendix I.

**The seizure of ivory from January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> is equal to 384 elephants**

Using the average weight of 4.5 kg per tusk. The seizures represent 10% of global traffic. The 647 seized ivory articles and tusk section of which the weight was not communicated have not been included in the total.

## "On the Trail" n°8 Black market raw ivory quotation from media or customs sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Gabon	38	23
	Kenya	1 102	11
		1 681	31
		1 824	33
	Tanzania	1 976	7
		2 594	36
	Zimbabwe	149	61
		166	2*
Asia	Thailand	1 127	66
	India	2 400	69

\* See chapter "Rhino and Elephants" p.67.

## AFRICA



### SPIDERNET OPERATION<sup>1</sup> Tanzania From January to March 2015

Spidernet is extending Operation Tokomeza. The operation started near Katavi National Park. The operation inspected several villages where ex-Hutu "rebels" from Burundi had sought refuge. The inspections were conducted without excessive violence, according to the initial information. Spidernet has spread its web over Ruaha National Park and Selous Game Reserve.

100 guns were confiscated. 4 alleged major traffickers were arrested. In Ruaha, 24 pieces of tusks were seized. In Selous, 61 tusks were seized. The initial cross-checking suggests that ivory is regularly trafficked from Tanzania and northern Mozambique to Burundi.



### Tanzania : what they get from it ?

The person who kills the elephant:	\$ 3 to \$ 5 US/kg of ivory
The person who removes the tusks:	\$ 3 US / kg.
The person who hides the tusks:	\$ 3 to \$ 5 US/kg
Minimum daily wage in Tanzania:	\$ 2.15 US (farm worker)



**Carnage in the Malian Gourma<sup>2</sup>**  
**Gourma-Rharous Circle, Tombouctou Region, Mali**

**January 1<sup>st</sup> to February 10, 2015**



19 in 40 days. The last elephants of the Sahel slaughtered by war and poachers.

**Poaching of an elephant<sup>3</sup>**  
**Masai Mara, Township of Narok, Kenya**  
**January 2, 2015**

Narok, the carnage continues. A large male in very bad shape, nearly dead, had taken refuge in a large private garden after an attack by poachers. The removal of the elephant's tusks was prevented by the close proximity to homes. The victim was voluntarily slaughtered in order to be put out of its misery.



**Poaching of an elephant<sup>4</sup>**  
**Maasai Mara, Narok County, Kenya**  
**January 7, 2015**



"My name is Ranger Siranka and I am an Elephant Aware ranger. You may already know of me but I would like to share this with you again anyway. I am a young Maasai man from Siana and aside from my ranger work I also help admin this page. Yesterday I was at the scene of a dead elephant that had been killed by poachers. What led my unit and myself to the exact location of the carcass was the unmistakable, stomach-churning smell. Those who have never smelled this cannot know how horrible it is. Upon finding the carcass we were even more sickened to find it was a young female. I think she was barely 16 and it is likely her tusks were small..." She was speared the night before. She was found at twilight.

**Seizure of ivory and arrests<sup>5</sup>**  
**Kasane, Province in Northwest Botswana**  
**January 2015**

Five men native to Botswana and Zimbabwe in a Corolla headed toward the northern border. Did they have a meeting with a member of the Chinese diaspora living in Namibia or in Zambia?

**Arrest of 12 poachers<sup>6</sup>**  
**Zakoumba National Park, Guéra Region and Haraze Manguigne Department, Salamat Region, Chad**  
**January 8, 2015**

Even though the tusks of elephants in Zakouma are not that long, they are dying even faster than elsewhere. 3,900 died in 2005, 3,100 in 2006, 940 in 2008, and 620 in 2009. There are only between 150 and 200 of them left now. 2 groups of poachers were recently caught.

**Seizure of 25 pieces of elephant tusks (42 kg) and arrests<sup>7</sup>**

**District of Mlele, near Katavi, Tanzania**  
**January 12, 2015**

The 2 men (25 and 35) were waiting for the bus destined for Mwanza, a journey of 14 hours. The 2 refugees of Burundi had in their bags 25 pieces of ivory of a value on the Tanzanian market of 148.5 million Sh, or \$83,000 US. It's the second time in a month that elephant tusks from Katavi National Park are seized by the regional police. Katavi is the third largest Tanzanian park in surface area. It shelters more than 2,000 elephants. "It's isolated, deprived of fences and infrequently visited." The poachers know it well. The camp for refugees from Burundi is in the region of Katavi.



Entrance to Katavi National Park

**Seizure of 80 kg of ivory and tools for ivory carving<sup>8</sup>**

**Togo**  
**January 2015**

**Poaching of an elephant<sup>9</sup>**  
**Rukinga Ranch, Taita Taveta County, Kenya**  
**January 15, 2015**

A large 40-year-old male, dead for at least 2 days. The odor was already very strong. It still had its tusks on and 2 open wounds. Neither a bullet nor an arrow, probably a poisoned spear.

**Seizure of 10 ivory tusks (18 kg)<sup>10</sup>**  
**Mouila and Mandji, Ngounié Province, Gabon**  
**January 2015**



The elephants were probably killed in Moukalaba-Doudou National Park, 4,500 km<sup>2</sup> large where gorillas and a few dozen elephants live.

The heavy players of the trans-African team – 3 from Gabon, one from the Ivory Coast and one from Cameroon – were transporting 10 small tusks for a total weight of 18 kg. The target of the brave poachers was elephants aged 3 to 4. For the first time in the Western Africa media, the possibility of ivory traffic for the benefit of religious terrorism in Nigeria and Cameroon is discussed.

**Seizure of 6 tusks (62 kg) of ivory and arrests<sup>11</sup>**  
**Mosiro, Township of Narok, Kenya**  
**January 18, 2015**

Return to Narok, stronghold of Kenyan poachers. The 2 suspects were preparing to make the trip to Nairobi to sell the 62 kg. If they had arrived at their destination, they would have pocketed between \$60,000 and \$70,000 US.

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**  
**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**Seizure of 64 ivory tips (126 kg), arrest and conviction<sup>12</sup>**

**Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, Congo**  
**January 19, 2015**

A pregnancy had allowed the butcher of elephant meet to avoid prison last year. Today, with her husband, she is caught in possession of 32 pairs of tusks, for a total weight of 126 kg – of milk teeth ripped out from babies. The reduction in seized



tusks weight is an implacable indicator of adult elephants shortage. The man was sentenced to 2 years in prison.

Congo-Brazzaville lost 5,000 elephants between 2009 and 2011. A lieutenant disheartened by the prevailing impunity admitted: "No one should ignore the law, much less knowingly."



**Discovery of 2 elephant carcasses<sup>13</sup>**  
**Arabuko Sokoke Forest, Township of Kilifi, Kenya**  
**January 2015**

The beautiful forest along the Indian Ocean has been bereaved by the violent deaths and mutilation of 11 elephants in the last 18 months.



**Discovery of 10 elephant carcasses and seizure of 4 tusks<sup>14</sup>**

**Bouba Ndjidda National Park, Northern Cameroon**

**January 2015**

3 years later, are the Sudanese back in Cameroon in Bouba Ndjidda National Park 1,000 km from their stronghold – they could have entered Northern Cameroon via Sena-Oura National Park in Chad – or are there other armed groups? For the elephants, the result is the same. 10 carcasses were found in the sector 23 of the park. The disseminated local population would not prove very cooperative with members of BIR, the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of Rapid Intervention in charge of shedding light on this new wave of poaching and chasing away invaders. May be the residents don't feel free to speak or have more or less an interest in the destabilization and mutilation of elephants. Gunfire occurred near a hidden camp and the Cameroon regular army seized several hundred ammunition, the 4 tusks and 4 horses. Bouba Ndjidda National Park extends over an area of 2,200 km<sup>2</sup>.





### **Seizure of 61 elephant tusks and arrest of 2 suspects<sup>15</sup>**

**Nanyumbu District, near Mtwara, Tanzania**

**January 2015**

The Tanzania Elephant Protection Society stated 2 years ago that 30 elephants were killed each day in the country.

If this figure is accurate, it's only the product of one day of poaching in Tanzania that reappears in this seizure in the southern part of the country close to Mozambique.

### **Seizure of ivory and arrest<sup>16</sup>**

**Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo**

**January 2015**

"Our children will learn that there was an animal called the elephant." Cosmas Wilungula, director of the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN) is lucid and paternal. "150,000 a few years ago, no more than 10,000 today." The raw ivory seized equals to the slaughter of 15 adult and sexually mature elephants. Congolese and Vietnamese people are involved.

### **Seizure of 35.22 kg of ivory and of 4.58 kg of crocodile skins (*Crocodylidae* spp., Annex I)<sup>17</sup>**

**Lomé, Maritime region, Togo**

**January 29, 2015**

Ivory and crocodile skin are used to decorate tasteless people around the world. The small store belonging to Ezounou Amekowou Thoma in the Wétrivikondji neighborhood of Lomé had a pretty little stock. The owner fled before the search by the Central Office of Repression of Illicit Traffic of Drugs and money Laundering (OCRTIBD), leaving his wife to deal with the investigators and the justice system. The anti-ivory laundering operation was conducted in partnership with the National Alliance of Consumers and of the Environment (ANCE).



### **Seizure of ivory and arrest<sup>18</sup>**

**Ndjamena, Chad**

**February 2015**

Chinese workers employed on an oilfield were arrested while they were trying to leave the territory with 2 tusks. They have been kept in detention.

### **6 people arrested in connection with the theft of ivory in Ugandan stock<sup>19</sup>**

**Kampala, Central Province, Uganda**

**February 2015**

A career military man, 49, committed suicide before being arrested. 6 suspects are behind bars. Among them, agents of the UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority) and an ivory trafficker. A colonel who had custody of the vault's keys is under questioning. The suspects would have engineered the burglary while they were in charge of preparing the Tourism Minister's inspection visit. Thieves broke into the ivory storage without breaking the locks, using key doubles. The current Executive Director of the UWA was suspended for several months after the theft (see "On the trail" n° 7 p. 82 and this issue p. 94).

### **Poaching of 3 elephants<sup>20</sup>**

**Ol Ari Nyiro Conservation**

**Area, Laikipia County, Kenya**

**February 2 and February 6,**

**2015**

The 2 dead and detusked elephants were found in the depths of the forest.

In the same area, a few days later, a third elephant about 50 years old was killed with 3 bullets and detusked too.



### **Conviction for elephant poaching and illegal possession of ivory<sup>21</sup>**

**Medouneu, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon**

**February 3, 2015**

Marcel Bdong Obiang had shot an elephant and sold the tusks to Emmanuel Allongifor. They were both sentenced to 6 months prison without remission, and to 1 million CFA francs in fines (€ 1,524 or \$1,649 US), and 500,000 CFA francs in compensation for the Provincial Department, for material and moral prejudice.



### Rescue of 3 elephants<sup>22</sup>

**Tsavo West National Park, Taita Taveta County, Kenya**

**February 3 and February 4, 2015**

By plane, the Ziواني anti-poaching team located 2 large elephants hurt by arrows. The elephants were cared for on-site. The next day, the air patrol found another wounded elephant, victim of a poisoned arrow. "This 3<sup>rd</sup> one was saved thanks to the good care of KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service) and The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust."



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### Seizure of 2 tusks (26.7 kg) and conviction<sup>23</sup>

**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

**February 4, 2015**

2 Malians, market stallholders, and a Gabonese man who claims to be a carver were caught red-handed. They were cutting the tusks into sections to sell the parts at \$ 38 US per kg. On March 2, the 2 traffickers were sentenced to 3 months in prison, the 3<sup>rd</sup> one was released.



© Gabon News

### Discovery of 6 elephant carcasses<sup>24</sup>

**Tsholotsho District, North Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe**

**February 2015**

At least 6 new elephants killed by cyanide in and around the Hwange Park.

There may be more unrecorded casualties among elephants according to the director of the EMA (Environmental Management Agency). The elephants toxic death is adding to that of 2 rhinos in the Chimpinge reserve (see page 61).

Tourism officials are concerned about declining attendance by foreign visitors to the largest park in Zimbabwe since the news spread around the world of the mass cyanide poisoning which in the middle of the year 2013 claimed the lives of hundreds of elephants. Decontamination efforts on sites infested with cyanide have cost \$300,000 US according Mutsa Chasi, responsible of the EMA in Harare. The NGO Robin des Bois (Robin Hood) based in France had written to the environment Commissioner of European Union environment asking for technical assistance to be provided on-site to decontaminate ponds, salt marshes, trails and help eliminate poisoned carcasses. Robin des Bois did not get an answer on the question.

The Zimbabwean government holds 76 tons of ivory and would like to sell them on the international market.





**Death of 2 poachers<sup>25</sup>**  
**Matusadona National Park,**  
**Mashonaland West Province,**  
**Zimbabwe**  
**February 2015**

2 poachers killed in a shoot-out in the southern part of the park. The 3rd one fled. A rifle, ammunition, and 70 kg of dried buffalo meat were seized.



**Rescue of a baby elephant wounded by a trap<sup>26</sup>**

**Rumuruti, Laikipia County, Kenya**  
**February 8, 2015**

The wounded baby was spotted by the farmer from Ngorare in a herd of about 30 elephants. The veterinary team put the mother temporarily to sleep so they could take care of the baby, cut the steel wire and necrotized flesh, disinfect the wound and inject antibiotics. Trapping is an insidious and silent poaching technique. Protection patrols watch over and intervene to save animals from strangling snares and to take care of their wounds.



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**Seizure of 2 ivory tusks and arrest<sup>27</sup>**  
**Santchou, West Region, Cameroon**  
**February 9, 2015**

The 3 men could be sentenced to 3 years in prison. One of them is a teacher. They were quite well organized. Each of them had his part: the tusk supplier, the salesman, and the dealer at the end of the chain. They were taken to Dschang under tight surveillance, and brought into custody. The Santchou hunting reserve is facing the "empty forest syndrome". The wildlife there is considered as exterminated. "If you come across an elephant, it is in fact the totem of an ancestor" as a local bad joke goes.

**Seizure of ivory and arrest<sup>28</sup>**  
**Nairobi Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Kenya**  
**February 9, 2015**

A Chinese citizen, aged 61, was arrested. He was leaving for Hong Kong, via Dubai. Ivory items worth KSh 200,000 or \$2,180 US were found in his pockets and luggage. He was heard by a judge.

**Release by the Court of Appeal of 2 persons sentenced for illegal possession of 2 tusks<sup>29</sup>**  
**Botswana**  
**February 2015**



In June 2011, they were sentenced to 7 years in prison. They lodged an appeal. The High Court sentenced them to 10 years. They lodged an appeal again. The sentence is too harsh they say. They don't have a criminal record and there is no proof of their guilt. The judge of Court of Appeal ruled partly in their favor. The sentence was reduced to 2 years.

**Discovery of a wounded elephant and 2 carcasses<sup>30</sup>**  
**Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya**  
**February 2015**

A young elephant injured at the foot by an arrow was cared for, then walked off without further ado. A big thank you to bush vets. 2 other elephants were found dead, an 8-year-old female and a 6-year-old male. They did not have visible wounds and still had their tusks. They were probably poisoned. KWS then removed their tusks and buried the carcasses to prevent the contamination of scavengers and of the surface environment. An autopsy was conducted on the female. It confirmed that she was poisoned.

In the war against wildlife, agricultural pesticides are often used. This is an easy, quiet and inexpensive poaching method.



© Olarro Conservancy

### **Seizure of 3 elephant tusks (6.5 kg)<sup>31</sup>**

**Laikipia County, Kenya**

**February 10, 2015**

The estimated value of the seizure is KSh 1 million (\$10,931 US). Based on information from KWS, 2 men were arrested and taken to Nyahururu Court. They were released on bail after paying 1.4 million KSh (\$15,260 US), awaiting the trial a few weeks later.

### **Convictions for poaching<sup>32</sup>**

**Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi**

**February 2015**

In Malawi, the courts don't joke with poachers anymore!

The first one was accused of poaching a serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) in Kasungu National Park, and received a 4 year prison sentence without remission as he could not pay the fine of MK 450,000 (€ 925 or \$1,011 US). The second one received the same prison sentence, 4 years, for elephant hunting. The third one was arrested with a weapon in his hand in Thuma Forest Reserve. He got off with a fine of MK 40,000 (€ 82), or 18 months in prison if he cannot pay.



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*Leptailurus serval*

### **Seizure of ivory (3 kg)<sup>33</sup>**

**Rumuruti, Laikipia County, Kenya**

**February 14, 2015**

Estimated value: KSh 500,000 (\$ 5,425 US). The man was released on bail for KSh 800,000 (\$ 8,679 US). The trial is in May.

### **Conviction for illegal possession of 46 elephant tusks (762 kg)<sup>34</sup>**

**Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

**February 17, 2014**

The judge wanted to send a strong message: "Ivory trafficking is a serious crime". 10 years in prison and R 1 million in fines (\$80,830 US). The prison term includes an unconditional detention period of 5 years. The accused showed remorse. He was only carrying out orders. The Chinese silent partner that called himself "Harry" had entrusted him with the tusks. The convicted man was supposed to hide the tusks in wine cases departing for Hong Kong. He was to be paid only after the cargo arrived at destination.



### **Seizure of 7 ivory pieces<sup>35</sup>**

**Narosura, Narok County, Kenya**

**February 18, 2015**

The accused denies all charges. Value of the seizure: KSh 1.52 million (\$16,491 US). The judge refused the request for a release on bail.

### **Seizure of 6 kg of ivory and arrest<sup>36</sup>**

**Ilala District, Dar Es Salaam Region, Tanzania**

**February 18, 2015**

The estimated value of the 6 kg of tusks cut into 4 sections is TSh 27.6 million, or \$2,594 US/kg. The 2 "businessmen" remain in custody, pending additional information. They appeared in the local court of Kisutu, but will be tried in the High Court of Dar es Salaam.

### **Court appearance for illegal possession of 52.4 kg of ivory<sup>37</sup>**

**Maun, North-West Province, Botswana**

**February 19, 2015**

The woman from South Africa and the man from Botswana, both aged 33, were caught in possession of ivory and diamonds. The prosecutor refused to release the South African national, considering there was a risk she might attempt to flee Botswana justice.

### **Discovery of 2 elephant carcasses<sup>38</sup>**

**Chirundu, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe**

**February 19, 2015**

2 elephants poached for their ivory. The killers came from the other side of the river that marks the border.

A wildlife conflict management program has been underway in Chirundu. Rangers patrol the villages to protect inhabitants. In the bush, they follow and monitor resident elephant herds.

### **Arrest of 3 suspects<sup>39</sup>**

**Kasungu National Park, Central Province, Malawi**

**February 2015**

Rifle and cartridges seized, poaching suspected. Kasungu, 2,100 km<sup>2</sup>, 2,000 elephants in 1980, 20 years afterwards, 10 times less elephants.







**Arrest of 2 poachers<sup>40</sup>**  
**Luafi Reserve, Rukwa Region, Tanzania**  
**February 2015**

**Emergency care for an elephant victim of a poaching attempt<sup>41</sup>**  
**Tsavo East National Park, Makueni County, Kenya**  
**February 23, 2015**

A large male was spotted in a group of 14 fellow elephants with a bad wound on its left side. An anesthetic arrow put him to sleep in 7 minutes. 40 liters of pus and 5 kg of necrotized flesh were removed from its wound. After being disinfected, injected with antibiotics, and plastered with green clay, the elephant returned to his brothers.

KWS and DSWT, rangers and veterinarians, planes and helicopters work together to conduct extraordinary rescue operations.



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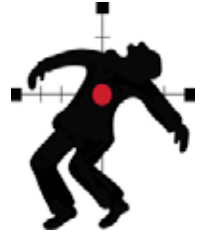
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**GANG**

**Dismantling of a highway robbers network<sup>42</sup>**  
**Pama Department, East Region, Burkina Faso**  
**February 23, 2015**



In addition to the cannabis that was found in their hideout, ivory would also have been sold, according to the initial information.

The gang was in contact with a certain Tougma Salif who was smuggling ivory to Benin and the Ivory Coast via Togo and Ghana.



© Lequotidien

According to the managers of the hunting reserves and parks in the East Region of Burkina Faso, next to Togo, Benin, and Ghana, 43 elephants were poached in 2013 and 2014. This information is yet to be verified, and must be linked to the arrest of the Burkina Faso national parks director for ivory trafficking (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p. 87). At this stage, besides the machetes and guns, a scale is the only exhibit. The gendarmes' report says that it was used to weigh elephant tusks.

**Discovery of an elephant carcass<sup>43</sup>**  
**Naboisho Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya**  
**February 24, 2015**

A postmortem was conducted. The male was aged between 35 and 40. The male died 3 days ago. Its tusks were still intact. Scavengers were starting to eat the carcass. A deep wound on the left flank shows that there was a spear that pierced the stomach and intestines. Death due to peritonitis.



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### **Conviction for illegal possession of 8 ivory bracelets<sup>44</sup>**

**Nairobi, Kenya**

**February 24, 2015**

She didn't know it was ivory. She didn't know it was prohibited. She had bought them at the market. "Ignorance is no defense," retorted the judge. This member of the African Union Mission in Somalia will receive the minimum sentence for illegal possession of wildlife trophies, i.e. KSh 1 million (\$10,850 US).



### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

#### **Seizure of 2 tusks (18 kg) and arrest<sup>45</sup>**

**Mounana, Haut-Oogoué Province, Gabon**

**February 25, 2015**

The two brothers were caught in the act. One of them is a teacher. Haut-Ogooué = Elephants in danger.



#### **Poaching of 20 elephants and death of 6 armed men<sup>46</sup>**

**Bouba Ndjidda National Park, North Region, Cameroon**

**February 2015**

The terrible outcome of 2 weeks. The sale of ivory, for \$2,100 US per kg (3 times more than in 2010), funds the rebellions. In Central Africa, militia are blamed for the deaths of 12,000 elephants in the past 10 years. In Cameroon, 2,000 elephants were attacked in 2012 and 2013.



#### **Poaching of 7 elephants<sup>47</sup>**

**Kenya:**

**Tsavo East National Park, Makueni County**

**Taita Ranch, Taita Taveta County**

**Lwalenyi, Taita Taveta County**

**From March 3 to March 11, 2015**



The victim was heavily limping. Hiking tourists spotted it. A rescue team (from KWS and DSWT) arrived immediately. The team couldn't do anything—one of the elephant's legs was torn to pieces. The animal was suffering terribly. It was put to death. Another victim was hit by a poisoned arrow. It was able to reach the reservoir of a dam, but died once it arrived. According to statistics from the KWS director last year, 47 elephants were poached in Kenya in 2007, 384 in 2012, 302 in 2013, and 164 in 2014.

### **REPEATED OFFENSE**

#### **Seizure of 4 tusks and sentencing<sup>48</sup>**

**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

**March 2015**

One of them had already been arrested for trafficking in "bananas"—in elephant tusks. They have been sentenced to one month jail and FCFA 500,000 (\$826 US) fine.



#### **Poaching of a young elephant and death 13 days later<sup>49</sup>**

**Kasungu National Park, Central Province, Malawi**

**March 11, 2015**

### **REPEATED OFFENSE**

### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

#### **Seizure of ivory<sup>50</sup>**

**Brazzaville, Brazzaville Department, Congo**

**March 2015**

The gendarmes, the Lusaka Agreement Task Force reinforcement, and ivory sniffer dogs from PALF (support project for enforcing the wildlife law) were not enough to prevent the violence and shady business during and at the end of a search of the house of the Ikama family, specialized in ivory trafficking. The press in Brazzaville is worried about impunity and corruption. "In the Ikama home, a lot of ivory was seized, and a lot of ivory was left there."

#### **Seizure of 4 tusks and arrest<sup>51</sup>**

**Maun, North West District, Botswana**

**March 2015**

Botswana is not safe from poaching. Apparently the poachers were Zambians who infiltrated Ngamiland. One of them was recently arrested, in possession of 4 tusks. When the traffickers were apprehended, the locals protected them. Poaching and trafficking found the short-lived prosperity of some communities.



### **Seizure of 6 ivory pieces and 2 arrests<sup>52</sup>**

**Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia**

**March 2015**

Elephant poaching is inevitably creeping toward southern Africa. There were 96 poaching incidents in Zambia in 2011, 124 in 2012, and 135 in 2014. 200,000 elephants in 1970. Less than 30,000 in 2008. No census has been taken since then.

In response to a parliamentarian's question, the Tourism Deputy Minister announced that the government had 46.35 t of ivory inventory as of the end of December 2014. This bulk came from elephants that naturally died in national parks, and from seizures. "We have donated ivory tusks to Bemba speaking people for traditional purposes specifically, the Bemba tradition requires that chiefs are buried in ivory," said the Minister. He said too that Zambia and other countries were examining the option of delisting its elephant population in Annex II. This could pave the way for international trade in ivory. The profits from the sale are meant to fund sustainable development.

### **Poaching of 30 elephants in 2 weeks<sup>53</sup>**

**Garamba National Park, Eastern Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**March 2015**

Near the Sudanese border. See "On the Trail" n°5, p. 85.

### **Release on bail refused for a presumed ivory trafficking kingpin wanted by Interpol<sup>54</sup>**

**Monbasa, Kenya**

**March 2015**



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Feisal Mohamed Ali—wanted in Kenya and by Interpol—was arrested in Tanzania on December 22, 2014. He was immediately extradited (cf. "On the Trail" n°6, p.81, n°7 p. 78).

Mr. Ali is involved in a major ivory trafficking operation that was revealed in the port city of Mombasa in June 2014 ("On the Trail" n°5, p. 90). He has asked to be freed on bail several times. He says he suffers from diabetes. His lawyers and the nurse who cared for him consider that his health condition is incompatible with his life in detention. On February 5, 2015, the nurse was sentenced to one year in prison, or the payment of bail amounting to \$1,076 US for illegally practicing the profession. This new irregularity did not stop the senior judge in Mombasa from ordering the release of Mr. Ali for KSh 10 million (around \$107,000 US). 2 Kenyan NGOs, Wildlife Direct and Save the Elephants immediately described this decision as being "ridiculous" and "depressing". The public prosecutor immediately launched an appeal. On March 30, the decision of the county court was overturned. According to the latest information, Feisal Mohamed Ali remains in prison, where a qualified nurse will be taking care of him. To be continued.

### **Seizure of 50 ivory pieces (500 kg)<sup>55</sup>**

**Entebbe International Airport, Central Province, Uganda**

**March 13, 2015**

The ton of shea butter or manioc flour—depending on which source you go by—was hiding 500 kg of raw ivory. The company Etihad Airways was preparing to load the package onto a cargo plane.

### **Seizure of 2 ivory bracelets<sup>56</sup>**

**Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya**

**March 16, 2015**

The 2 Vietnamese men who left Bujumbura (Burundi) and were heading to Bangkok are in custody, until an interpreter is assigned to them.

### **Seizure of 4 tusks and arrest<sup>57</sup>**

**Camp close to Kasane, North West Province, Botswana**

**March 16, 2015**



2 employees approached the 2 German tourists on vacation in a safari camp near Kasane. "We have 2 elephant horns to sell for \$6,000 US." "Are you interested in them?" "Yes," Martin and Christin Kotthof answered. They were actually interested in contacting the local anti-poaching unit as soon as possible. The offer was not a good idea. The 2 German citizens live in Cape Town. They are both members of OSCAP (Outraged South African Citizens Against Rhino Poaching). The 2 traitors and traffickers fell for the trap. They were foiled and arrested. At the same time in Kasane, an international summit on protecting elephants and wildlife was being held.

### **Conviction for smuggling 30 ivory tusks<sup>58</sup>**

**Edea, Littoral Region, Cameroon**

**March 16, 2015**

The bag fell from the luggage compartment of the bus, right under the driver's nose. The bus was going from Douala to Yaoundé. Nourou Abdoraman was sentenced to one year in prison and 44 million CFA francs (\$72,745 US) in fines.



**Seizure of 3 ivory carved tusks and arrest<sup>59</sup>  
Pointe-Noire, Pointe-Noire Department, Republic of the Congo**



**March 25, 2015**

In Congo-Brazzaville, in Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park alone, several hundreds of elephants were killed between 2009 and 2011. The 3 tusks were carved. Yet again, this is proof that craftsmen are at work in the heart of Africa. The 3 traffickers are from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Seizure of 210 kg of raw ivory on February 18 and sentencing of 5 traffickers to 5 years prison each on March 30, 2015<sup>60</sup>**

**Livingstone, South District, Zambia  
March 30, 2015**



**Conviction for illegal possession of 94 kg of ivory<sup>61</sup>**

**Hwange, North Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe**

**March 2015**

The prisoner is Zambian. He was arrested a year ago. He is sentenced to 10 years prison. It was eventful (cf. "On the Trail" n°4, p. 84). He had 94 kg of ivory in his possession. Local value: \$14,000 US. He will be 48 aged when he leaves prison.



**AMERICA**

**Conviction of an auction house and its director for illegal ivory possession and illegal ivory sale<sup>62</sup>**

**Toronto, Ontario Province, Canada**

**February 27, 2015**

Another offense in an auction house. "Five Star Auctions" was preparing to sell 2 carved ivory tusks. 78 cm long. 1.7 kg each. Environment Canada had asked Laval University and the University of British Columbia for dating the tusks with carbon 14. They come from 2 different elephants. They are from 1977 and 1978, and thus constitutes a breach of WAPPRITA (Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act). WAPPRITA prohibits the sale of ivory dating from July 1975 onwards, when elephants were 1<sup>st</sup> registered in a CITES Appendix. Moreover, "Five Star Auctions" does not have any document proving that the tusks were legally imported to Canada. The director and the company were sentenced to 9,375 C\$ in fines, or \$7,518 US. This is the first time that radiocarbon dating has been used in Canada in the fight against environmental crime.



The world's most famous circus, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus announced that it would not be using elephants from 2018 onwards, and until then, they will be gradually removed from their rings.

"The decision was not easy, but it is the best interest of our company, our elephants and our customers." More and more cities in the United States of America are banning circuses if they exhibit elephants.<sup>63</sup>

**ASIA**

**Ivory to be removed from the stands of a large broker in Hong Kong<sup>64</sup>**

**Hong Kong, China**

**January, 2015**

In November 2014, Hong Kong for Elephants had demanded the halt of the sale of ivory for nearly 1 hour in front of the windows of the Chinese Goods Center. Two months later, the director of the mall Wong Chow Kuen-kuen asked all of his renters to stop selling ivory.



"Business is not only about profit..." wrote the businessman in an explicit letter.

The fate of all of the ivory products that were being sold is unclear.

Chinese Goods Center is the fourth large center of ivory distribution to disappear from the streets of Hong Kong.

In the words of Alex Hofford, co-founder of Hong Kong for Elephants, "The large stores of Hong Kong are practically ivory-free but there are still a hundred small boutiques that must follow in their footsteps."

Chinese Goods Center's decision was taken some months after the ivory embargo announced by Wing On, Yue Hwa and Chinese Arts & Crafts.



## **Dismantlement of a network of the illegal ivory sale<sup>65</sup>**

**Hengshui, Hebei Province, China**

**September 2014 to January 2015**

Rumor had it for a long time around Hengshui – about a hundred kilometers from Beijing – that in several villages an established network of craftsmen transforming raw ivory into carved ivory was at work and that the commercialization of objects was flourishing. At the beginning of last year, a piece of raw ivory fell into the hands of the police in spite of the extreme discretion of the artisans who had avoided the detection of the relevant authorities. Over the course of several months, investigators put together information on the network and its ramifications. Between September 2014 and January 2015, 15 people were arrested in Beijing, in Dezhou (Shandong Province), in Zhengzhou (Henan Province), in Nanyang (Henan Province) and in Nanjing (Jiangsu Province). The value of the seized items was estimated at one million yuans, or \$160,000 US.

A large number of vendors moving among markets and settled retailers was implicated in the downstream elements of the industry, and it is unclear if they were informed of the fraudulent nature of the production.

## **Seizure of 51 African elephant tusks (134 .7 kg) and arrest<sup>66</sup>**

**Tha Tum District, Surin Province, Thailand**

**January 1, 2015**

How did these African elephant remains arrive in Thailand? They were taken in secrecy from an ice-box by the police, at the back of a pick-up truck near the shack of a 47-year-old man lost in the Tha Tum District. Kampol "Riam" Noithanom must have purchased the African ivory at a broker in Nonthaburi, 500 km from where he lives. In his modest residence, "Riam" was in the possession of around \$150,000 US in the form of white gold. Surin Province, bordering Cambodia and Vietnam, shelters several dozen clandestine ivory boutiques. Answer to the beginning question: 2 suspects aged 51 and 50 years old were arrested on March 19. One of them is Malaysian, Tea Boon Ching. He made several trips to Thailand, Kenya and other African countries according to a high rank police official.



## **Seizure of 503 ivory items<sup>67</sup>**

**Donghe District, Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia, China**

**January 2015**

Police raid on 15 shops and 3 wholesalers. Result: 512 parts of protected animals were confiscated, mainly carved ivory (317,000 yuans, or \$51,100 US).

## **Poaching of an elephant<sup>68</sup>**

**Kiling Gaon, State of Assam, India**

**January 9, 2014**

It took place around fifty kilometers from Kaziranga Park.

## **Seizure of a kilo of ivory and arrests<sup>69</sup>**

**Belakoba, State of Western Bengal, India**

**January 10, 2015**

25 cm, 22 cm and 20 cm long. The pieces had been hidden in a schoolbag, with a final destination of Bhutan. The buyers, 5 in a car, successfully fled. The 2 sellers stayed under watch. They were arrested. The transaction totaled around \$2,400 US.

## **Discovery of 2 elephant carcasses<sup>70</sup>**

**Mebo, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India**

**January 17, 2015**

The locals know that the elephants arrive in December in the forest of Siluk. They also know that a group of poachers is at work at one of the supposed sanctuaries where everything is profaned. The 2 large adult elephants were found dead and torn apart, the skulls smashed and the tusks missing. The villagers think that far in the forest, which extends up to the Chinese border, other bodies and theft of tusks are to be found. They also say under the protection of anonymity that at least one of the secret groups captures live orphaned elephants. After some time of domestication, the victims are sent completely illegally to the States in Central India where they are exploited by the tourism industry and religious events or rituals.

## **Seizure of 45.7 kg of elephant meat, 3.3 kg of elephant tusks and arrest<sup>71</sup>**

**Ngapudaw, Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar**

**January 18, 2015**

The 9 men poached the old-fashioned way : knives, bows, and arrows were seized.

**Seizure of 10 kg of mammoth ivory (Genre *Mammuthus*)  
Harbin Taiping Airport, Heilongjiang Province, China  
January 19, 2015**

A Chinese citizen flying from Russia to China carried 10 kg of mammoth ivory without a permit and airport officials seized the goods. The mammoth ivory will be returned to Russia. Mammoth ivory is very valuable in carved goods, so the market price is very high. In 1989, China suspended the importation of ivory, so the market reached a low point for a few years. Now, underground trading of ivory is becoming more popular. Mammoth ivory became a popular substitute for elephant ivory. 90% of the mammoth ivory from Siberia is being delivered to China. Although the purchasing of mammoth ivory could be legal, the sellers still need permit to trade the good.



The Cossacks launched their attack on the Siberian coast from 1650 onwards, in search of the “golden fleece” of fables. 50 years later, Peter the Great ordered the Cossacks to collect “earth horns”. This was despite their “holy terror” of mammoth remnants. From then on, the fossil ivory trade was developed with European countries, following on the heels of the Asian trade. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the French naturalist Buffon wrote that more ivory had been taken from the North than all the elephants in the Indies at the time could possibly provide.

It is easy to identify the raw elephant and mammoth tusks. However, in carved form, they resemble each other and are easily and dangerously confused with one another. Who would go to the trouble of examining the angles of the Schreger lines on a bracelet, an animal figurine, or a Buddha statuette? Or examining the minute traces of vivianite that distinguish elephant ivory from mammoth ivory?

Mammoths are invading Hong Kong now. Ming Hing Arts has just opened and is playing its ivory score on 2 piano keys. An endangered elephant is on the right, and an extinct mammoth is on the left. The mourning period is over. It doesn't smell like a mammoth anymore. No one is shedding tears. Mammoth ivory is ivory without a complex.

Mammoths are invading mainland China now. 40% of the ivory sold in China is believed to be mammoth ivory. Ivory transformation workshops don't make any distinction between working with mammoth or elephant ivory. It is said that elephant ivory is falsely declared as being mammoth ivory to get it past the border into China—and why not into other countries— that work the ivory. The so-called raw mammoth ivory arrives in Asia via Hong Kong. The ivory is then transferred to mainland China, where it is sold and carved. Some of ivory then returns to Hong Kong as small ornamental pieces. Those who know the market well say that a few retailers claim to sell mammoth ivory, but they actually sell elephant ivory. In some circles, mammoth ivory has apparently become a code name for elephant ivory. But it goes the other way too. Medium quality mammoth ivory currently sells for less than elephant ivory per kilogram. Ivory crooks can put mammoth ivory on the elephant ivory market and make significantly more profit. Fakes or misnomers are becoming increasingly common in the wildlife crime industry.

Mammoth ivory is definitely supplying the international ivory market, and not being monitored. The increasing quantity of mammoth ivory that China legally imports has not held back the illegal elephant ivory imports at all—the elephant ivory smuggling is on the rise as well.

The ivory business is shady. The victims: walruses, hippopotamuses, elephants, and archaeological treasures—mammoths—biological monuments.

In its 2010 report on the mammoth ivory trade in Russia, the NGO Care for the Wild considered that there was no proof of collusion between mammoth ivory traffickers and elephant ivory traffickers in Africa. 5 years later, is this still true?

**Should mammoths be registered in Appendix I or Appendix II in CITES?**

The mammoth skeletons are victims of pillaging in Siberia. The authorities have not succeeded in curbing this new extractive industry—especially as the mammoth ivory price tends to converge toward the elephant ivory price.

The diversity of the ivory put on the market is hiding the lack of fossil ivory resources and “living” ivory.

India prohibits the import of mammoth ivory. India would like to prevent fossil ivory from serving as a cover for the ivory of the last Asian elephants.

The States of New York and New Jersey in the United States of America recently prohibited the sale of mammoth ivory. Maryland will be following in their footsteps. Several other States intend to prohibit the sale of generic “ivory” without specifying the species it comes from.

Yes, it would be useful for the international mammoth ivory trade to be strictly controlled, or prohibited—to clean up the global ivory traffic and deter the vandalism of world paleontological heritage. Robin des Bois is writing to Russian authorities to convey this message.



## The ex-mammoth



The *Mammuthus* genus was born in Africa. The *Mammuthus subplanifrons* has left fossil traces in southern and eastern Africa from around 5 million years ago. Other traces from around 3 million years ago were discovered in Algeria.

It is said that *Mammuthus africanavus* crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, or reached southern Europe via the Middle East, and conquered the Northern Hemisphere, progressively evolving based on the climate, plant resources, and geology. At the start of its migration, the mammoth was a quadruped the size of a tapir. It had prominent incisors and an elongated muzzle that later would become a trunk.

The origin of the word “mammoth”, which appeared in 17<sup>th</sup> century literature, is extremely controversial.

- Some say that the word is from a dialect of the Tartar steppes, and from the word “Mama”, which means earth. The Tungusic and Lakoute peoples identified tips and curves of tusks on the ground’s surface. They believe that mammoths lived in underground systems. Legends say that mammoths made the earth shake, lifted mountains, and immediately died when exposed to daylight, when they came near the large rivers of Siberia.
- Or “mammoth” comes from a Finnish-Siberian language blend, a combination of “Mut”—Estonian for an animal related to the mole, and “Ma”, which means the earth.
- Or the word could come from Behemoth, the powerful and imposing herbivore in the Bible. It is said that Arab travelers introduced this name to the depths of the Arctic. These travelers were already on a quest for ivory in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. Mammoths and religions have gone together for a long time. Güyük Khan, a descendant of Gengis Khan, had an ivory throne. That was in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. He was a devout Buddhist and Christian. In 1789, a mammoth femur believed to be the arm of a Christian saint was carried in a procession across the Spanish city of Valencia to ask God for rain.

The mammoth has been an extraordinary source of uncertainties, fantasies, and ivory. It is now perceived as a giant animal. However, the most well-known species of the genre, the *Mammuthus primigenius*—the woolly mammoth, the Far North mammoth, was the same size as the Asian elephant. To withstand extreme cold, it was particularly hairy, with 3 superimposed layers in its 2 cm thick skin: slightly auburnish bristle flock about ten centimeters long, longer and rougher hair several tens of centimeters long, and then a dark mane covering the back and the flanks, 1 to 3 meters long. The head was elongated and had a sort of dome that allowed the sinuses to heat up the icy air before it reached the lungs. Their last mechanism to physically adapt to the surrounding climate was an anal flap to prevent the cold and snow from entering the digestive system. In a few thousand years, these “woolens” became so specialized in the fight against - 40 °C temperatures that one of the explanations for their extinction has been their inability to adapt to a brief period of global warming that lasted 1,000 years. It is said that the mammoth died of heat.



The jaws, the quantity, and the strength of their teeth allowed them to feed on succulent grass in the summertime, and on tree branches and entire bushes in the wintertime. The mammoth was an herbivore and fed on trees. In the winter, it used its tusks to find plants under the layer of ice and snow. It used its trunk and molars to cut down, chew, and reduce the upper levels of trees to pulp. The contents of the intestines of a baby Siberian mammoth revealed that it had eaten the dung of an adult. This ingestion allowed young generations to develop bacterial flora for digesting plants.

Prehistoric man relied on mammoths, in addition to sperm whale and other whales on the eastern coast of Japan prior to and after the Jomon Period. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Russia, the Kostienki excavations on the right bank of the Don revealed concentrations of sharpened flint and bones. They show that mammoths and homo sapiens were in close contact, and that homo sapiens exploited them. Thousands of cut or entire mammoths bones filled up small round pits. They have been interpreted as being reservoirs of raw material. The tusks and flat bones were used for the roofs of dwellings. On the ground, there were ivory female figurines and limestone mammoth

figures. Pioneers of Russian archeology interpreted this statuary as an expression of the respect that primitive societies had for the women who tended to households and who had supernatural powers that helped during the hunting season and ensured that they were successful. In the middle of the 20th century, archaeological digs in Ukraine and in Moravia in the Czech Republic revealed remnants of encampments and of huts marked out with mammoth jaws, and founded on skulls. Mammoths were used for everything. Their bones were used for construction and kitchen utensils. Their ivory was used for jewelry. Their skin and hair were used for bedding and clothing. Their meat was consumed. And if this instrument made of shoulder blades is indeed the ancestor of the xylophone, mammoths were even used for music. Ivory was found in the grave of 2 young girls. From 35,000 to 20,000 BC, these human societies were flourishing and passed away at the same time as the mammoths. In her breathtaking book "Le Destin du mammoth" (the mammoth's destiny), the French paleontologist Claudine Cohen writes that there was truly a mammoth civilization in these regions. The mammoth was the basis for life—and even for survival. These civilizations also disappeared at the same time that mammoths did, around 12,000 BC.

The concentrations of mammoth bones and tusks might not be from hunting. The bones and tusks may have been collected. It seems like herds of mammoths drowned, were trapped, and sunk due to ice jams, ice breakups, geological collapses, earthquakes, and mudslides. Rivers and ocean currents carried them downstream before the first human colonies even appeared. Oyster fishermen from Happisburgh, Norfolk in Great Britain collected 2,000 molars in their nets between 1820 and 1823. In 1860, hundreds of bones were unearthed when a canal was dug near Anvers, in Belgium.

However, in the Aztec city of Teotihuacan, 60 years ago, the remains of a mammoth from 11,000 BC were found. Arrowheads were found very near there. The proximity of hunting tools and relics of these major migrators—mammoths—backs up another theory on the extinction of the genus. Mammoths would have fled the hordes of Eurasian hunters, and the search for calm territory led them to cross the Bering Strait when it was dry, and to colonize the North American continent.

The mammoth population began to decline 16,000 years ago. Mammoths became definitively extinct 4,000 years ago. The last survivors of the genus were short. They were 1.80 m high, weighed 2 t, as opposed to the 3 to 4 m and the 4 to 6 t that are usually observed. The last population of Wrangel Island, off the coast of eastern Siberia, became smaller in a few thousands of years. This was when global warming caused the sea level to rise, cutting the island off from the continent. Russian paleontologists described their discovery in the magazine "Nature" in 1993. This propelled mammoths from prehistory to history. Until then, it was thought that they had become extinct around 9,000 BC. The last mammoths lived at the same time as the Egyptian pharaohs.



Woolly mammoths near the Somme River, AMNH mural. Charles R. Knight



## Elephants Asia

### Seizure of 2 kg of ivory<sup>72</sup>

**Xianyou County, Fujian Province, China  
January 2015**

The man was specialized in recovering ivory debris, shavings, trimmings, and crushed ivory. He ran the workshops that processed raw ivory. The estimated value of the seizure is Yuan 4,600 (\$736 US).

### Seizure of 3 kg of ivory<sup>73</sup>

**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, China  
January 29, 2015**



The 4 buffalo horns were elephant tusk tips. The scatterbrained passenger was arrested..

### Seizure of 4 elephants and arrest<sup>74</sup>

**Namsai District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India  
February 6, 2015**

After a month of investigation jointly conducted by the forest services and the police, 4 people were arrested. They confessed. They captured elephant calves and trained them in an entrenched camp in the forest. They then sold the baby elephants. The 4 survivors, 2 babies taken from the Siluk region in Mebo Subdivision, and 2 "domesticated" adults were taken to a rehabilitation center.

### Seizure of 2 elephants<sup>75</sup>

**Horana and Maharagama, Western Province, Sri Lanka  
February 2015**



There are an increasing number of raids to recover elephants that are detained without authorization. Police raided private property in Horana, after a tip-off. A young 4-year-old was detained in shameful conditions. His 4 legs were injured, probably because of the straps, and his trunk suffers from a skin disease. He was handed over to the National Wildlife Training Centre in Giritale to be cared for. 30 km from there, another young elephant was seized following a court order.

## GANG

### Seizure of 8 tusks and arrest<sup>76</sup>

**Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Indonesia  
February 10, 2015**

8 suspects aged 25 to 52 were arrested. The 2 m long tusks were taken from a male aged about 80 years in Mandau Forest, in Bengkalis District. The police recreated the crime scene. During their search of the gang leader's house, the police found 6 other tusks. According to the gang members' confessions, the tusks were taken from 2 males in Jambi Province, and from a female in the forest of Tesso Nilo National Park. The police also seized guns. The elephants were killed by shots to the head. The investigators suspect that an international trafficking network is behind this. The suspects could serve up to 5 years in prison and pay a fine of 200 million Indonesian roupies, or \$6,000 US. The investigation is ongoing.

### Conviction for the transaction of ivory<sup>77</sup>

**Beijing, China  
February 2015**



A former policeman at the border inspection, Zhu was convinced by a friend to help a passenger named Li to bring ivory into China. Li was a tourist in Africa. He visited Africa in 2013 "to watch animal migration". Then, in Kenya, he had noticed that ivory was especially cheap, so he decided to bring some back to China to make a profit. Zhu never had imagined that their conversations were recorded on tape and they were both arrested. Zhu was convicted to 3 years in prison and Li was convicted to 5.

### Seizure of 60 kg of ivory<sup>78</sup>

**Hong-Kong International Airport, China  
February 2015**

The customs sniffer dog tracked down the stash disguised in black, coming from Nigeria. It was in 12 postal service packages at the airport.



### Elephant captures<sup>79</sup>

#### Alur and Sakleshpur, State of Karnataka, India February 2015

The Forest Department has requested permission to capture 11 additional elephants (22 were captured last year). The elephant's natural habitat is becoming fragmented. It is becoming difficult for the elephants to live near humans. Villagers are complaining and protesting to demand these intruders be exiled. The transfer is costly and not effective, as the elephants always return home anyway.

### Seizure of 2 elephant tusks and arrest<sup>80</sup>

#### Bengaluru, State of Karnataka, India February 2015

The man was fooled by police officers who supposedly were interested in his tusks. He said that "someone else" gave him the tusks. The police are looking for this potential accomplice.

### Seizure of 2 ivory statuettes (480 g)<sup>81</sup>

#### Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China March 2015



### Conviction of 3 persons to 3 years imprisonment and to Rs. 30,000 fine for smuggling of elephant and deer parts (Cervidae family)<sup>82</sup>

#### Ramnagar, State of Uttarakhand, India March 2015

The 3 poachers were caught in December 2010.



### Seizure of an ivory statue (0.29 kg) and arrest of a Chinese passenger coming from Bangkok<sup>83</sup>

#### Jieyang Chaoshan International Airport, Guangdong Province, China March 6, 2015

### Seizure of 11 kg of tusk sections<sup>84</sup>

#### Border Post of Coc Nam, Lang Son Province, Vietnam March 6, 2015

Early in the morning, customs were informed of an attempted smuggling toward China. 3 bags full of vegetables attracted the attention of the team that arrived on the premises. Ivory was inside. The experts said it came from Africa. The northern provinces of Vietnam bordering China were the scene of several smuggling activities. Before the "Tet" festival—the Vietnamese New Year, several hundreds of mopeds and cars are used to smuggle fireworks, clothes, electronic equipment, cigarettes, and alcohol. Throughout the whole year, pangolins, monkeys, turtles, and elephant and rhinoceros by-products are transported from Vietnam to China.

### Conviction for illegal acquisitions and illegal ivory sale<sup>85</sup>

#### Jinniu District, Sichuan Province, China

March 12, 2015



1.15 kg of carved ivory and slices of ivory. 526 objects. Estimated value: Yuan 47,917, or \$7,655 US. One year in prison. Fine of Yuan 100,000 (\$16,000 US).

### Seizure of 43.5 kg of elephant sections and elephant ivory jewels from Africa and arrest of 2 Vietnamese citizens<sup>86</sup>

#### Tan Son Nhat International Airport of Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam March 14, 2015



### Seizure of a tusk, 9 statuettes and several objects in ivory and arrest<sup>87</sup>

#### Bidhan Nagar, State of West Bengal, India March 16, 2015

The former police officer (aged 65) made a career change. He is in the online ivory business now. With his accomplice (aged 32), he was hauled in by WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau). Between 2008 and 2011, the NGO WSPI (Wildlife Protection Society of India) counted 121 cases of poaching and seizures of 781 kg of ivory, 69 tusks, 31 pieces of tusks, 99 pieces of carved ivory, and 75 bracelets.

Elephant poaching is rampant mainly in the States of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Assam, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Bihar.





**Seizure of 54 items in ivory<sup>88</sup>**  
**Xiamen City, Fujian Province, China**  
**March 17, 2015**

The carved ivory was transported in a can of baby milk. Hiding ivory in something white is an increasingly common strategy (cf. "On the Trail" n°6, p.95). The flight departed from Hong Kong. The smuggler was a man.



**Seizure of 200 kg of ivory at Dubai International Airport and handing over to the Ministry of Environment and Water<sup>89</sup>**  
**Dubai, Dubai Emirate, United Arab Emirates**  
**March 2015**



**Seizure of an elephant<sup>90</sup>**  
**Kandalama, Central Province, Sri Lanka**  
**March 2015**

The young elephant was found in an old colonial home. His age has not been determined. His owner is apparently a political figure. The permit to be in possession of the elephant expired in 2012. For the powerful, the nouveau riche, and Buddhist priests, having an elephant at home or in one's temple is a must. As people in Colombo say, "to be an elephant and walk from Dondra to Point Pedro is far more risky than a woman wearing jewellery and walking on her own." Dondra and Point Pedro are in the northernmost and southernmost parts of Sri Lanka (530 km). However, things may be changing. Captive elephants are being checked for their identity increasingly often. Those who have an elephant stolen from the forests as a prestigious pet may be imprisoned without remission, without the option of release on bail. It is said that 150 elephants are illegally held captive in Sri Lanka (cf. "On the Trail" n°5 p. 97, n°6 p.91, and n°7 p.91). A new cause for concern has emerged—to avoid the increasingly harsh

criticism of public opinion and the judicial system, some "masters" could kill and bury their pet elephants.



**REPEATED OFFENSE**  
**Conviction for ivory smuggling<sup>91</sup>**  
**Beijing, China**  
**March 2015**

The 51-year-old Jin tried to bring 14.38 kg of ivory through the "nothing to declare" tunnel of Beijing Airport's customs, but was stopped to be inspected. He had 29 pieces of ivory products worth 59,000 Yuan (\$9500 US). She argued that she did not know about the policies, but she had a history of smuggling ivory. In 2007, she mailed ivory from Croatia to Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China, and was fined for doing so. She was convicted to 6 years and 6 months in prison and a fine for 100,000 Yuan (\$16,100 US).

**Seizure of 2 ivory carvings (2055 g)<sup>92</sup>**  
**Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China**  
**March 19, 2015**

The parcel was marked from Japan. It has been searched by postal customs.



**Discovery of an elephant carcass and arrest<sup>93</sup>**  
**Buxa Tiger Reserve, State of West Bengal, India**  
**March 21, 2015**

The head was 200 m from the body. The tusks had been pulled out. This reserve has lost at least 3 elephants in 2 years. 210 individuals were counted in the last census. The reserve is a migration corridor between northern India and Bhutan.

**Discovery of a skinned and mutilated baby elephant<sup>94</sup>**  
**Thanh Son, Dong Nai Province, Vietnam**  
**March 23, 2015**

**Seizure of 15.5 kg of ivory<sup>95</sup>**  
**Cao Loc District, Lang Son Province, Vietnam**  
**March 23, 2015**

The ivory was in boxes. The transporters fled when customs officers approached them. Yet again, the ivory seems to be of African origin.

**Conviction for the smuggling of 45 ivory products<sup>96</sup>**  
**Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China**  
**March 23, 2015**

Weng has worked in Congo for years and upon his return to China, brought many ivory products, including combs, chopsticks, and seals, to sell. He put the products inside wine boxes and wrapped them with rugs and clothes. He was convicted to 2 years in prison and a fine of 20,000 Yuan (\$3220 US).



**Seizure of 10 ivory pieces (550 g)<sup>97</sup>**  
**Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China**  
**March 2015**

The Nanjing airport customs seized 10 pieces of ivory products, including bracelets, cigarette holders, and seals.



**Seizure of 30 ivory bracelets (1280 g)<sup>98</sup>**  
**Hangzhou Xiaoshan Airport, Zhejiang Province, China**  
**March 25, 2015**

2 men of Sudanese nationality flying from Doha were stopped at

the airport inspection point.

**Conviction for the smuggling of 12 pieces of ivory<sup>99</sup>**  
**Qingdao, Shandong Province, China**  
**March 2015**

On March 24, 2014, Li disembarked the plane and went to the bathroom to meet his friend Chen who works in the airport. The two were talking about Li's scheme to smuggle the goods past customs, but Chen rejects. A customs officer was eavesdropping at the stall next door and took Li to an office for luggage inspection. Because Li knowingly smuggled illegal objects, he was sentenced to 6 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 Yuan (\$16,108 US).



**Importation of 7 elephants<sup>100</sup>**  
**United Arab Emirates**  
**March 2015**

The United Arab Emirates deny wanting to import 7 baby elephants captured in Hwange Park in Zimbabwe for commercial purposes and acknowledge that they wish to import 7 elephants from Zimbabwe for educational purposes. "One family group of different ages, and including one calf, which is accompanied by his mother."

**359 elephant tusks stock management<sup>101</sup>**  
**Sri Lanka**

The bloody ivory was seized in Colombo in May 2012. It came from East Africa and was heading to Dubai. No one knows what will happen to it. In December 2012, in public, the former presidency of the country stated that it would like the 359 tusks, a tidy sum of nearly \$ 3 million US, to be given to the Dalada Maligawa Buddhist temple in Kandy. The "Temple of the Tooth" has a tooth relic of Siddhārtha Gautama. It was found in the ashes of his cremation in India, between 500 and 600 BC. The tooth was transferred to Sri Lanka. Gautama founded a community of wandering monks who were the forerunners of Buddhism. Buddhists worship teeth. Gautama's tooth and elephant teeth are not so different from each other.

"Bloody ivory" is a very appropriate name. Customs noticed it because of its odor. They didn't need a sniffer dog for that. The tusks were nearly fresh. They were covered with dried blood. The new government—or at least one of its representatives—seems to have another plan: returning the ivory seized to the sales network, and selling it in a third country. A Sri Lankan customs official brushed aside this rumor, saying that they still had the ivory. The deputy tourism minister is suggesting another solution—burning the dirty ivory and destroying it.

**Project to import elephants from Sri Lanka to Auckland Zoo<sup>102</sup>**  
**Sri Lanka-Niue-New Zealand**  
**February 2015**

2 young elephants from Sri Lanka face the threat of being kidnapped by air. They are first slated to spend 3 months in quarantine on Niue, the New Zealand island. They



should then be joining "Burma", a 32-year-old elephant, the only elephant living in the Auckland Zoo. In the Sri Lankan Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, an employee of the New Zealand zoo was photographed using chains and a hook to mistreat a young elephant. The NGO Born Free is trying to block this transfer project. Its estimated financial cost is said to be 3.2 million AU\$ (\$2.5 million US).



## EUROPE

### The French hunter wants to repatriate his trophies<sup>103</sup>

**Amiens, Picardie Region, France**

**February 2015**

The big game hunter would do anything to recover the 2 tusks that were 107 and 103 cm long, an ear, the 4 feet, and the tail of the elephant.

"My client spent € 10,000 to hunt in Cameroon. He wants to recover his trophies. The trophies have been held in a warehouse for 2 years. The elephant fed 150 locals," pounded out the lawyer—who was very proud that his client was part of the fight against food wastage. The humanitarian argument did not make the Amiens administrative court forget the law. The court decided that the import request filed by the company Excess International in December 2012, for the hunter Michel Carrion, was not receivable. The company is specialized in transport and logistics, and Michel Carrion is an entrepreneur in Picardy. The hunter had indeed received an import pre-permit on January 9, 2012, from the competent French administrative division, via European Council Regulation 338/97. This document was labeled as an "incomplete permit". Despite the fact that the pre-permit was granted, it could not be used for importing, even for non-commercial purposes, under any circumstances whatsoever. The scientific review group, as stipulated in Article 17 of the above-mentioned European regulation, issued an unfavorable general opinion on importing elephants and elephant parts from Cameroon, stating that importing harms the preservation of the species and its habitat.

The hunter was thus trapped by evolving and progressive regulation, based on the opinion of a group of scientists drawing on reliable, troubling, and recent information on the prevalence of elephant poaching in Cameroon.

### Seizure of a carved tusk and a pair of elephant feet<sup>104</sup>

**Lorient, Brittany Region, France**

**February 9, 2015**

Is Brittany an ivory storehouse? It may be—many sailors, travelers, explorers, and adventurers were born there, left, and keep coming back. Among 200 packages of "personal belongings", at the bottom of a shipping container, Lorient customs officers seized carved ivory and stools whose seats were made of some kind of animal skin. The container used for the move came from South Africa. It came to France via Le Havre port.



### Donation of a tusk to a museum<sup>105</sup>

**Voghera, Lombardy Region, Italy**

**February 11, 2015**

50 kg of tusks were found on the beach of Vasto (in the region of Abruzzo), along the Adriatic Sea in 2014. Some of them were given to the Museum of Natural Science of Voghera. Educational presentations are made in schools, with real tusks. This approach is useful, but risky. Thugs could steal the tusks at any given time. This kind of offense is on the rise in Europe. It is possible to provide information on elephant extinction even if the instructor does not show a tusk.

### Seizure of an elephant foot<sup>106</sup>

**London Borough of Waltham Forest, England, United Kingdom**

**March 27, 2015**

The custom elephant foot is still trendy in France and Great Britain. Colonial nostalgia. This one was sold on eBay. At the time, it was really stylish to have teak furniture, a parasol with an elephant foot as leg. The police did not reveal the identity of the seller. He is 47. This horrendous object will be used for educational purposes by the Wildlife Crime Unit.



### Seizure of 2 tusks<sup>107</sup>

**Bois-le-Duc, Province du Brabant-Septentrional, Pays-Bas**

**Mars 2015**

Following information provided by the police, the health authorities operated the seizure in a private home. The person proposed tusks for sale on the internet.



## The ivory under news fire

### Ethiopia

Illegal ivory seized over time at Bole International Airport (Addis Ababa) was burned. The government stock represented 6.1 tons.

Ethiopia is a member of the EPI - Elephant Protection Initiative - with Botswana, Chad, Gabon and Tanzania. The EPI wants a ban on international ivory trade to be extended at least 10 years and beyond as long as the future of elephants is threatened.

Aware of atmospheric pollution produced by the blaze, Ethiopia decided in compensatory measure to plant 90 hectares of forest. The ashes of ivory will be used as fertilizer to 90,000 seeds. "This forest will remain as a tribute to all elephants we have lost."

The EPI also wished for domestic ivory markets to be closed "in the few countries where they still exist" and secure the illegal ivory stocks from any commercial transaction.



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/ African Wildlife Foundation



© Lucy King / Save the Elephants

### Kenya

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta set fire to a pile of 15 tons of illegal ivory, the result of seizures made by State services for several years. The fire will last at least 5 days. "This is the largest amount of ivory voluntarily destroyed in Africa" welcomed Iain Douglas Hamilton, one of the leading specialists of the African elephant and founder of the NGO Save the Elephants in 1993. One can even say that this is the largest amount ever destroyed in the world.

### Malawi

At the last moment the chairmanship of Malawi gave up burning 4 tons of ivory. The postponement is due to the need to burn all the stock of ivory seized by customs and other agencies. 2.6 tons miss the call.

Malawi has joined the EPI. President Arthur Peter Mutharika confirmed the commitment to protect all ivory from all forms of trade. So the operation is said to be only postponed. The commitment of African countries to eliminate stocks of ivory under their custody is also due to the growing difficulties in ensuring stockpile safety. Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda were victims of theft of significant quantities in what they believed to be strongholds.

### Thailand

Thailand forms the project to destroy 12 tons of illegal ivory. The General Direction of National Parks states that the burning will occur in a high temperature furnace to prevent fraudulent reuse of unburned parts. This is a very relevant precision. Ivory is not a naturally combustible material and in the ashes may remain fragments reusable by illegal traffickers and craftsmen. The same problem arises from the technical option of destruction used by countries like the US, Belgium or France, namely crushing. The "chipped" ivory can be sold on the international black market if it falls into wrong hands. France has ground its ivory stock and then burned the residue to prevent diversion.



## Other Mammals



Hippopotamus hunting. Gustave Doré.

### AFRICA

#### EAGLE OPERATION

**Seizure of 38 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>1</sup>**

**Uganda**

**February 2015**



The 2 traffickers were arrested in possession of 38 hippopotamus teeth and 4 African buffalo horns (*Syncerus caffer*). This seizure is the first victory for Operation EAGLE in Uganda.

EAGLE (Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement) is a transversal and joint program of several African countries. The goal is to strengthen the enforcement of sanctions imposed on wild plant and animal traffickers. Operation EAGLE in

Uganda is led by a lawyer, Vincent Opyene. He was a prosecutor, and played a key role in creating UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority). He left his official position to implement EAGLE in his country. In Togo, Benin, Cameroon, and the Republic of the Congo, in only a few weeks' time, EAGLE has obtained convincing results.

### ASIA

#### GANG REPEATED OFFENSE

**Seizure of 20 kg of meat and a gaur head (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) and arrests<sup>2</sup>**

**Munnar, State of Kerala, India**

**January 7 and 8, 2015**

20 kg of meat and the head of a peaceful herbivore were found. The 5-person gang seems to have made a habit of this kind of damage.



**Seizure of 12 common jackal skulls (*Canis aureus*, Appendix II) and arrests<sup>3</sup>**

**Samayapuram, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

**January 9, 2015**

12 jackal skulls for sale. The 3 trappers have been arrested now and are in a place where they won't cause harm.

**Poaching of a blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III) and 2 Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III): actor Salman Khan remains convicted<sup>4</sup>**

**January 14, 2015**

On April 10, 2006, the Bollywood star Salman Khan was sentenced to 5 years in prison without remission for poaching on the sidelines of a film shoot in Jodhpur, with a few actors and actresses. Night poaching, a 4x4 chase, headlights full on. Animals stunned and hit. Carrying arms prohibited. After 3 days in prison, Salman Khan was released on bail. In 2013, the Rajasthan High Court suspended the sentence. Khan had to return to Great Britain to shoot a film. Immigration visas are rejected for people who have been sentenced to a least 5 years of imprisonment. The Rajasthan High Court wanted to let Khan fully exercise his profession. The government of Rajasthan lodged an appeal, and the Supreme Court of India reinstated the 5 year prison sentence. The Supreme Court considered that the Khan's sentence did not irreversibly impact his career, and that since November 2013 and the suspension of his sentence, Khan's professional activities did not call him to Great Britain.

With regards to the film actor, the government of Rajasthan has demonstrated determination while the poaching of Indian gazelles, peacocks, and great Indian bustards is rampant in the State, and usually goes unpunished. 8 gazelles were poached in 8 days in February. All the suspects were released on bail. Rangers complain about threats from villagers, and even from police officers, because they consider that the rangers are too enthusiastic about intercepting the poachers. "The poachers of GIB [Great Indian Bustard] in the Desert National Park falling within the Khudi Police Station in Jaisalmer district were out on bail in a jiffy" a spokesperson from the Wildlife Society of India bitterly observed. On the one hand, Rajasthan would like to save endangered species from extinction. On the other hand, it gives in to intimidation and releases poachers.

**Seizure of 6 musk deer preputial glands (*Moschus spp.*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>5</sup>**

**Birendranagar, Mid-Western Development Region, Nepal**

**January 16, 2015**

Deer musk is used to make "medicine", perfume, and incense.



**Conviction of 6 persons to 3 years imprisonment and to a fine of Rs. 10.000 (\$ 161 US) each for poaching a blackbuck in 2005 (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III Pakistan and Nepal)<sup>6</sup>**

**Faridabad, State of Haryana, India**

**January 2015**

**Seizure of gaur meat, horns and skin (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>7</sup>**

**Ganjam District, State of Odisha, India**

**February 7, 2015**

A man was arrested. The 5 accomplices fled.

**Seizure of 8 jackal skins (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III) and a otter skin (*Lutrinae spp.*, Appendix I or II) and arrest<sup>8</sup>**

**Gosalpur, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

**February 11, 2015**

The police raided a poachers' camp. 4 women were arrested. The men were on the run. On the scene, the authorities not only found the skins—they also found 14 traps and other poaching accessories, and equipment for skinning and tanning the victims.



*Canis aureus*

**Seizure of 2 mongoose carcasses (Herpestidae family) and arrest<sup>9</sup>**

**Bahraich District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

**February 13, 2015**

Thanks to an anonymous informer, the 2 poachers were arrested. 3 of them are still on the run. They admitted to eating mongoose meat and selling its hair (cf. "On the Trail" n° 3, p.78).

**Seizure of 15,159 mongoose paintbrushes (Herpestidae family)<sup>10</sup>**

**Padivattom, State of Kerala, India**

**March 19, 2015**

Watercolorists of the world: Make sure your brushes don't smell like dead mongoose! 14,000 brushes made of mongoose hair with grey stripes were seized from a wholesaler. The manufacturer Moon Star Brush Ware is supposedly in Bijnor, in Uttar Pradesh State. Cf. "On the Trail" n° 3, p.78.



### Seizure of a civet (Viverridae family)<sup>11</sup>

Hue, Thua Thien Province, Vietnam

March 23, 2015

The civet is safe now. It will be in the forest soon.



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The civet questions evolutionary hierarchy

See Civet Coffee "On the Trail" n°1 p. 41

### EUROPE

### Seizure of 22 Tibet blackbuck wool shawls (*Pantholops hodgsonii*, Appendix I)<sup>12</sup>

Chur, Canton of Graubünden, Switzerland

February 2015

44 to 110 antelopes were sacrificed for this batch—2 to 5 individuals per shawl. Each one is worth between CHF 5,000 and 20,000 (\$ 5,261 to \$ 21,045 US). According to the authorities, the size of this seizure shows that there is a luxury market for shahtoosh shawls in Switzerland.

Cf. "On the Trail" n°3 p. 75-76, n°5 p. 109, n° 6 p. 100.



In 2005, 38 shahtoosh shawls worth CHF 400,000 (\$ 334,000 US at the time) were seized by Swiss customs (picture).

### OCEANIA

### Conviction for poaching of 13 flying-foxes (*Pteropus* spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>13</sup>

Poya, New Caledonia, France

February 25, 2015

To impress his guests and offer them a choice dish, the man went off hunting, at night, and outside of authorized periods. He was sentenced to F 1.3 million Pacific (\$ 12,329 US) in damages, and a suspended prison sentence of 3 months.

The flying fox is well known in New Caledonia. The archipelago has 3 species of flying fox. The wingspan of the smallest species is 30 cm, and that of the largest species is 1 m. They feed on pollen, fruit, and insects. Their numbers are declining. "We do not have exact figures," said Fabrice Brescia, a chiropter specialist at the Caledonian Agronomy Institute. However, hunting is still authorized on weekends in the month of April—5 flying foxes per hunter per day. But gone are the days when Kanaks armed with bamboo picks impaled the flying foxes in their flight paths and in the trees ... when they used their hair as money. The flying fox was the mascot of the Pacific Games in 2011. However, this symbolic and commercial distinction does not guarantee the protection of the species. The armadillo, the mascot of the last FIFA World Cup, in Brazil, also continues to be heavily trafficked.



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# Multi-Species

## AFRICA

**Conviction to 6 month prison term suspended sentence and \$ 4148 US damages for trafficking of 3 leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 5 African rock python skins (*Python sebae*, Appendix II), 3 pangolins skins and 2 kg of pangolin scales (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II)<sup>1</sup>**



**Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin  
January 6, 2015**

See "On the Trail" n°7 p.104.

**Seizure of a colobus monkey (*Colobus spp.*, Appendix II), pangolin parts and scales (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>2</sup>**

**Ngambe Tikar, Centre Region, Cameroon  
January 2015**

The hunters' union representative from central Cameroon and 2 accomplices are entangled in a dirty affair involving trafficking in monkeys and scales of Africa's most hunted mammal.

**Conviction of a Vietnamese citizen to 5 years prison and \$ 11,000 US fine for illegal possession of elephant skin and 2 lion teeth (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II)<sup>3</sup>**



**Kenya**

**January 13, 2015**

**Seizure of 137 elephant tusks (791 kg) and 2,029 kg of pangolin scales (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II)<sup>4</sup>**  
**Entebbe International Airport, Central Province, Uganda**

**January 25, 2015**

76 tusks in one package. 61 tusks in the second package. The packages were sent by MTN, a telecommunications equipment company in Uganda. They were headed for Amsterdam. The purpose of the shipment was the "repair of faulty equipment".



MTN management is not accepting any responsibility for this. "This is a case of identity theft." "We have too much work." "We don't have time to export ivory." "We don't even know how much that costs". For smuggled goods heading to Asia as their final destination, it is increasingly common to transit through Europe. The tusks are cut up. It is difficult to know how many elephants were killed.

A high-ranking officer of UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority) was quick to suggest that the ivory bound for Europe was from a recent robbery of government strong rooms (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p. 82).

3 people were arrested: a customs officer, an airport employee, and the driver of the truck that delivered the merchandise. Wooden cases were opened after they went through customs. The truck driver led the investigators to a house in Bunamwaya, in Wakiso District, 30 km from Entebbe, Uganda's international airport— where the merchandise was loaded. In the house, instruments to weigh and cut the ivory, and pangolin scales were found. A man was apparently arrested on-site.

**Seizure of ivory and pangolin scales (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II) and questioning of a Chinese citizen<sup>5</sup>**

**Brazzaville, Brazzaville Department, Congo**

**February 8, 2015**



**Seizure of a mandrill skull (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I), of one elephant femur and one elephant jaw. Arrest<sup>6</sup>**

**Tonga, West Region, Cameroon**

**February 2015**



Men in white tried to trade the skull of a great ape and the bones of an elephant poached in Waza National Park. They have been caught red handed in a bar. The two mens are aged 55 and 56. One of them is a former public servant.

**Seizure of 7 kg of elephant ivory, a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and a serval skin (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II). Arrest<sup>7</sup>**

**Kaptilu, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya**

**February 27, 2015**

A pastor of the evangelical Full Gospel Churches was carrying ivory tusks and cat skins. The pastor and his associate stashed the loot in the forest. Undercover KWS agents were preparing to buy the leopard skin for KSh 200,000, and the serval skin for KSh 150,000 (\$ 2,180 and \$ 1,640 US). Responding to why he became mixed up in poaching and trafficking, the pastor said that "he had fallen into the devil's trap."



**Seizure of 6 crocodiles (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I), 3 birds of prey (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix II), an African spurred monkey (*Centrocorys sulcata*, Appendix II) and a patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*, Appendix II)**



**Ratoma, Conakry Region, Guinea**

A joint operation of Interpol, the forestry commission, and GALF (Guinée Application Loi Faunique) resulted in the arrest of 2 traffickers—Yousouf Donzo and Aboubacar Sylla, and the seizure of around 10 protected animals they were trying to sell. These animals were released. As for the 2 accused, they were sentenced to 6 months in prison, 3 years without remission, a fine of GNF 80,000 (\$ 11 US) each, and GNF 50 million (\$ 6,913 US) in damages for the Environment Ministry.



**Seizure of an African rock python skin (*Python sebae*, Annexe II), a head of Nile Crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Annexe II), Nile monitor skins (*Varanus niloticus*, Annexe II) on the healer's market in Empangeni, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa<sup>9</sup>**  
**March 2015**

**Seizure of 157 trophies and animal remains and arrest of 2 poachers**  
**Pendjari National Park, Donga Department, Benin**

**March 2015, 13**

Since the beginning of the year, Pendjari National Park is no longer monitored. Guides and tourists cross paths with armed poachers there, and find the carcasses of shot animals. Among the ghastly series of trophies seized thanks to the joint effort of the police, forest rangers, and NGOs: elephant skins and bones, carcasses of crocodiles (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II), of pythons (*Python* spp., Appendix II), and of pata monkeys (*Erythrocebus patas*, Appendix II), several species of antelopes, carnivores, and chameleons.

**Seizure of 2 military trucks transporting bush meat and 10 liters of ostrich oil (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I)<sup>11</sup>**

**Kapoeta East County, South Sudan**  
**From March 9 to March 16, 2015**

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) uses nature for its food and for doing business. Rangers from South Sudan's National Wildlife Service have recently intercepted soldiers twice. A high-ranking

military officer had smoked bushmeat in his possession. It seems to have come from at least 20 tiang antelopes. A convoy was partially immobilized a few days later. One of the 2 trucks managed to escape. In the other truck, 30 bags of bushmeat were found (717 kg), with 2 jerricans of ostrich oil. An adult ostrich provides 5 L of oil. Ostrich oil is said to heal muscle pain and rheumatism. It can also be used for luxury soap. The young country of South Sudan, founded in 2011, has not ratified the CITES international convention yet. It is an offense to be in possession of bushmeat. However, the penal code does not stipulate any penalties.



According to the wildlife conservation director, the truck that avoided the roadside check was also transporting bushmeat. The 2 trucks belonged to the SPLA headquarters in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. Unfortunately bushmeat trafficking is widespread in South Sudan (cf. "On the Trail" n°5, p. 81). Giraffes are also part of the mad scramble and the trafficking. There are less than 500 giraffes remaining in the country.

## AMERICA

**Hunting derby<sup>12</sup>**

**Salmon, State of Idaho, United States of America**  
**January 2 to 4, 2015**

A magnitude 4.9 earthquake in the Rocky Mountains and its aftershocks inaugurated the "Kill Fest". Wild animals very sensitive to seismic events were on their guard before the first gunshots. Around a hundred hunters participated in the competition. Half of them were from Idaho. They did not kill any wolves.

At the outset, in November 2014, the upcoming event was enormous. Over a 3 day period, it was supposed to give the right to kill as many animals as possible on 12,140 km<sup>2</sup>, for 500 hunters including 10-year-old children. Weasels, skunks, raccoons, coyotes, and wolves were all in the line of fire. The person who kills the most coyotes and wolves was to receive \$ 1,000 US. The project provoked an angry outburst from NGOs. Defenders of Wildlife and Wildearth Guardians were the first to react.

At the finish line, Predator Derby was more modest than planned. The derby finally took place on 6,000 km<sup>2</sup> of private ranches. The hunting permit on the public forest area was withdrawn thanks to the legal attacks from environmental NGOs.

100 years ago, wolves frolicked about on 2/3 of the United States of America. From 1930, their numbers started to decline. They fell victim to the crazy demand of New York furriers and campaigns that systematically denigrated and trapped the animals. Through reintroduction and protection programs that the federal government started to implement in 1974, the gray wolf population is now considered as viable again in Oregon, the State of Washington, Wyoming, and Montana. The northern Rocky Mountains have a permanent population of around 1,700 gray wolves, out of an estimated population of 12,000 in Western Canada. The return of the gray wolf is considered as a calamity by the farmers raising the 240,000 sheep in Idaho. Since 2011, the administration has authorized the hunting of gray wolves in Idaho and the Rocky Mountains. However, NGOs consider that they need to continue to be strictly protected. The wolves are not just the pests that cattle raisers criticize. The wolves naturally control the deer and elk populations. The carcasses of their preys feed on bears and scavenger fauna. Wolves regulate natural ecosystems.

No dead in the rush to hunt after furry mammals in Idaho. However, wolves are still having a hard time. Wolf pelts can now be internationally traded from Montana. The pelts must include a CITES "tag". The pelts must be from wolves that were killed during the 2014-2015 hunting season. Wolves killed in car accidents may not be sold. The website Moscow Hide and Fur of Moscow (Idaho) "buys top-quality wolf pelts for as much as \$500, preferably with the feet attached."

**Seizure of 2 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 6 Psittacidae family birds (Appendix I or II), 3 turtles and an armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family)<sup>13</sup>**  
**Los Ríos Province, Ecuador**  
**January 2015**

They were illegally held as pets. They were taken to a wildlife rescue center.

**Seizure of 4 squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I) and a lion cub (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II)<sup>14</sup>**

**Playa del Carmen, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico**  
**January 2015**

9 people were arrested. They were using the animals to attract tourists. The tourists paid to be in photos with a wildlife specimen during their vacation.



**Seizure of a common tegu (*Tupinambis teguixin*, Appendix II), 16 cardinals (*Cardinalidae* family) and 4 thrushes (*Turdidae* family)<sup>15</sup>**

**San Fernando, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina**  
**January 2015**

The new regulations of the city of San Fernando are encouraging. They can be used to check and take action without waiting for the provincial government to intervene, and to accelerate procedures so that specimens return to their natural habitat as soon as possible. In the event of an offense, the regulations provide for fines, the seizure of animals, cages and other equipment, as well as a 6-month to 3-year suspension of the commercial activities of repeated offenders.

The first 2 inspections in this new framework authorize the seizure of the tegus and birds. They are put into the care of the NGO Animales de la Tierra, awaiting their return to their natural habitat.



The common tegu (*Tupinambis teguixin*) is a saurian from South America. Adults measure over 1 m long. It is mainly hunted for its skin, but it also falls prey to the pet market.

**Seizure of 4 wallets in Geoffroy's cat skin (*Leopardus geoffroyi*, Appendix I) and in jaguar skin (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), 3 jaguar and rattlesnake skin bracelets (*Viperidae* family), 12 fangs, a spectacled caiman skull (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II), a toucan beak (*Ramphastidae* family) and an ant-eater or sloth claw (*Pilosa* order)<sup>16</sup>**

**San Marcos Sierra, Córdoba Province, Argentina**  
**January 2015**



This happened in a local handicrafts market. The vendor, of Colombian origin, managed to escape. The market manager said that the stall was illegal, and was not part of his organization.

**Seizure of 71 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 11 big-headed side-neck turtle (*Peltocephalus dumerilianus*, Appendix II), 18 red-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis erythrocephala*, Appendix II), a giant South American turtle (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II) and an arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>17</sup>**

**Novo Airão, State of Amazonas, Brazil**  
**January 27, 2015**



Adeilton Assis da Silva, aged 22, Ailton Assis da Silva, aged 25, and José dos Santos Reis, aged 28, were inspected early in the morning. Turtles and fishing nets full of arapaimas were in their boat. They were fined \$ 500 R (\$ 187 US) per animal seized.



*Podocnemis erythrocephala*

## REPEATED OFFENSE FAMILY AFFAIRS

Appearance for American black bear poaching (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), bobcat poaching (*Linx rufus*, Appendix II) and elk poaching (*Cervus elaphus*)<sup>18</sup>

State of Colorado, United States of America  
January 2015



The 2 brothers, aged 47 and 55, had poached for years. They lured wild animals with bait. The poached in 14 nature reserves in Colorado, and on private property. The investigators from Kansas and Colorado identified the 2 men with information that the public provided.

Voluntary handing over to the authorities of woodtortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II), parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II), and a white-headed marmoset (*Callithrix geoffroyi*, Appendix II)<sup>19</sup>

Porto Seguro, State of Bahia, Brazil  
January 29, 2015

The Brazilian environment secretariat opened a call center for anyone in possession of wildlife specimens without the authorization of Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), and who would like to return them to the authorities without running the risk of criminal or administrative sanctions. The menagerie has joined a wildlife rehabilitation center (CETAS) until a better option turns up.



Seizure of a red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II) and 2 Geoffroy's spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II)<sup>20</sup>

Tecámac, State of Mexico, Mexico  
January 2015

The 3 animals were found during a surprise PRO-FEPA inspection. They were victims of ill treatment.

Seizure of caiman meat (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II), agouti meat (*Dasyprocta* genus) and Brazilian tapir meat (*Tapirus terrestris*, Appendix II)<sup>21</sup>

Brasilândia, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil  
January 30, 2015

The 33-year-old man had stashed it in the freezer. He was arrested.

Seizure of 90 wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II), 8 little spotted cats (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I), 9 sloths (*Ptilosa* order), 5 iguanas and 702 iguana eggs (*Iguanidae* family), 5 spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II), 4 owls (*Strigidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 anteaters (*Ptilosa* order), 5 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), 4 wild birds from unspecified species, cotton-headed tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*, Appendix I), 231 Colombian slider turtles and 2 black vultures (*Coragyps atratus*)<sup>22</sup>

Chuquisaca Department, Bolivia

January-February 2015

At this time, regional authorities are working to bring endangered species smuggling under control. It is common knowledge that the carnivals, the Holy Week, and their preparation are a peak time for the wildlife trade.



Seizure of 11 boas (*Boidae* spp., Appendix I or II), an iguana (*Iguanidae* family), 400 iguana eggs, a Bolivian three-toed sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II) and an anteater (*Myrmecophagidae* family)<sup>23</sup>

Atlantico Department, Colombia  
February 2015



CRA—Corporación autónoma Regional del Atlántico—is stepping up inspection operations in the current pre-carnival and carnival period. This is when iguana eggs are eaten, and when animals such as boas are used as masks. Boas are sometimes also used to scare (and amuse) crowds. Money is collected as a sign of thanks for and during the show.

CRA says that trafficking in wild animals has decreased, even though the animals are not only captured, but also eaten in villages. CRA is a regional administrative entity that is responsible for renewable natural resources.

**Seizure of 43 animals including wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II) and 10 parakeets and parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II)<sup>24</sup>**

**Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil  
February 2015**



A neighbor reported the 46-year-old man. The man had set up an illegal wild-life market in his apartment. Most of the animals were in cages.

**Seizure of 708 kg of wild animals meat including spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus* Appendix I or II), feline (*Felidae* family) and capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*)<sup>25</sup>**

**Asuncion, Asuncion Capital District, Paraguay  
February 14, 2015**

The animals seem to be from the administrative department of Boquerón, and should be delivered to Loma Pyta—a neighborhood of Asuncion, and to Mariano Roque Alonso (Central Department). 570 km. Roberto Jara Ochipinti was driving the refrigerated truck. He was arrested. The meat was given to Asuncion Zoo. It will be used to feed the birds of prey and the caimans, but not the felines. Like other animals, felines have a very strict diet.



**Sequestration of 15 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 9 jaguars (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), 5 pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I or II), 7 leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 5 lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), 2 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, appendix I or II), 3 blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III), 3 buffalos (*Bison bison*, Appendix II), a margay (*Leopardus wiedii*, Appendix II), 3 guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), 3 bobcats (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), 3 kinkajous (*Potos flavus*, Appendix III), 3 Geoffroy's spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II), 3 black-capped capuchins (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II), 12 scimitar-horned oryxes (*Oryx dammah*, Appendix I), 2 hamadryas baboons (*Papio hamadryas*, Appendix II), 3 pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III), 3 wapitis (*Cervus elaphus*, Appendix I, II or III), a nanday conure (*Aratinga nenday*, Appendix II), a red-fronted conure (*Aratinga wagleri*, Appendix II),**

**a keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II), a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II), a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), a dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius*), 2 raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), 6 Mexican agoutis from *Dasyprocta mexicana* species and 2 red brockets (*Mazama americana*)<sup>26</sup>**  
**Tehuacan, State of Puebla, Mexico  
February 2015**

PROFEPA went to the "Club de los Animalitos" to inspect the 240 animals in the zoo. 101 animals were sequestered—92 for abuse—the animals were piled up in cages that were too small. 9 of them were sequestered because they



did not have their documentation. The zoo did not comply with safety conditions for the public or for the animals. The veterinary facilities and the kitchens were sub-standard.

The park director has the support of the local community. Thanks to the community, the director has a second chance. PROFEPA is suspending the zoo's activities for 2 years, until it becomes compliant. In a year's time, it must also present its new management plan. The management plan document must be submitted to SEMARNAT to obtain UMA status, and to thus be able to host wild animal specimens. "Club de los Animalitos" hosts felines that have been seized from traffickers and other gangsters.

## **DENUNCIA FAUNA OPERATION**

**Filing of a complaint against a tourism operator for wild fauna trafficking, wood trafficking, and pollution<sup>27</sup>**

**Peru**

**February 2015**

The 2 hotels of the Colombian company "On Vacation" are 700 km apart. One is in Puerto Alegria in Peru. The other one is in Leticia in Colombia. The 2 hotels are holding wildlife. There are 100 animals on the Colombian side. On the Peruvian side, a women's association offers animal care demonstrations every day. The demonstrations attract 200 to 300 onlookers. The hotel complex is built of illegal wood. "On Vacation" has pillaged both flora and fauna. Every day, tourist waste is thrown into the river. The affair came to light through the operation denunciafauna@gmail.com.





## Carnival – Awareness in Bolivia<sup>28</sup>

The carnivals in Bolivia are between mid-February and Mid-March. Participants march with rattles made of Bolivian hairy armadillos (*Chaetophractus nani*, Appendix II); some dance outfits are made from feathers from Andean flamingos (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*, Appendix II), parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II), toucans, and Andean condors (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I). In response to these practices, the Bolivian Minister of Environment and Water has declared the implementation of a rule prohibiting the use of the skins, feathers, and objects made from wild animal parts during the parades. The minister also added that inspections will be conducted to end the illegal detention of wild animals, their sale, and their slaughter. Offenders will be criminally prosecuted.

The Minister comments : " for quite a few years now, we have been trying to raise awareness among dancers so that they would not use animal parts for their costumes but did not any results. This is why we think it's time to be stricter regarding this issue."



Rattles made of Bolivian hairy armadillos

## Seizure of

- 40 frozen animals including 17 ball pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), a common squirrel monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*, Appendix II), a white-tufted-ear marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II), a moustached parakeet (*Psittacula alexandri*, Appendix II), 2 American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II), 3 water monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), 2 Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), 4 Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Annexe II) and 2 red-eyed leaf frogs (*Agalychnis callidryas*, Appendix II)

- 12 living animals: a sun parakeet (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II), a chinchilla (*Chinchilla* spp., Appendix I), 6 desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*, Appendix II), 2 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and 2 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II)<sup>29</sup>

Monterrey, State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico

March 2015

PROFEPA and the public prosecutor of Mexico conducted the operation, based on alerts in October 2014. They were using the apartment to store animals that he would then sell on Facebook. The living specimens were kept in pitiful conditions—without

water or food. The specimens were transferred to La Pastora Zoo for veterinary consultations.

## Seizure of 53 kg of collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and gray brocket meat (*Mazama gouazoubira*)<sup>30</sup>

Orellana Province, Ecuador

March 7, 2015

The operation ended at 10 in the morning, after 4 hours of inspection and vigilance. The meat was transported in 2 jute bags by a Huaorani woman. The Huaorani are an indigenous community in Ecuador. The meat was buried.

## Seizure of a jaguar skin (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) and an agouti skin (*Dasyproctidae* family)<sup>31</sup>

Lacanga, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil  
March 7, 2015

The 83-year-old man had 2 pelts, a rifle, and ammunition in his home.



## Seizure of 26 wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II) and 25 kg of tapir meat (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II) and collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II)<sup>32</sup>

Porto Walter, State of Acre, Brazil

March 8, 2015

All the animals were traveling on Antonio Fidelis's boat on the Jurua River. When the police questioned him, he said that the animals belonged to a certain Daniel Bandeira. The investigation is ongoing.

## Seizure of a Pacific parakeet (*Aratinga strenua*, Appendix II), 22 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotheris jugularis*, Appendix II), 5 frogs, 4 turtles and 54 iguanas

San Salvador, San Salvador Department, El Salvador

March 12, 2015

The authorities raided the central market. Following complaints about the wildlife trade, the authorities had already scouted the scene. The animals were dehydrated and had been abused. 50 iguanas were tied, with their mouths shut. The 4 other iguanas were amputated. Customers had already dropped by for their lunch.



**Sequestration of 2 flap-necked chameleons (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Annexe II), 7 diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II), 3 Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), 5 Sumatran short-tailed pythons (*Python curtus*, Appendix II), a ball python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), and a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II)<sup>33</sup>**

**Mexico City, Federal District of Mexico, Mexico  
March 2015**

PROFEPA inspected the pet shop Jurassic Pets. Jurassic Pets could not produce the official documentation for the animals. The animals were sequestered. The pet shop defends itself. It explains that the PROFEPA information is wrong, that it complies with the rules, and that the inspectors are incompetent—they can't identify the species.

After its animals were sequestered, the company solicited UMA and PIMVS unadvisedly. "To all our friends who manage UMAs and PIMVS, and who have many babies, we can buy them from you. We can buy entire litters." Note that a UMA is a management unit for the conservation of wildlife. A PIMVS is a wildlife management facility. Under certain conditions, these 2 organizations are authorized to host wildlife specimens. These organizations are meant to save the animals, and not to send them off to pet shops. The reality is very different (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p. 18-19 and p. 106).

**Conviction for illegal possession of 3 hawks (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 Western screech-owls (*Otus kennicottii*, Appendix II), 2 barn owls (*Tyto alba*), a long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix I) and a sea turtle (*Cheloniidae* spp., Appendix I)  
San Jose, California, United States of America  
March 2015**

Dora Martha Jimenez Zepeda, aged 42, was sentenced to \$ 3,600 US, 300 hours of community work, and 3 years of suspended prison. In her studio, over 50 preserved animals were found, including a life-size standing lion.

The accused claims she bought most of her collection on eBay. The investigation was launched in June 2014, after a French officer from the ONCFS (French national forests office) reported a barn owl transaction on eBay. The toll-free number to anonymously report poachers and polluters in California is 1-888-334-2258.



© California Department of Fish and Wildlife



**Seizure of a caiman (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 common rheas (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II), 2 capuchins (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II), a raccoon (*Procyon* gender), 2 crested guans (*Penelope purpurascens*, Appendix III in Honduras), a king vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*, Appendix III in Honduras), 2 black-bellied whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*, Appendix III in Honduras), 2 deers (*Cervidae* family), 2 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II), a toucan (*Ramphastidae* family), a yellow-fronted amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), 19 green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I), 4 coahuila box terrapins (*Terrapene Coahuila*, Appendix I) and 2 wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II)<sup>35</sup>**

**Alberto Adriani, State of Merida, Venezuela  
March 2015**

The restaurant owner used wire mesh and roof sheeting to build a miniature zoo that he called "Nido de les Avestruces" ("the ostrich nest"). He was not authorized to do this, of course.

**Seizure of a lion's head (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and of 21 animals: 2 common rheas (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II), 4 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 3 yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), a blue-headed parrot (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II), 7 toucans (family *Ramphastidae*), a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 ducks and one deer. Total value pesos 32 millions (\$ 12.620 US).<sup>36</sup>**

**Dosquebradas, Risaralda Department, Colombia  
March 2015**

**Liberation of 148 animals<sup>37</sup>**

**Valle del Cauca Department, Colombia  
March 2015**

Boas, primates, felines, Amazon parrots, and macaws . . . were all seized or rescued by



Colombian authorities. Their recovery will take nearly a year. A veterinarian will need to first assess their condition, and then work on their diet. In other words, the vet will need to teach or retrain them how to eat the food they will have when they are released. They must ultimately behave like wild animals again. The biologist Gustavo Trujillo explains: "We have been dehumanizing them." "One of the strategies is to minimize visual contact between humans and animals." "This is why some cages have green covers on them." The biologist also says that it is impossible to prevent the animals from becoming stressed when they are released. "But they definitely should not be given medicine." "We just give them vitamin B to make them relax, without making them drowsy or numb." "They need to be alert when they are released."



**Seizure of a tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II)<sup>38</sup>  
Ocotlan, State of Jalisco, Mexico  
March 2015**

The 3 of them were all in a cage with a radius of 9 m, 7 m high. As the walls were transparent, you could examine them. The lion was castrated and had lost his mane. Traces of wounds could be seen on his head. The tigress had osteoarthritis. She had trouble walking. The left eye of the young bear was missing. They were transferred to a management unit for the conservation of wildlife (UMA) to be quarantined and observed. The animals will first need to recover enough. The tigress will then return to the cage for the felines, where one tiger and 2 other tigresses are expecting it. The lion and the bear will return to individual cages.

**Seizure of 150 animals among which 45 brown-throated parakeets (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II), 16 yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), a spectacled parrotlet (*Forpus conspicillatus*, Appendix II), 5 wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II) and a little spotted cat skin (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I)<sup>39</sup>**

**Barranquilla, Atlantico Department, Colombia  
March 28, 2015**

This is the result of the operation led by 70 environmental police in Barranquilla market at the end of March.

**Seizure or voluntary handing over to the authorities of 43 animals among which a little spotted cat (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I), a black howler (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II), macaws (*Ara spp.*, Appendix I or II) and iguanas (*Iguanidae* family)<sup>40</sup>**

**Medellin, Antioquia Department, Colombia  
March 2015**

The Holy Week in 2015 started on March 29, and ended on April 6. Seizures are speeding up (cf. "On the Trail" n°5, p. 44). A man took the initiative to return the 6-month-old little spotted cat. He said that he had brought it back from the Atlantic coast. The 3-month-year-old black howler was also voluntarily given to the authorities.



## ASIA

**Seizures of protected animals including a bear cub (*Ursidae spp.*, Appendix I), a salt-water crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix I), young eagles (*Accipitridae spp.*, Appendix I or II) and a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) and arrest of 7 traffickers**

**Malaysia**

**From January 2 to March 13, 2015**

These Malaysian big shots ruthlessly trafficked in wildlife. They used Facebook as their storefront. Perhilitan, the government environmental agency,

launched an extensive operation to arrest them. Tens of protected animals were seized. They are worth an estimated RM 80,000 (\$ 21,600 US). 3 vehicles were seized as well. The accused could face 100,000 RM (\$ 27,000 US) in fines and/or a maximum sentence of 3 years in prison.



Perhilitan officers with some of the seized animals

**Conviction for trafficking of 232 boxes of frozen pangolins, 76 boxes of pangolin scales, 1,113 python skins (*Pythonidae spp.*, Appendix I or II) and 23 boxes of wattle-necked softshell turtle meat (*Palea steindachneri*, Appendix II)<sup>42</sup>**



**Jiangmen, Guangdong Province, China  
January 10, 2015**

The 5 smugglers were sentenced to 5 to 8 years of imprisonment and fines of between Yuan 2 million and 3.5 million (\$ 322,366 to \$ 564,142 US). The value of the seizure is estimated to be Yuan 15 million (\$ 2.5 million US).

**Seizure of a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) and a macaque (*Macaca spp.*, Appendix II) sold on Internet<sup>43</sup>**

**Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
January 2015**

The small feline suffered from its unjustified reputation as a hen robber. But it was actually suffering from hunting and from habitat fragmentation. The feline is also in high demand on the pet market.

**Liberation of 4 eagles (*Accipitridae spp.*, Appendix I or II) and a macaque (*Macaca spp.*, Appendix II)<sup>44</sup>  
Phu Quoc Island, Vietnam  
January 19, 2015**

The 5 wild animals were prisoners in a bed and breakfast. They were released in the same place that had been captured. Phu Quoc is Vietnam's largest island. It is on the border of Cambodia's territorial waters. The National Park covers half of the 585 km<sup>2</sup> of Phu Quoc Island.

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

**Seizure of a frozen tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and 8 frozen monkeys (*Primates spp.*, Appendix I or II) and arrest<sup>45</sup>**

**Nghe An Province, Vietnam  
January 20, 2015**

There will soon be more tigers in freezers than in

forests in Vietnam. Sung, aged 51, and Phu, 19, had 30 kg of frozen monkey in 2 bags. In the refrigerator of Phu's mother, police found 70 kg of monkey and 140 kg of tiger. A "stranger" offered to sell monkey meat to the Phu family for VND 150,000 (\$ 7 US) per kg. It was a deal. For the tiger, the transaction was more complicated. The feline was deposited in the Phu home. The Phu family would have received a commission of around \$ 1,000 US once the tiger cut up and sold for \$ 240 US/kg. Note: A frozen tiger was found in a car in December 2014 (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p. 54).



**Seizure of an ebony leaf monkey (*Trachypitecus auratus*, Appendix II), a salmon-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I), a yellow-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), an Oriental pied-hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II) and a black-capped lory (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>46</sup>**

**Malang, East Java Province, Indonesia  
January 23, 2015**



In 2014, Profauna found 3,460 illegal wildlife sales on the internet. This dealer stocked up in Papua (West New Guinea) and in the region of Lumajang (province of East Java)

**Seizure of 19 ivory jewels, 59 parrots (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II) and 586 birds from unspecified species<sup>47</sup>**

**Chengguan District, Gansu Province, China  
January 2015**

Around 60 police officers combed the flea market, the fish market, and other places of sale. Their mission was productive.

## GANG

**Seizure of a rhinoceros horn and a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and arrest<sup>48</sup>  
Bhaktapur, Central Development Region, Nepal  
January 25, 2015**

The 5 of them are behind bars. The youngest man is 30, and the oldest one is 48. The horn weighs 526 g. The skin is 79 cm long and 48.5 cm wide. They were arrested near Kathmandu.

**Seizure of 456 kg of monkeys (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II), deers (*Cervidae* family) and foxes<sup>49</sup>**

**TuongDuong District, Nghe An Province, Vietnam**

**January 27, 2015**

**Conviction of a ranger by the Anti-Corruption Bureau<sup>50</sup>  
Vizag, State of Andhra Pradesh, India**



**February 5, 2015**

The value of the forest ranger's assets were too high compared to his official revenue. Where was this \$ 56,000 US coming from? Probably from trafficking. The anti-corruption judge was sure about it. Raveendranath has been sentenced to 3 years in prison without remission and one year in addition if he doesn't pay a fine of 1 million roupies, or \$1,615 US.

**Arrest of 7 poachers<sup>51</sup>**

**Similipal Tiger Reserve, State of Odisha, India  
February 8, 2015**

Radical. To catch the animals, they set the forest on fire. The 7 arsonists were equipped with bows and arrows, and axes, ready to shoot the animals running away. This is the return of an age-old technique, used during the dry season from February to mid-June.

The Similipal Tiger Reserve (2,750 km<sup>2</sup>) hosts several species of deer, wild boars, squirrels, sloth bears, pangolins, and a few hundreds of elephants. In 2004, 101 tigers were counted. There are only 23 of them left today.

**Seizure of 11 monkeys, monkey skins (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II), 214 kg of python bones (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and 2 kg of bear skin (*Ursidae* spp. Appendix I). Arrest<sup>52</sup>**

**Nghe An Province, Vietnam**

**February 12, 2015**

On highway 48, Hoang Thi Nguyet had 40 kg of dead monkey with her. She was going to deliver it to a local restaurant. The driver had to stop for a road inspection. In the driver's home, the police found 2 monkeys that were still alive. One of them had its 2 front paws amputated. There were also 3 dead monkeys—one was dried, and 2 were frozen. The police also seized 214 kg of python bones, 2 kg of bear fur, and various pieces of monkey skin. The cruel woman sourced from local hunters. She supplied restaurants and handicraft workers. They make necklaces from serpent vertebrae.



Example of necklace made of snake's vertebrae



**Seizure of 4 woodchucks (*Marmota* genus), 110 pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II), 21 snakes from unspecified species, 5,7 kg of golden tree snakes and 9 geckos (*Gekkonidae* family) and arrest<sup>53</sup>**

**Bangkok International Suvarnabhumi Airport, Thailand**

**February 20, 2015**

The 2 Japanese men, aged 39, came to Thailand to smuggle in a variety of continental Asian fauna. Caught by customs officers in Bangkok Airport, they were nearly arrested and sued. However, after the animals were seized, the 2 trafficking cynics were released. They had \$ 15,000 US of fauna in their suitcase. They claimed that the animals were "souvenirs for friends."



**Seizure of a Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo abelii*, Appendix I), a sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), 2 tarsiers (*Tarsius* spp., Appendix I), 3 Celebes black macaques (*Macaca nigra*, Appendix II), a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I or II), a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), 6 hornbills (*Bucerotidae* family), a parrot (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II), a palm**

**cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I), 5 sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II) and several other species<sup>54</sup>**

**West Java Province, Indonesia**

**February 20, 2015**

The inventory of a wildlife merchant on the internet was cordoned off by the police and by the NGO Center for Orangutan Protection. The Java broker seems to have supplied zoos in Thailand, the Middle East, and Europe.

**Wilful destruction of animal furs<sup>55</sup>**

**Drangsung, Yunnan Province, China**

**February 27, 2015**

For lunar new year, Tibetans living in China burned clothes and accessories in leopard, otter, and wolf skin. The Tibetans responded to the call that the Dalai Lama launched in 2006. The Chinese authorities are mistrustful of this response to the directives of the Dalai Lama, in exile in India.



In July 2014, China Tibet News criticized hunting, and wanted festivals and other group events to stop promoting the use of tiger, leopard, otter, and wolf skins. "We must reconcile ethics and clothing practices."

As for China, it has encouraged wearing clothes and ornaments made of animal skin. Several delegates at the conference from the Tibetan People's Congress and Tibetan People's Political Consultative (Lhasa, January 2015) were wearing and showing off their fur hats and finery. Shugden, a leading Buddhist figure whom the Dalai Lama considers to be a dissident, also encourages Tibetans to wear finery made from animals.



## REPEATED OFFENSE

**Seizure of 6.5 kg of pangolin scales (*Manis* spp., Appendix II) and 2 leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and arrest**

**Dehradun, State of Uttarakhand, India**

**March 1st, 2015**

3 people arrested, including a recidivist from a Haryana poaching gang.

**Liberation of a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) and sea turtles (*Cheloniidae* spp., Appendix I)**

**Vinh, Nghe An Province and Can Tho, Can Tho Province, Vietnam**

**March 2015**

The wildcat and the turtles were kept captive in restaurants to satisfy unhealthy appetites. ENV found and released them.

**Seizure of snakes, beetles, lizards and frogs in the suitcases of 2 Kuwaitis passengers arriving from Europe. Arrest<sup>58</sup>**

**International Airport of Kuwait, Kuwait**

**March 2015**

**Conviction for illegal possession and illegal sale of sturgeons (*Acipenseridae* spp., Appendix I or II), paddlefish (*Polyodontidae* spp., Appendix II), newts (*Salamandridae* family), ploughshare tortoises (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I) and radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I)**

**Singapour**

**March 18, 2015**



The owner of Wu Hu Aquarium was sentenced to \$ 41,000 S (\$ 30,000 US) in fines. The import, export, possession, and sale of endangered animals, their parts, and their by-products are strictly regulated. All these activities require a CITES permit. The traffickers could face a maximum of 2 years in prison and \$ 50,000 S (\$ 36,000 US) in fines for each species.



**Seizure of 2 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), 2 Tibetan gazelle horns (*Procapra picticaudata*, unlisted on CITES), and ivory (5 bracelets, 4 necklaces, 6 pendants, 6 buddha heads) and arrest of 3 men<sup>60</sup>**

**Xuchang, Henan Province, China**

**March 2015**

Last August, the Xuchang forest police received reports about a named "Hejinyuan antique store" that sold products made of wild animals. The police sent out a squad immediately and found many ivory products, gazelle horns, and saiga antelope horns. The storeowner Dai confessed that this store belonged to her and her husband Liu. Another accomplice mailed the products to their store. Liu disappeared after his wife's arrest, but turned himself in October 10. All 3 suspects are awaiting trial.

## EUROPE

**Seizure of dozens wolf skin coats (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), otter skin coats (*Mustelidae* family, Appendix I or II) and ocelot skin coats (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I)<sup>61</sup>**

**Chorley, England, United Kingdom**

**January 31, 2015**

The eBay trafficking business was full of suspicious animal skins. The police have calmed things down. "We offered advice and support to the person involved to assist in them in running their business lawfully." The skins were seized so they could be assessed.



© Preston Police Wildlife and Rural Crime Officers



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**Seizure of an elephant tusk and of an ivory piece, an alligator skin (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 gazelle horns, 4 seashells and 5 corals<sup>62</sup>**

**Avignon, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region**

**February 9, 2015**

**Seizure of 18 geckos and about 20 butterflies and sticks partially composed of crushed pangolin scales from Tanzania, Thailand and India. Falsified CITES documents<sup>63</sup>**

**Zaventem Airport, Brussels, Belgium**

**February 11, 2015**



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**Seizure of 8 skulls and 8 skins including from yellow-backed duiker (*Cephalophus silvicultor*, Appendix II), bay duiker (*Cephalophus dorsalis*, Appendix II), zebra duiker (*Cephalophus zebra*, Appendix II) and Brooke's duiker (*Cephalophus brookei*, Appendix II)<sup>64</sup>**

**Zaventem Airport, Flemish Region, Belgium  
February 2015**



A cargo of hunting trophies was sent from Monrovia, Liberia, to New York. The cargo was intercepted at Brussels Airport. The CITES certificates traveling with it were

forged.

**Seizure of a stuffed tiger head (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and bear claws (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II)**

**Lurgan, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom  
March 3, 2015**

Several wildlife specialists helped local police to seize this batch of wildlife with many preserved specimens, including a tiger head, a wolverine (*Gulo gulo*, not listed in CITES) and several bird species.

**Theft of a rhinoceros horn, a narwhal tusk (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) and elephant ivory<sup>66</sup>**

**Calci, Tuscany Region, Italy  
March 6, 2015**



A 17<sup>th</sup> century rhinoceros horn 60 cm long and weighing around 3.5 kg exhibited in the historical gallery of the Museum of Natural History was stolen the night of March 6. It is worth between € 20,000 and € 30,000. The police are following the trail of the collectors, and of the Asian market. A narwhal tusk was also stolen at the same time.

La Certosa di Pisa ("Charterhouse of Pisa" in English) is an old Carthusian monastery. The building has been home to the Museum of Natural History since 2013..

**Seizure of 50 carved ivory (70 kg) from elephant or hippopotamus (*Hippopotamidae* family)<sup>67</sup>**

**Rome, Lazio Region, Italy  
March 2015**

The total value is estimated to be € 50,000.

**Seizure of dehydrated seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), pangolin scales (*Manis* spp., Appendix II), elephant ivory items and crocodile skin bags (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II) coming from Conakry (Guinea) and bound for Beijing<sup>68</sup>**

**Brussels International Airport, Flemish Brabant Province, Belgium**

**March 26, 2015**



Animal parts were in bags of medical plaster.

## GANG

**Indictment and temporary detention for international trafficking of protected species by an organized gang<sup>69</sup>**

**Clermont-Ferrand, Auvergne Region, France  
March 27, 2015**



The Belgian man was putting wild animals in a cage at a zoo in Ambert in the Massif Central. He may be imprisoned. The local newspaper La Montagne disclosed that

this man was also involved in the international trafficking of captive animals. In Russia, he just sold 2 snow panthers that he bought in Germany. Bouy Zoo opened in 1975 and is accustomed to animal cruelty. Manager after manager has shot the zoo's mouflon sheep dead with rifles. "These animals reproduce like submachine guns," as the 1<sup>st</sup> owner said. He is 80 years old. "If we don't kill half of the herd every year, they proliferate. And we can't handle that." Albrecht, his successor, also likes the Final Solution. He has already received a 6 month suspended prison sentence for animal cruelty.

After supposedly getting off to a fresh start, the zoo is filing for bankruptcy, and Albrecht is in preventive detention. A puma was found in a freezer. Albrecht is also a pioneer of the circular economy. This animal enemy fed survivors with the dead boarders from his zoo. Around a hundred animals—most of them felines—were taken hostage. They should be finding buyers in a few weeks elsewhere. Unless they die of hunger or the cold before that. French NGOs are on alert.



## OCEANIA

**Seizure of one hundred animals among which a baby Australian fresh-water crocodile (*Crocodylus johnstoni*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>70</sup>  
Broome, State of Western Australia, Australia  
February 5, 2015**



In the suburbs of Broome, the passengers of a car pursued by the police threw a crocodile overboard. When the car stopped, there were still 10 living animals inside, including mulga snakes (*Pseudechis australis*) and mouse spiders (genre *Missulena*). The baby crocodile was found on the road shoulder, along the itinerary of the intercepted vehicle. Inside, there was a whole range of gear—shovels, nets, flashlights, and a reptile identification guide. The police seized all of it. The 3 passengers aged 22, 23 and 16 are charged with illegal possession of protected species and animal cruelty. This eventful arrest was made after suspicious packages were sent from the post offices in Broome and Derby. The animals were sent in the packages alive. "One of the postal packages was moving on the counter," said an inspector. Out of the 80 specimens sent by the postal service, several of them were already dead. Others are among the most poisonous specimens in Australia. The police launched a call for witnesses to try to reveal who the other members of the network are. Insects and reptiles were captured in the regions of Kimberley and Pilbara in North West Australia.

**Seizure of about 200 animals among which pygmy pythons (*Antaresia perthensis*, Appendix II) and arrest<sup>71</sup>  
International Perth Airport, State of Western Australia, Australia  
February 6, 2015**

They did not come to Australia to admire the Great Barrier Reef or the Sydney Opera House. They were caught in Perth Airport, the departure terminal, with the reptiles and amphibians. The 2 Russians and 2 Czechs had stuffed cigarette packages and had gently stuck insects in children's books. They were flying off to Europe.





## ON THE TRAIL N°8

### Sources

Sources are available on request by email to [contact@robindesbois.org](mailto:contact@robindesbois.org) indicating the “On the Trail” issue number, section and reference in the title of the event.  
For instance, for the last event of “On the Trail” n°8 (Seizure of about 200 animals in Perth, Australia), ask for “On the trail” n°8, chapter Multi-Species, reference 71.

### Institutions

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### Non Gouvernemental Organisations

African Conservation Foundation, Big Life Foundation, Bornfree Foundation, Catalogue of Life (Species 2000 ITIS), Centre for Orangutan Protection, Conservation Justice, The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, EAGLE Network, Education for Nature - Vietnam (ENV), Elephant Aware Masai Mara, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), EOL Encyclopedia of Life, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Foundation Franz Weber, Friends of Maasai Mara, Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP-UNEP), Hong Kong for Elephants, Indian Bird Conservation Network, Iran Environment and Wildlife Watch, International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, Lwiro Primates, Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature (IUCN), Kenyans United Against Poaching, Last Great Ape organization (LAGA), Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO), Limbe Wildlife Centre, Mara Elephant Project-Escape Foundation, Mara Triangle, National Wildlife Crime Unit, Neotropical Primate Conservation, Olarro Conservancy, Outraged SA Citizens Against Poaching, Projet d’appui à l’Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), Project Rhino KZN, Robin des Bois, Save The Elephants, Save the Rhino Trust Namibia, Saving The Survivors, Species Survival Network, Talff-Enforcement, Tiger Time, Tikki Hywood Trust, TRAFFIC, Tsavo Trust, Walk With Rangers, Wara Conservation Project, WildAid, Wild Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Direct, Wildlife Crime in India, Wildlife Trust of India.

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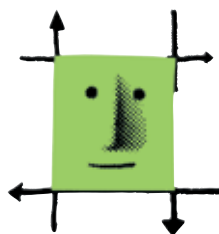
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ROBIN DES BOIS

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