

ON_{the} TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling

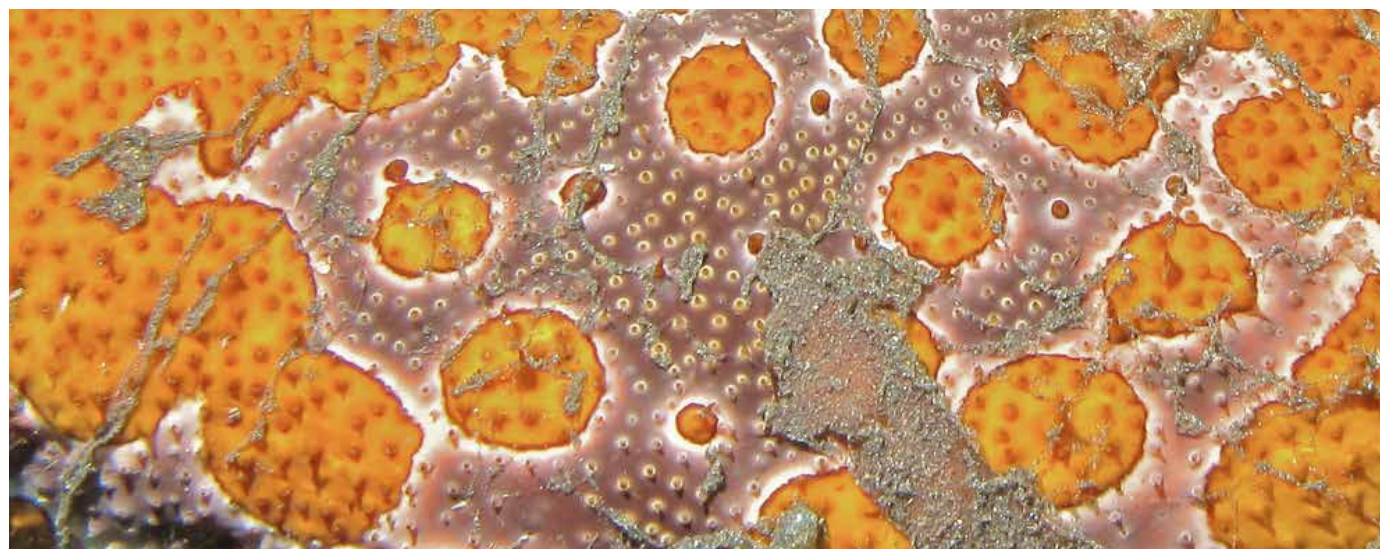
n°14 / 1st July - 30th September 2016

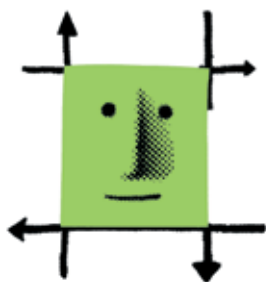
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Original version in French

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ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

Carried out by Robin des Bois (Robin Hood)
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Sea Cucumber *Bohadschia ocellata* (detail)
cf. page 5

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. 181 Member States.

Seahorses

Seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) are listed under CITES Appendix II.

ASIA

INDIA

July 3, 2016

Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Profession: singer in a street orchestra. Age: 38 years old. Illan Gouan was caught at a bus stop with 26 kg of seahorses in Thondi, a fishing port where seahorse and sea cucumber poaching go together. Presenting himself as a simple carrier, he blamed everything on a certain Arjunan, head of the network, based in Thondi. Police are on his trail. It is fighting on all fronts, at sea in the Mannar Gulf to uncover seahorse and sea cucumber pillagers and on land to set hands on the processing workshops.¹

August 17, 2016

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 6.3 kg of seahorses. One arrest. Destination Singapore. The baggage, according to its owner, contained snacks, "seedai" (a sort of popcorn), "murukku" (churros made of rice and lentille flour). It actually was part of CITES' Appendix II.²

EUROPE

FRANCE

July 28 and August 8, 2016

Chilly-Mazarin, Department of Essonne, France

Seizure by the postal custom services in Chilly-Mazarin, in the Paris Region, of 800 then 1200 dried seahorses. Coming in from Conakry (Guinea). Destination Hanoi (Viet Nam). Total value: \$ 21,000 US.³



Abalones and Queen Conches

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 28, 2016

Near Swellendam, Province of Western Cape, South Africa

Seizure of 8989 abalones in 78 bags (value: \$ 334,000 US) and a minibus. One arrest. Crowds of abalones are being smuggled to China (see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 95, n°6 p. 83, n°9 p. 93, n°12 p. 4, n°13 p. 7).¹

September 9, 2016

Khayelitsha, Cape Town, Province of the Western Cape, South Africa



The 2 Chinese citizens aged 31 and 35 were engaged in the illegal processing of abalone in a Cape town ghetto. Almost 38,000 specimens were found at their hideout, as well as a cannabis hydroponic plantation. The 2 charges resulted in a conviction of 18 months in prison and a fine of 500,000 rand (\$ 34,783 US) each.²

AMERICA

THE NETHERLANDS

July 2016

Princess Juliana International Airport, Saint-Martin, the Netherlands

Patrimonial evasion. Customs are very proud to have prevented 200 kg of conches from going abroad.

The Caribbean harbors several species of queen conches: *Strombus costatus*, *Strombus raninus* and the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) (cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 4, n°3 p. 3, n°4 p. 4-5, n°5 p. 127, n°6 p. 5, n°10 p. 6, n°12 p. 5).³



Nui Chua National Park

July 7, 2016

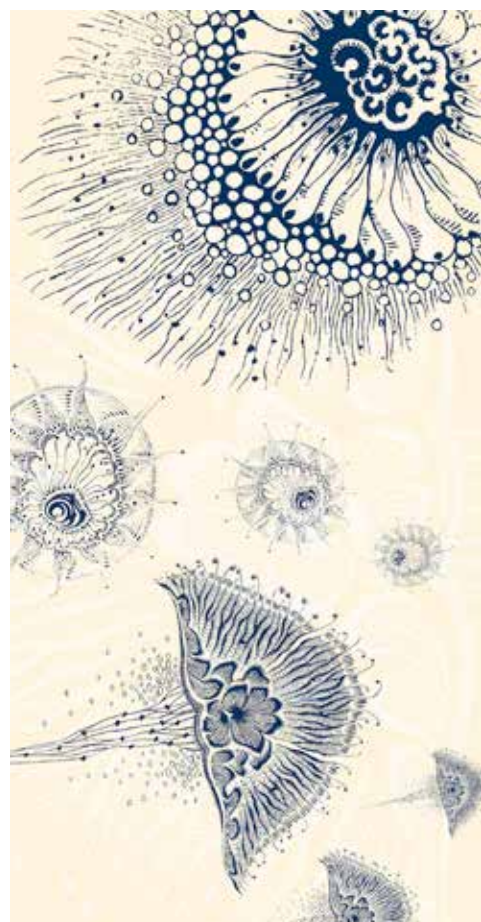
Province of Ninh Thuan, Viet Nam

The man, his wife and other villagers were prowling inside the mangrove of the Nui Chua National Park covering both land and sea. The intruders claim they were there to dig up sea worms by pulling out some roots.



A guard intervened, pushing the group outside the Park. End of the afternoon when getting back home the guard was stabbed in the back. The guilt turned himself into police the day after the crime.

The Nui Chua National Park covers nearly 300 km². It is home to 664 plant and 20 animal species.⁴



Sea Cucumbers

Class Holothuroidea. *Isostichopus fuscus* is listed under CITES Appendix III in Ecuador. See also "A Sea Cucumber Ending" in "On the Trail" n°4, p.107.

AMERICA

MEXICO

September 15, 2016

San Quintin, Baja California, Mexico

Seizure in a pick-up caught traveling at high speed of 871 brown sea cucumbers, 217 kg of shark fins and 144 kg of swim bladders of Gulf corvina (*Cynoscion othonopterus*). This fish lives in the Sea of Cortez. Its average size is 70 cm for a weight of 2,4 kg. The vehicle was heading toward Tijuana, border town with the United States of America.¹

ASIA

INDIA

RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT

State of Tami Nadu, India

-July 28, 2016. Marakaiyar Pattinam. Seizure of 77 kg of sea cucumbers leaving for Sri Lanka. Value: Rs 7.7 lakh (11,390 US\$). One arrest inside the fishing port.²

- August 1, 2016. On the Devipattinam coast. Seizure of 21 kg of fresh sea cucumbers and one motorbike. Coastguard patrols are tackling poaching. H. Abdul Rahman was about to depart by motorcycle with the seafood he just had bought from fishermen and that he intended to boil before selling them abroad.³



- August 10, 2016. Tirupalaikudi. Seizure of 25 kg of sea cucumbers. One arrest.⁴

- August 12, 2016.

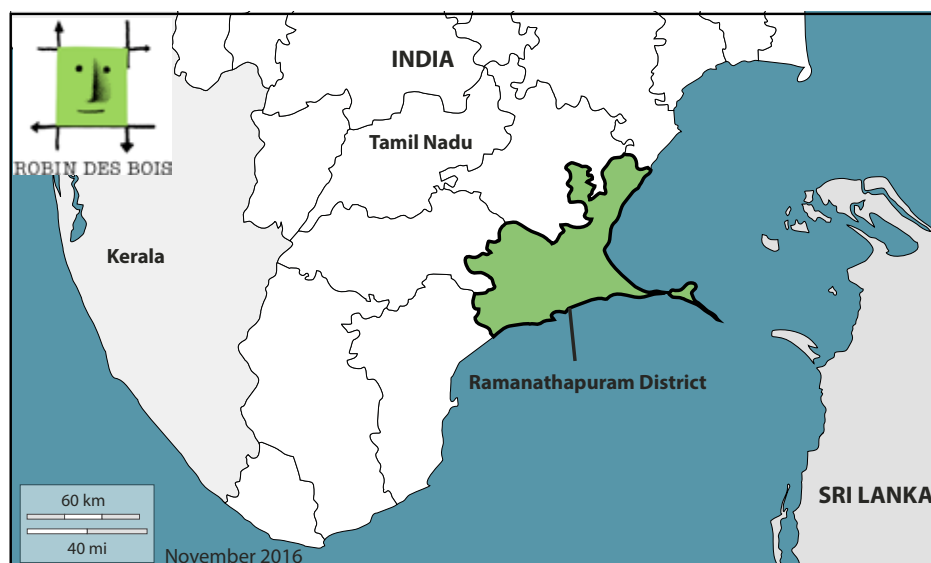
1 – Seizure of 250 kg of fresh sea cucumbers inside a rickshaw on the national route near Mandapam. One arrest.

2 – Seizure of 80 kg of fresh sea cucumbers. The man escaped on a motorbike.

3 – Seizure of 8 kg of sea cucumbers.⁵

Fishing, boiling, processing and exporting to Sri Lanka, Malaysia or Singapore. The network is rolling. Authorities ban trade in sea cucumbers and demand that fishermen throw them back to sea when caught in nets and hauled up unintentionally. In fact, a lot of fishing actually targets sea cucumbers.

-August 17, 2016. Devipattinam. Seizure of 20 kg of fresh sea cucumbers. One arrest. The fishermen claim the sea cucumbers were taken accidentally. Yet they clearly were boiled and dried intentionally. Since the end of July, 600 kg have been seized.⁶



August 16, 2016

Thiruppalaikudi, Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 200 kg of fresh sea cucumbers. One arrest. The man was on the beach with his loot delivered by local fishermen. After cooking sea cucumbers would have sailed to Sri Lanka.⁷

September 18, 2016

Mandapam, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 200 kg of sea cucumbers during transshipment. One arrest. It's been proven that the traffickers were in cahoots with the fishermen who would intentionally haul up the benthic species. Fishing sea cucumbers is banned under the 1972 Indian Wildlife Protection Act.⁸



September 28, 2016

Mandapam, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 200 kg of sea cucumbers and kitchen facilities. Two arrests, 26 and 22 years. They had built their processing shop on the beach. Sea cucumbers are very useful for marine ecosystems. They are caught and looted at the bottom of the seas everywhere. CITES should show interest. The traffic is international. This is the seventh seizure in the district of Ramanathapuram since August 1st.⁹



SRI LANKA

July 14, 2016

Mandaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 18 sea cucumbers, 4 scuba diving masks and 4 pairs of flippers. Four arrests. The culprits are being questioned in Jaffna by the fisheries' chief inspector.¹⁰



July 19, 2016

Mandaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Fifteen arrests, caught red handed during illegal fishing. Seizure of 104 sea cucumbers, 7 scuba diving masks, 6 pairs of flippers and one boat.¹¹



Sri Lanka

August 22, 2016

- **Mandaitivu Island, Northern Province.** Seizure of 7 sea cucumbers and diving gear. Two arrests.

- **Chalai, Northern Province.** Seizure of 35 sea cucumbers, diving gear and a dinghy. Two arrests.¹²



- **August 23, 2016. Kalpitiya, North Western Province.** Seizure in the coastal waters of 770 kg of dry sea cucumbers coming from Tamil Nadu. Two arrests.¹³



Northern Province, Sri Lanka

- **August 31, 2016. Point Pedro.** Seizure of 2 boats, 5 pairs of flippers, 21 oxygen cylinders and a GPS. The 7 underwater fishermen were sea cucumber pillagers.¹⁴

- **September 1, 2016. Mullaitivu.** Seizure by the marine forces off the coast of Mullaitivu and 15 kg of fresh sea cucumbers, a small boat, 2 pairs of flippers, 10 oxygen cylinders. Three fishermen are being questioned by maritime police.¹⁵



September 6, 2016

Vettalaikerni and Chundikulam, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The 5 offenders were taken to Jaffna Fisheries central office. At night they dived in a forbidden area to collect sea cucumbers. 438 specimens were seized plus 2 small boats and diving equipments.¹⁶



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

September 22, 2016

State of Queensland, Australia

The Vietnamese boat had been spotted while in fishing action inside the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone, off the Cairns shore by an airplane patrol. Inside there were 26 barrels of sea cucumbers, diving gear, longlines and bait. The ship was seized and destroyed after being stopped by the *Storm Bay* patrol boat and escorted to Cairns. The Vietnamese captain was sentenced to 4 months suspended prison and 18 months on probation. In May and in June, 2 other Vietnamese ships had been intercepted while fishing sea cucumbers around the Lihoo reserve 600 km off the Cairns coast. There was enough equipment on board to equip 10 divers simultaneously. Six tons of sea cucumbers were seized. Both boats were destroyed in Cairns. The 30-crew members were convicted by the Darwin Tribunal and sentenced to prison time ranging between 2 and 7 months.¹⁷



Fishes

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 7 to September 20, 2016

Off the coast of Cape Town, South Africa



Condemnation of the captain of the *Chin Jen Wen* to 2 fines of 75,000 rand (\$ 5,217 US) and 25,000 rand (\$ 1,739 US) for unauthorized possession of a tuna fishing gear in South African waters and refusal to comply. The *Chin Jen Wen* was intercepted by the *Victoria Mxenge*, a patrol boat from the fisheries police and escorted to Cape Town. The Taiwanese boat came from Mossel Bay. For a brief moment, she tried to escape the instructions of the South African Navy. The offense to the MARPOL Convention on the prevention of pollution has not been sanctioned. The *Chin Wen Jen* does not have an oil book. The fines were paid on September 20. Cf. "On The Trail" n°13 p.8-9.¹

GUINEA

OPERATION PEDRO CARDOSO NACO

End of August 2016

Conakry Autonomous Port, Guinea



The operation is named after a fisheries inspector from Guinea Bissau who died at sea after 35 years on the job.

The campaign against illegal fishing in the Gulf of Guinea lasted 4 days for a € 200,000 cost co-financed by the European Union and the World Bank. Eighty-two fishing boats were checked, 14 were in breach of the law. The "biggest fish" caught was the *Chiang Jiao Yan Yu 6*.



She was fishing in a biological recovery zone. She had a fishing license delivered by Guinea Bissau. She came out with a fine worth one million € and 4 month detention at dock. The *Lu Jiao Nan Yuan Yu 102*, another Chinese big one, managed to escape. She would have been given a 2 million fine and belongs to the same company as the first one.

At present she has not been docked. A third Chinese ship is on the run. In all 11 ships were escorted back to the Bissau Port in Conakry for violations of various degrees of gravity. Most were artisanal small fishing boats.

The European Union is considering removing Guinea from the black list of countries uncooperative regarding illegal, undeclared or unregulated fishing.

According to the FAO (Food & Agriculture Organization) sale of fishing licenses to fleets from outside Africa by African countries brings in 400 million US\$. If these authorizations were granted to African fleets, they in theory would bring in 3.3 billion to African countries.²



The Senegalese patrol boat *Kedougou* was part of the operation

AMERICA

CHILI

Beginning of September 2016

137 km southwest off Arica, Arica Province, Chile

The Chilean Navy has seized 5 tons of shark meat on a Peruvian fishing boat, the *Fernandez II*. She was out of the Exclusive Economic Zone of Peru and had entered the EEZ of Chile. The ship was escorted unto the port of Arica. Arrest of the crew, 4 Peruvians.³

COSTA RICA

Septembre 6, 2016

Costa Rica

Seizure during the night of 494 kg of cocaine and shark meat on board the *Almirante William*. The ship was 130 km off the Pacific coast. Three crew members arrested.⁴



ASIA

CHINE

July 4, 2016

Kwai Chung, Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, China

Seizure at the Kwai Chung container inspection center of about 880 kg of hammerhead shark fins. They were mixed in the container with fins and tail fins of unprotected species. Three species of hammerhead sharks, *Sphyrna lewini*, *S. mokarran* and *S. zygaena* are listed on Appendix II of CITES. Swim bladders completed the merchandise. The total weight of the cargo was 4.9 t. The container had been loaded on the *COSCO Auckland* (China Ocean Shipping Company) in Colon, Panama. The container ship then passed through Houston, Texas, before heading to Ningbo and Hong Kong.



Smart alics take advantage of the difficulties of identification of fins between protected and unprotected species and mixed hammerhead sharks in the lot. The market is declining but is still active. Hong Kong imported 5717 tons of fins in 2015. The other big Chinese container ships company Orient Overseas Container Line announced earlier this year that it decided to stop transporting meat or other parts of sharks, whales and dolphins. Cathay Pacific airline claims it is "shark free". These good resolutions do not prevent international air and maritime companies to be accomplices in endangered wildlife and flora trafficking, by lack of vigilance and customs controls facing the frauds of the loaders.⁵

EUROPE

SPAIN

July 25, 2016

Las Teresitas beach, Santa Cruz de Tenerife Province, Canary Islands, Spain

Marc Crosas, soccer player in the Tenerife team (League 2) speared a baby angel shark (*Squatina squatina*). He was reported by the NGO Friends of Sharks and Rays of the Canaries.⁶



Big fun

FRANCE

August 12, 2015

September 8, 2016

Nîmes, Gard, France

As it often happens, the retired professional fisherman was still a professional fisherman. It was August 12, 2015 at Le Grau-du-Roi. Maritime guards found a Bluefin tuna (1.76 m, 65 kg) in the bottom of the boat without identification ring (see "On The Trail" n°10 p.13). The fish is seized and stored in a cold storage. At dusk, the fisherman and an accomplice came and stole it. They are captured red handed by the video surveillance camera. During the trial, he argued that he has threw the fish back into the sea because it was "black". "It brings bad luck, in the family we are superstitious." Its value was € 1,000 on the local market. Joseph was fined € 2,000 and his fishing license was withdrawn for 6 months.⁷



August 28, 2016

Off the coast of the Lérins Islands, Alpes-Maritimes Department, Southern France

"When we see a species like this, the first reflex to have is to not shoot." So is the heartfelt appeal of an expert from the University of Nice. "Leisure fishermen for the most are unfamiliar with marine resource management." "This is the first sighting of this species ever to occur in France." Unfortunately, as soon as it was spotted, it was speared with a harpoon. The spiny butterfly ray (*Gymnura altavela*) of 72 kg had probably not the time to lay her few tens of eggs as done usually by the end of the summer. In October 2014, the butterfly ray was given the honor of appearing in the French Official Journal as a species protected under the Barcelona Convention aiming for reduction of pollution and protection of the Mediterranean sea. Leisure fishermen and underwater hunters have not read the Official Journal. Let's us let the killers have the last word: "I started to drift, when I got 16 m deep, I saw a large dark form, I first thought it was a beach towel drifting." "The thing opened its eyes before me, I then understood it was a ray." "She was horrendous" "I shot immediately." The vandal rapidly called the local newspaper to be photographed beside his catch. A moment of fame in Nice Matin, the local paper. "If I had known I wouldn't have shot, I knew about manta rays, but we don't find them here" was his vague apology.⁸



Cyril via Facebook

ITALY

July 7, 2016

Marsala, Region of Sicily, Italy

The 27 Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) ended up in a food bank. They had been seized from 4 fishing boats. The fishing season was over. Global fine of € 32,000 if immediate payment, 96,000 if payment is delayed.⁹



Beginning September, 2016 Monopoli, Region of Apulia, Italy

The 8 Bluefin tunas (*Thunnus thynnus*) weigh 350 kg. They were hidden in a hold. The ship-owner and captain are sentenced to € 8000 in fine. Their fishing license has been suspended for several months.¹⁰



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

July 19, 2016

Mackay, State of Queensland, Australia

Eight sawfish rostrums of the species *Anoxypristis cuspidata*, Appendix I, were being placed on the market place. Apparently they had been accidentally caught. The rostrum easily get tangled in the nets and the fish die when hauled up.

Rostrums are used as decorations; they are also used as a prod in cockfights. Queensland coasts are among the rare places in the world where sawfish remain, individuals who reach 4 to 5 m in length are now an exception, if not impossible to find. Fishing devices are not their only enemy, water pollution and river dams are also harmful. Fishermen who sell rostrum risk up to \$ 121,900 AU (\$ 90,660 US) in fine. Some longline fishermen are thought to have specialized in catching sawfish and would cut off the rostrum before throwing the fish back to sea still alive. "This is a barbaric practice" says Brendan Ebner, the fish expert from the James Cook University.¹¹



ROBIN DES BOIS

CITES

17th Conference of the Parties
Johannesburg – South Africa
Press release n°5
October 3, 2016

Sea Tide Turns Green Except the Banggai who Remains Red

Sharks

Sharks fall victim of targeted and accidental catches from the fishing industry. The fins are subjected to intense international trade and aimed at the Asian market. Once the fin cut off, the carcass is the most often thrown back to sea; it is rare that the meat be used.

The silky shark was listed in Appendix II of CITES with 111 votes in favour, 30 votes against, 5 abstentions. Their name comes from their soft skin. Found in the tropical ocean and coastal waters, populations in the Atlantic have dropped by 90% since the 1950s.

Thresher sharks have been listed in Appendix II by 108 votes against 29, 5 abstentions. Its name comes from its extraordinary long caudal fin. Thresher sharks are found in all temperate and tropical oceans of the world. Populations have dropped by 99% in the Mediterranean. The fins are sold under the name "wu gu" for 25 US\$/kg.

Historical opponents to listing sharks under CITES Appendices rose to the occasion, especially Japan and Iceland.

Mobula rays (9 species spread around the world in temperate and tropical waters). Listing in Appendix II. The gill lamellae are sold between 290 and 557 US\$/kg as fortifier in China.

Banggai cardinalfish. The European Union surrendered to Indonesia. Proposal to list the Banggai cardinalfish in Appendix II has been withdrawn. Indonesia pledges to take measures in favor of conservation, a promise it has been making since 2007.

Clarion angelfish. Listing in Appendix II. It is an orange colored fish found off Mexico and Clipperton sold up to 2000 US\$ to aquarium collectors. Listing was accepted (95 votes for, 5 abstentions, 21 against) despite opposition from Viet Nam and Japan.

Nautilus. Listing in Appendix II was approved (112 for, 10 abstentions, 9 against).

Marine Mammals

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Mid-September 2016

Point Hope, State of Alaska, United States of America

They only killed the walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) to retrieve and sell the tusks after beheading them. "Head hunting" is banned. Natives are allowed to butcher walrus for food and can use the bones for indigenous art. In some way the 4 men, 2 of which are brothers, are accused of wasting. They let the meat rot. The line between hunting for survival and sordid poaching is a hazy one.¹



September 16, 2016

Library beach, Islamorada, Florida State, United States of America

A guy posing as "apprentice preacher" was harassing 2 adult North American manatees (*Trichechus manatus*, Appendix I) and their offspring when he was spotted. Initially, a Court summons was served on him. In the end, he protested and was sentenced to a \$ 25,000 US fine for failure to cooperate with the police and agents of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.²



September 28, 2016

Bangor, State of Maine, United States of America

The retired officer from the Mounted police force in Canada had already been sentenced in Canada to \$ 385,000 C for unlawful export of 250 narwhal tusks into the United States (see "On the Trail" n°3 p. 4). Logan who also was a resident in Maine was extradited to the US in March 2016 and kept in pretrial custody. One of his accomplices Andrew J. Zaruskas, who took part in the sale of the Arctic marine mammal tusks in the United States has already been sentenced to 33 month in jail.³

ASIA

SOUTH KOREA

September 27, 2016

Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea



Conviction of 2 captains, 30 crew members and a driver to prison terms between 10 and 18 months and fines from 1.5 to 5 million won (\$ 1350 US to \$ 4500 US). The pirate whalers illegally captured 40 Minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I) between 2014 and 2016 off the coast of the North Gyeongsang Province. Illegal marketing of one Minke whale brings in between 25 and 100 million won (between \$ 22,500 and 90,000 US).⁴



JAPAN

September 9, 2016

Osaka, Osaka Prefecture, Japan

Arrival from Iceland of 1800 tons of fin whale meat (*Balaenoptera physalus*, Appendix I) transported on the *Winter Bay* through the North-East passage under Russian control. In 8 years, 9000 tons of whale meat listed in CITES' Appendix I were exported to Japan by Iceland and Norway. Appendix I forbids international trade in species placed under its protection. Iceland, Norway and Japan don't care about this international ruling. A precedent that can give ideas to southern African countries and also once again Japan with regards to elephant ivory.⁵ The *Winter Bay* is owned by Dalriada Ltd, now based in Tallinn, Estonia, European Union.



66th IWC – International Whaling Commission. Portoroz – Slovenia
Press release n°3. October 27, 2016

IWC Comes to the Aid of Whales



3 positive resolutions adopted by vote :

1 – Resolution on Cetaceans and their Contribution to Ecosystem Functioning submitted by Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Uruguay.

At last, whales are no more considered as absolute predators and competitors with fishing activities. The resolution instructs the IWC Scientific Committee to include in its works services rendered by alive and dead cetaceans. This is a satisfaction and a success for Robin des Bois who has been working on this issue since 2010 (1).

2- Resolution on the Minamata Convention propose by Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Switzerland and Monaco.

This resolution requests from the scientific Committee to present at the next plenary session of the IWC the present state of knowledge of contents among cetacean species of heavy metals, primarily mercury and its components. The resolution requires localization of areas where consuming whale meat could be harmful to human health. Non-lethal methods to gather information of contamination are to be preferred- beaching unfortunately offers many opportunities to scientists to study whale tissues. The resolution invites all Member States to the IWC to collaborate with the World Health Organization on this issue.

The resolution refers to the Minamata Convention that's objective is to protect human health and the environment from anthropological emissions of mercury and mercury compounds. Almost all the Member States to the IWC have ratified or signed it. Minamata Bay, in Japan, was ravaged from 1932 to 1966 by industrial discharge of mercury. According to the Japanese governmental statistics, the Minamata illness has caused 1784 deaths and 481 permanently disabled because of neurological disorders. At the end of a lengthy judicial battle in 1996, 15,000 people were recognized as victims of various diseases mainly due to consumption of sea products contaminated by mercury.

Japan voted against this resolution. During preliminary debates before the vote, the Japanese delegation claimed that life expectancy was the longest in countries where whale meat is eaten, that is Iceland, Norway and Japan. Ignoring mercury contamination of Inuit populations in Arctic whose diet specifically depends on whale meat, Japan supported that there is no direct link between human health and consumption of whale meat. Whalers from Taiji (600 km from Minamata) came to support the Japanese delegation ensuring that eating whale meat had no impact on human health. Whales at the top of the marine food chains accumulate and concentrate all persistent pollutants such as PCBs and mercury. They transmit the toxic substances to the calves by nursing. Japan in their blinded defense of whaling brought with it several African countries, Caribbean micro-states, Cambodia and Laos, not to mention its faithful partners, Norway and Iceland.

3- Resolution on Improving the Review Process for Whaling under Special Permit submitted by Australia and New Zealand.

The adoption of this resolution will force Japan or eventually other scientific whaling applicant countries to submit proposals to a specific timeframe and to the approval of several bodies within the IWC. This is a multi-stage procedure which will in the future prevent Japan from brutally starting bloody whaling campaigns.

(1) See "On Whales and their Usefulness" - April 2010 (pdf 20 pages 1Mo)
http://www.robindesbois.org/wp-content/uploads/Of_whales_and_their_Usefulness-1.pdf
 "Fish Eat Whales" - July 12, 2011
<http://www.robindesbois.org/en/les-poissons-mangent-les-baleines-3/>

The South Atlantic Sanctuary Lost in the Political Ocean

Hope of seeing the international community declare the South Atlantic Ocean to be a domain where whales and sperm whales are protected from pollutions, collisions, industrial fishing and acoustic chaos is sinking in the quick sand of political alliances.

The South Atlantic represents slightly more than 10% of the world ocean. It is home or harbors temporarily according to migration periods 51 cetacean species, including blue whales, fin whales, Minke whales, Antarctic Minke whales, southern right whales, humpback whales and sperm whales.

The eclectic battle line made of the whaling triumvirate of the world- Iceland, Japan, Norway -, partnering with Russia, Antigua and Barbuda and the influent Morocco hooked up to the COP22 but not at all whale-friendly has together with some satellite countries, blocked the creation of the South Atlantic sanctuary.

38 votes in favor, 24 votes against, 3 abstentions. $\frac{3}{4}$ votes in favor were needed for the motion to pass.

This good project proposed by 3 South American countries and 2 African countries was consolidated by a dynamic and coherent Management Plan. Fulfilling it would have enabled all South Atlantic neighbor countries to develop and enhance knowledge on cetaceans and for example encourage the oil industry in the Gulf of Guinea and the chemicals industry on the Río de la Plata to reduce contaminating discharges. Hunting is not the whales' only enemy. Placed at the end of the food chain, whales are the ultimate mirror for the sanitary state of plankton, squid and fish essential to food security for humans. Protecting whales, the marine mammal sentinels, is to protect all the little people of the sea.

Marine Turtles

Marine turtles (families Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae) are listed under CITES Appendix I, including Ridley Sea Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Kemp's Ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys kempii*) and loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*).



Caretta caretta

AFRICA

BENIN

Mid-September 2016
Porto-Novo, Ouémé Department, Benin

Acquittal of an olive Ridley's sea turtle trafficker (see "On the Trail" n°13, p. 13). The Porto-Novo Court is unfortunately known for its indulgence toward wildlife traffickers (see "On the Trail" n°10 p. 70).¹



CAMEROON

Beginning of July
Cameroon



Eight green turtle shells and handcuffs.²

GUINEA

August 9, 2016

Matoto, Conakry Region Conakry, Guinea

Seizure of sea turtles at 2 traffickers house. They were returned to sea off Kaloum.³

KENYA

Sea turtles in Kenya

Pate Island, Lamu Archipelago, Kenya

People from Kizingitini want to hunt sea turtles. They advance social and libidinous arguments. "Turtles are very important. Its soup gives men a lot of sexual energy. In the days of our forefathers divorces were rare because men were active in bed." "Instead of making excuses they should eat fish and help save turtles from extinction" answers tit for tat the nutrition specialist from Lamu hospital.⁴

AMERICA

COSTA RICA

Beginning of July 2016

Puerto Limon, Province of Limon, Costa Rica

Seizure of the shell, eggs, fins and 2.3 kg of meat of green turtle in the car of a 19 years old man.⁵



July 2, 2016

Santa Cruz, Guanacaste Province, Costa Rica

Seizure of 3500 turtle eggs. One arrest in flagrante delicto.⁶

July 31, 2016

Puerto Limon, Province of Limon, Costa Rica

Seizure of green turtle meat in a bar of the Bananito district in Limon. The pieces were served as "snacks" with beer. The couple owning the bar was taken to the police station.⁷



August 16, 2016

Beach Barra del Pacuare, Costa Rica

Rescue of a green turtle hurt and turned on its back. Found by the coast guards, she was hidden under leaves by her attackers.⁸

September 28, 2016

Province of Limon, Costa Rica

Tied up and ready to be cut up. This is the fate awaiting the green turtle when a patrol of coastguards intervened. She was returned to the water.

It's the 25th green turtle who is rescued from poachers since the beginning of the year.⁹

Chelonia mydas



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 5, 2016

Palm Beach County, State of Florida, United States of America

They reach the age for procreation at 17. Loggerhead sea turtles swim thousands of miles to come lay their eggs on secret beaches, unfortunately well known to tourists and poachers, bury them under 20 cm of sand before returning to the sea once their mission accomplished. A 49-year-old man came at dawn- turtles lay at night- for a raid. When arrested, he had 107 eggs on him. Fifteen were kept for the investigation and genetic analysis. 92 were returned to the sand nests. Normally, they will hatch beginning September and the small baby turtles will spontaneously crawl towards the ocean water. Glenn Robert Shaw may be released under bail for \$ 3000 US.¹⁰



FRANCE

September 16, 2016

Off the coast of Fort-de-France, Region of Martinique, France

Seizure by the *Macouba*, the semi rigid speedboat owned by the French customs, of 75 kg of turtle meat and 30 kg of white sea urchins (*Tripneustes esculentus*). Two arrests.¹²

MEXICO

August 14, 2016

Compostela, Nayarit State, Mexico

Seizure of 150 eggs on the beach of Boca Bahia at the edge of the Pacific Ocean. One arrest.¹³

August 14, 2016

Huamelula San Pedro, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Seizure of 6000 Olive Ridley sea turtle eggs in bags on Morro Ayutla beach on the Pacific coast. The eggs were buried in the sand in the hope that they are still viable.¹⁴

NICARAGUA

July 2016

Nicaragua

Eggs that spy on poachers. The idea prized by the "Wildlife Crime Tech Challenge" organized by US Aid is to incorporate fake 3D turtle eggs equipped with a GPS and to follow their trail were they to be pillaged along with real one from a marine turtle nest. The spy eggs could facilitate arrests and uncovering networks. Some problems regarding water tightness, "feel" and color are being studied. Turtle eggs are somewhat flexible. They're not as rigid and breakable as bird eggs.

The NGO Paso Pacifico notes that in Nicaragua alone 90% of nests on a beach are visited and that the eggs at the end of the chain can bring in between 5 and 20 US\$ per unit. During nesting season, turtle egg fever hits the crowd and in Central America it is common to see people digging up nests only meters away from tourists wallowing in the sand. Eggs stolen in Nicaragua, when not consumed there, will be exported to Salvador or Guatemala. The supposed final destination is China.¹⁵



Prototypes

PANAMA

August 10, 2016

Isla Caña de Tonosí, Los Santos Province, Panama

Seizure of 7368 turtle eggs, 7319 eggs of Kemp's Ridley turtle and 49 of green turtle in 11 black bags inside a luxury vehicle. A man, aged 42, was arrested.¹⁶

August 16, 2016

Tonosí, Province of Los Santos, Panama

Seizure on the road of 800 eggs at about 30 kilometers from the Marine Reserve of Canas Islands. Five arrests.¹⁷

August 17, 2016

Cambutal Region, Panama

Seizure of 1314 turtle eggs in a luxury car. Five arrests including 2 women and 5 fines of \$ 600 US.¹⁸



August 19, 2016

Bocas Del Toro, Bocas Del Toro, Panama

Seizure of 4 green turtles. They were about to be sacrificed when the police arrived. On the shell, traces of a probable spear attack. They survived and were released.¹⁹

September 27, 2016

Villa de Los Santos (Pacific Ocean), Province of Los Santos, Panama

Seizure of 250 sea turtle eggs in plastic bags ready to be sold. Two people in custody. The eggs were destroyed, they were no longer viable.²⁰

ASIA

CHINA

July 14, 2016

Xiàmén Gāoqí International Airport, Province of Fujian, China

The useless little souvenirs brought back from Indonesia came from dismembering a marine turtle and carving the parts into small decorative items. Customs remind Chinese travelers that they must not buy abroad any species that are protected such as seahorses or agarwood (*Aquilaria malaccensis*, Appendix II) or their products as ivory.²¹

September 30, 2016

Lamma Island, Hong Kong

Seizure of 35 green sea turtles and a hawksbill sea turtle in the sea farm park of the Bay of Sok Kwu Wan. They were all taken to the Hong Kong Ocean Park for observation.²²



JAPAN

Begining of August 2016

Aomori, Aomori Prefecture, Japan

A 50 cm long green turtle weighing 15 kg stolen from the Asumushi aquarium.²³



In the Asumushi aquarium

MALAYSIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 16, 2016

Off the Sandakan coast, State of Sabah, Malaysia

The 4 Filipino pirate ships were surrounded at 1:30 in the morning. On board there were about 19,000 marine turtle eggs. Species have not been yet determined. Among the 11 Filipino "crew members", one of them would be a 7-year-old boy. The oldest is 63. The head of the WWF Malaysia deems unfortunate the disparity in law inside the country. Some States like Sabah and Sarawak have a ban on egg transport and consumption while continental Malaysia remains quite liberal on the issue.

The laws in place are also not enforced with willingness by those who should be giving a good example. Last November, the federal minister of rural and regional development was seen and photographed seated at a political luncheon

gathering members of his party in power. Turtle eggs were unscheduled but certainly were on the menu (see "On the Trail" n°11 p. 11).²⁴



THE PHILIPPINES

July 26 2016

Bataraza, Province of Palawan, The Philippines

Discovery of over 100 dead hawksbill sea turtles on a boat deserted by his crew before police arrived. The Island of Palawan between the Philippines and Malaysia is a stronghold of intra-Asian trafficking in marine turtles.²⁵

VIET NAM

REPEATED OFFENSE

July 9, 2016

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Here it goes again with the same restaurant in the Thu Duc neighborhood. Seizure of 2 turtles who were set back at sea.²⁶

July 18 and 19, 2016

Province of Bac-Lieu, Viet Nam

Seizure of a live hawksbill turtle on the 18th, released into the Mekong Delta on the 19th.²⁷



August 4, 2016

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure of 21 shells of sea turtles in 2 exotic wildlife stores. The police barks, the shells move on. Sea turtle traffic is rooted in the country. The investigation on the formalin turtles cemetery (see "On the Trail" n°7 p.11) has been stalled for two years.²⁸

End of August 2016

Archipelago of Con Dao, Province of Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Viet Nam

Stay of proceedings against a man for stealing 116 sea turtle eggs. The prosecutor of the southern archipelago considers that eggs are not specimens or individuals and cannot be qualified as parties or products derived from animals.²⁹



September 13, 2016

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

Seizure of a hawksbill turtle in a restaurant and return to the sea.³⁰

Various Marine Species

AFRICA

GABON

ALBACORE OPERATION

Beginning of September 2016

Gabon

Sea Shepherd works as marine police in Gabon. Under the government direction, a coastguard from the NGO patrols in territorial waters near the maritime border with the Republic of Congo. Gabonese soldiers are on board and with the help of the environmental activists they diverted 2 fishing boats with gillnets. The crews from Congo, Benin and Ghana are immediately questioned on the deck of the *Bob Barker*. The boats are then escorted to the port of Mayumba in order to land fish, in this case 150 sharks including scalloped hammerheads (*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II) and blacktips (*Carcharhinus limbatus*). In April, 3 trawlers from Congo and their crews suffered the same fate when caught in the act of illegal fishing off the Gabonese coast.¹



Off the 900 km long Gabon coastline spreading between Equatorial Guinea in the North and the Republic of Congo in the South, Bryde's whales, humpback whales, dolphins and marine turtles fish, dive and migrate. During the 2016 tuna fishing season, at least a dozen turtles, hundreds of sharks and 2 humpback whales were unintentionally caught in the European tuna ship purse seine. The humpback whales were released.



The *Gevred*, a brand new tuna fishing ship based in Concarneau, France, circled a Bryde's whale in its purse seine. With the help of the *Bob Barker*, he also was released.

NAMIBIA

September 27, 2016

Windhoek, Regions of Khomas and Walvis Bay, Region of Erongo, Namibia

A Chinese company registered in Namibia has just filed an application to the Ministry of Fishing to export 10 orcas (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix II), 500-1000 Cape fur seals (*Arctocephalus pusillus*, Appendix II), 300-500 African Penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*, Appendix II), 50-100 Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*, Annexe II), 50-100 common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*, Annexe II) and a selection of sharks.

This whimsical request was first received with great reluctance from the government but still managed to attract attention from the public all the more that at the time a Russian trawler that would have been involved with the catch and transport of marine mammals for the Asian aquarium and oceanarium market was in Walvis Bay.²



Ryazanovka

The 82nd out of the 104 refrigerated trawlers of the Nadyozhnyy type (project 420) built between 1978 and 2001 by the Sudoremontnyy Zavod shipyard in Nikolaevsk by the Amur River in far eastern Russia. Length 44.81 m, 573 t.

EUROPE

ITALY

Mid-September 2016

Reggio de Calabre, Region de Calabria, Italy

Seizure of 40 kg of stony coral (*Scleractinia* spp. Appendix II) and 10 shells on the stall of a man from Morocco during celebrations of Our Lady of of Consolation. Total value € 70,000.³



Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

AFRICA

GUINEA

August 2 and 18, 2016

Matoto, Conakry, Guinea

The deodorant and women perfumes merchant also sold turtles that he concealed in sacks of rice. The 32 victims "fully protected by the Washington Convention, the Wildlife Code and the hunting regulation of the Republic of Guinea" according to the newspaper "Guinée Matin" (Guinea Morning) will be released in the coming days. The stallholder would have acquired them from a woman named N'Ga Mah near Boffa, 100 km from Matoto.¹

MADAGASCAR

July 4, 2016

Ivato International Airport, Region of Analamanga, Madagascar

Seizure of 4 angonokas (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I) and 115 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). Packed into cardboard boxes like potatoes, they were about to fly off to Shanghai on an Air Mauritius plane. Each one was wrapped in a plastic film and stuffed into a diaper. The passenger disappeared into thin air. He also was filmed. The Air and Border police are after him.²

September 22, 2016

Antsahamanitra, Antananarivo Province, Madagascar

Seizure of 198 radiated tortoises from Madagascar (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). Five arrests. The tortoises were skillfully placed in large suitcases"according to "Madagascar Actualités" (Madagascar News). They were not yet dehydrated. Their condition was not critical. Freedom could be their future after the quarantine.³



September 28, 2016

Andranomena, Province of Antsiranana, Madagascar

Seizure of 227 baby radiated tortoises from Madagascar (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). They came to Andranomena by taxi bush in bags filled with onions. They were poached in the south of the Island. Radiated tortoises are smuggled into Asia (see "On the Trail" » n°6 p. 18, n°10 p. 13 and p. 16, n°11 p. 12 and p. 13, n°12 p. 17 and p. 20).

Six days earlier, 198 tortoises of the same species were seized.⁴



SENEGAL

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 31, 2016

Thiès, Thiès Region, Senegal

Seizure of 128 live marsh terrapins (*Pelomedusa subrufa*) estimated worth a million Francs CFA (\$ 1710 US) at the home of 3 traffickers.⁵



September 2, 2016

Dakar, Dakar Region, Senegal

Seizure of 85 live turtles estimated worth 2,125,000 FCFA (\$ 3635 US). Arrest of one trafficker and his provider.

Seventeen wildlife offenders were arrested in 2015 and 2016. After arrests, most often begin transactions, indulgences and suspended sentences. Prison times come to a sudden end after only a month thanks to official pardons flown down out of the blue.⁶



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 27, 2016

Austin, Texas State, USA

A freshwater turtle of 18 kg, 27 cm length and 15 width was killed by an angler and his accomplice with a hammer. Terry Washington, 55, said he acted in "legitimate defense". In fact, the turtle had only risen to the bait. The crime took place on the shores of the Lady Bird Lake. Witnesses tried to intervene but in vain. The scene was filmed and the video handed to the police. Terry Washington is accused of animal abuse. He must pay a fine of \$ 5000 US.¹¹



The Lady Bird Lake in the center of Austin is famous for its historical c h l o r d a n e pollution.

August 2016

State of Florida, United States of America

Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II) are a key species for ecosystems. Around 30 cm long, they dig burrows that can reach up to 14 m in length. The underground dens are useful to burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*, Appendix II), snakes belonging to the Drymarchon genus, and opossums. New catastrophic trend! The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) has noticed for some months that some of them have their shell painted and then are set free as so. Not only does it drip onto the head and legs, the paint gets into the blood by seeping through the porous shell. The process of creating vitamins from the sun's ultra-violet rays is inhibited. "Painting shells of land and marine turtles is seriously damaging to their health."

Even after several patient and harrowing hours of scrubbing with a soy-based solution, the shell remains permanently marked.⁷



ASIA

BANGLADESH

September 6, 2016

Port of Chittagong, Bangladesh

Seizure of 4000 kg of shells from Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II and river terrapins (*Batagur Baska*, Appendix I). They were found in a warehouse of the Fish Mark Export company, hidden in 142 bag leaving for Hong Kong under the designation of "dried fish". The trafficking is running in. Tortoises are poached mostly in India, eaten in Bangladesh and shells are shipped to China.⁸

CHINA

GANG

July 26, 2016

Canton, Province of Guangdong, China



The gang leader, Huang Weizhe was sentenced to 11 years prison time. \$ 75,000 US worth of his possession were seized. The airport agent, on account of his favorable work record and cooperative behaviour got away with a 5 years prison sentence coupled with a fine worth \$ 7500 US. The 5 other gang members received between 1 year and 9 months and 7 years jail time.

The trial enabled to better understand the networks way of working. The contraband channel went through an employee of the China Southern Airlines whose complicity opened the gates for the very expensive and very rare turtles to a red carpet in corridors ridden of any customs. The organizers met through the Internet. The radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) were immediately their priority. On the retail market, they can be sold at least for \$ 4000 US in China. The traffickers trusted their ability to get the turtles into China. They were wrapped in silver foil. A breeding farm grown out of the imported specimens was among the different projects.



中国南方航空
CHINA SOUTHERN



In 2014, there were 5 smuggling operations via a direct flight Madagascar- Canton. The turtles were stocked in Conghua. The big buyers, especially a certain Guangxi Gui Tailang, would buy turtles by the dozen. Another wildlife wholesaler from Beijing bought 230 for just under \$ 1000 US per specimen. Two of the gang members were in charge of bringing the turtles from Madagascar. On the 3rd of February 2015, it was the one too many trips. Chen Junyi, ground agent for the airline company, was stopped by airport customs' agents in the hallway limited to employees with 2 backpacks. There were 316 turtles inside.⁹

INDIA

July 9, 2016

Dadar Neighborhood, Mumbai, State of Maharashtra, India

After 24 hours on the railway, Agatha Queenie arrived at the Dadar train station coming from Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. In a plastic bag she had 3 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) 16 cm long who were turned over to the adequate services along with the lady aged 59.¹⁰

July 27, 2016

Thiruparankundram, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 8 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) and an Indian black turtle (*Melanochelys trijuga* Appendix II). They were peddling them on the spot for 200 rupee per unit (\$ 3 US). Three arrests.¹¹

During the night of July 28, 2016
Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The “crabs” exported by Cosmic Exports were in fact Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II). “There was something suspicious moving inside the thermocol boxes “. In batches of 10, they were wrapped in clothes. The plane was about to depart for Malaysia. The question now is to find out what to do with the 500 Indian stars.¹²

REPEATED OFFENSE
July 29 and August 27, 2016

Chennai International Airport, Tamil Nadu, India
New seizure of baby red-eared tortoises (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) at the Chennai airport. They measured 2.5 cm long. It is the same smuggler who already tried two consecutive times to introduce these exogenous tortoises on the Indian territory. He was coming from China via Kuala Lumpur on a Malaysian Airlines flight. He would have bought them in Malaysia for 20,000 RP or \$ 300 US meaning to sell them in India where they are, so he said, considered as lucky charms. The airports of Chennai and Pondicherry are increasingly frequented by animals. Pythons, scorpions, monkeys, star tortoises throng at the gates in both directions, landing and taking off. Ten smuggling attempts were neutralized since the beginning of the year. Chennai is also a hub for shark fins and peacock feathers. Already in January, 2800 red-eared tortoises were seized in the luggage of an Indian traveler coming from Guangzhou and going to Chennai (cf. “On The Trail” n°12, p. 21).¹³



August 23, 2016
Chennai Station, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The railroad police saved 150 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II). They were in a 20-year-old man's suitcase as he walked into the station. Chennai station, Chennai airport, turtles are there.¹⁴

September 19, 2016
Navi Mumbai, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 24 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II). 25,000 rupee (\$ 374 US) in fine for the trafficker who had bought each turtle 400 rupee (\$ 6 US) and expected to sell them 1500 rupee (\$ 22 US) per unit.¹⁵



MALAYSIA

July 25 and 26, 2016
Petaling Jaya, States of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory, Malaysia

Seizure of 1011 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II), 23 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I) and 36 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I).

Indians truly are at the top of this trafficking. Four of them aged 32 to 39 were arrested in continental Malaysia in 2 separate raids carried out by Perhilitan, the governmental branch dedicated to countering wildlife trafficking. In Malaysia, each turtle can be sold between 300 and 1000 Malaysia ringgit (between 75 et 250 US\$) on the pet market. The Minister of the Environment and of natural resources says that “this is the largest exotic turtle seizure to be carried out in Malaysia in a long time”.¹⁶



PAKISTAN

FAMILY AFFAIRS
September 9 and 13, 2016
Karachi, Sind, Pakistan

Seizure of 780 live black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) in a bungalow inhabited by 3 Chinese expatriates on the ground floor and 6 Pakistani on the 1st floor. Twelve persons were arrested. The 3 Chinese are brothers. They were sentenced to 2 weeks in prison. Turtles with an average weight of 10 kg were released into Keenjhar Lake, in the Thatta district.¹⁷



Keenjhar Lake

FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 29, 2016

Shaheed Benazir Abad District, Sind, Pakistan

Seizure in a pick-up, at the exit of the Deh Akro-II marsh, of 307 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) in 20 bags. Four arrests. One of the suspects whose clientele is the Chinese colony in Karachi is related to a repeat offender in turtles poaching.¹⁸

EUROPE

BELGIUM

September 27, 2016

Kortrijk, West Flanders Province, Belgium

334 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in a garage. A specimen is selling between € 50 and 80 on the grey market. Traffic of turtles, birds, Barbary macaques (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) is intense between North Africa and Europe via Spain, Italy and France. Robin Hood wants these turtles to be repatriated as soon as possible in Morocco and released by skilled services in selected and secret natural spots.¹⁹

SPAIN

September 29, 2016

Tenerife, Spain

Seizure of 22 red-eared slider alive (*Trachemys scripta*), 13 in a hotel complex and 9 in a restaurant.²⁰



ITALY

July 2, 2016

Cirò Marina, Region of Calabria, Italy

They were released in the strictest secrecy. Nothing has filtered as to when, how and by whom they were dispersed into the dry forests. Aged from one month to one year, the 88 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) had been found in the hands of a 21-year-old man.²¹

July 24 2016

Ovada, Province of Alexandria, Italy

Seizure inside a minivan driven by a Dutch citizen of 5520 turtles including 20 protected by CITES. The vehicle had been stopped for speeding at the beginning of a tunnel on the road between Alexandria and Genoa.²²



Mid September 2016

Palermo Port, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure of 14 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in a car landing from a ferry boat coming from Tunisia. The driver is of Italian nationality, the turtles were in shoe boxes.²³

UNITED KINGDOM

FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 13, 2016

London, England, United Kingdom

Kamel Gadouchi and his girlfriend were jointly sentenced to £ 3,600 (\$ 3,900 US) in fine and damages for illegally importing from Algeria and offering for sale 6 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II).²⁴



SWITZERLAND

August 10, 2016

Chavornay, Canton of Vaud, Switzerland

Black pond turtle (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) had been seized in Hong Kong at the end of 2014. Under statelessness status- they could have come from Pakistan, India or Bangladesh- they remained in waiting for several months. Following an initiative by the Turtle Survival Alliance, they were transferred to Europe to facilities registered in the Studbook, an international genealogical register aiming to allow better management of genetic diversity among animal species held captive. A male and 4 females landed in Switzerland in a center for shelter and protection of turtles, home to 1300 residents at present and intending to grow to a capacity of 4000 to 5000.²⁵

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

August 19, 2016

Gidgegannup, State of Western Australia, Australia



Seizure from a home of an extremely rare western swamp turtle (*Pseudemydura umbrina*, Appendix I). 15 cm long, in the wild they can live 100 years. Problem is, there are almost none left in the wild in their tiny range around Perth. 250 in 1960, maximum 50 remain today. The Perth zoo breeds

them but efforts towards reintroduction into the Twin Swamps reserve near Ellenbrook are so far apparently vain. Australian police maybe nabbed a network of national or international scale. The seized turtle carried number 228. She had been released in 1995 inside the natural reserve. Latest proof of her surviving in the wild dates back to December 2010. The western swamp turtle lives in swamps and feeds on tadpoles, insects and larvae. Their shell is colored to match to hosting swamps and ranges from dark yellow to blackish grey. At the beginning of the month, 24 juveniles raised at the zoo were set free in places other than the Twin Swamps Reserve. For our part, we prefer to not say where.²⁶

Snakes

ASIA

INDIA

July 4, 2016

Purusharakatte, State of Karnataka, India

Mannu Mukku Havu (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) are still very popular among youth in the South of India. The red sand boa, several cell phones and the suspects' car were seized. Aged between 26 and 30 the couple were searching for the right client. They wanted to sell for Rs. 2 to 3 lakh (3000 to 4437 US\$). Value of a mature specimen on the international market would be 10 million rupee, i.e. 148.000 US\$.¹



August 7, 2016

Hyderabad, State of Telangana, India

We still find this practice consisting of giving milk to cobras after capturing them in the forest and not letting them drink for weeks. Milk is deadly for them (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 21). 34 snakes who's fangs had been ripped out were taken from snake charmers during the Naga Panchami festival, day dedicated to adoration of snakes. A similar action led by forest guards and local NGOs took place in Indore in Madhya Pradesh.²

August 21, 2016

Bhandup, Mumbai Municipality, State of Maharashtra, India

An African migrant stuck in the wall of a side street. The ball python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), exotic species, can't be released into the forest. He was turned over to the Wildlife Welfare Association that feeds him some mouse per week. He weighs less than 1000 g and measures less than 90 cm long. An individual can sell in Mumbai pet shops between 150 and 250 US\$. The African ball pythons rejected by unscrupulous owners have certainly begun to colonize the Maharashtra forests.³

End of August, 2016

Dwarka, New Delhi, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

Seizure in the city (population 40,000) of an Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) and an Indian sand boa (*Gongylophis conicus*, Appendix II). Two snake charmers indicted.⁴



September 1, 2016

Naihati, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 2 vials filled with supposed cobra venom (Elapidae family, Appendix III). Once more these mysterious vials engraved "Manufactured at the Red Dragon Factory France". Estimated value is 25 million rupee (\$ 373,881 US) if the venom is genuine. Seven arrests.⁵



Beginning of September 2016

Mumbra, Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). 99 cm long, 740 g, 2 men (20 and 30) arrested.⁶

September 21, 2016

Katraj, Pune, Maharashtra, India

The Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) was alive in the hands of the 20 years old. He was arrested at dawn. An accomplice fled. Astrologers, traders, "celebrities" are ready to pay good price (up to \$ 100,000 US and more) for a "mandul" or the so called "snake with 2 heads" supposed to bring luck (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 16-17, n°7 p. 16-17, n°13 p. 20).⁷

INDONESIA

Mid July, 2016

Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta, Indonesia

The 10 live juvenile pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) were rolled up in socks and hidden in plastic bags. The passenger was about to fly to Saudi Arabia on a Garuda Indonesia flight. Airport authorities accuse Koufiah Jihad Zaki of trafficking in endangered species and breach of airport safety.⁸

VIET NAM

July 15, 2016

Province of Binh Phuoc, Viet Nam

ENV's hotline (1800 1522) was warned on July 12. The Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix II) weighing 20 kg was seized inside a restaurant on the 15th. He should be released in the Bu Gia Map National Park.⁹

EUROPE

ITALY

September 11, 2016

Genoa, Region of Liguria, Italy

A python (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) marooned in a stream.¹⁰

Sauria

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 7, 2016

Navajo County, State of Arizona, United States of America

Seizure on the road of frozen iguana meat (*Iguaniae* family), of 1.5 kg of heroin and 7 kg of methamphetamine for a global value of something like \$ 800,000 US. The couple didn't even have a driver's license.¹



ASIA

CAMBODIA

July 30, 2016

Koh Kong, Province of Koh Kong, Cambodia

Seizure of a clouded monitor (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I) right when he was about to be sold.²



INDIA

September 6, 2016

Moreh, State of Manipur, India

Seizure of a tockay gecko (*Gekko gecko*). 200 g, 36 cm long.³

EUROPE

ITALY

August 18, 2016

Turin, Region du Piemont, Italy

Discovery of an forsaken or escaped central bearded dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*). The species originates from Australia. Their range spreads from the East to the center of the country in the great bush. *Pogona vitticeps* is diurnal, omnivorous, terrestrial and tree-bound. An adult individual measures between 40 and 50 cm and weighs between 350 and 500 g. They have a very developed sense of hierarchy and the dominant male runs the group. "Fights" between males consist mainly of an intimidation act: beard and flanks puffed, the opponents change color while circling each other.⁴



Crocodilians

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 28, 2016
Mopani District, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Fifteen crocodiles (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II) poisoned to death. Paws and heads cut off.¹



AMERICA

BOLIVIA

September 23, 2016
Chimoré, Province of Carrasco, Bolivia

Seizure of 2 caimans (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II) at the Unibol Quechua University. The specimens were stuffed there and used for research and educational purposes. However, the university was unable to submit compliance documents.²

BRAZIL

August 5, 2016
Três Lagoas, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of 15 kg of alligator meat (Appendix II) and 500 liters of adulterated diesel at a mechanic's. Fine of 7,500 real (\$ 3200 US).³



PARAGUAY

July 4, 2016
Cruce Douglas, Presidente Hayes Department, Paraguay

Seizure of 400 kg of spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) and several firearms in a Hyundai Galloper. The 5 hunters were heading toward Asuncion. They were placed in custody.⁴



ASIA

CHINA

July 21, 2016
Gongbei, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of a stuffed Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I). The Thailand "souvenir" had been bought for 2000 baht (\$ 57 US) in Bangkok.⁵



July 29, 2016

Dongxing, Autonomous Region of Guangxi, China. Border to Viet Nam.

Seizure of 399 Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I), babies barely 15 days old. 25 cm long. Two arrests. The 3rd managed to escape. They were unloading the boxes in front of a house. "They looked nervous" commented police. There's no possible doubt. The crocodiles came from Viet Nam only a few steps away.⁶



Young Siamese crocodile

August 28, 2016

Dongxing, Autonomous Region of Guangxi, China. Border to Viet Nam.

Beware the crocodiles, there are plenty on the roads in the region and on the fishmonger's stall's (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 65, n°12 p. 25). 25 cm long, 15 days on earth, the 940 baby Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) were in 2 Styrofoam crates. That Sunday morning, border police patrolling on foot along the quays heard them growling.⁷



Various Reptile Species

ASIA

CAMBODIA

September 14, 2016

Koh Thom district, Kandal province, Cambodia

Seizure of 124 kg of snakes and 243 kg of Burmese mountain tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II) still alive and bound for Viet Nam. The driver of the pick-up fled. Wildlife Alliance is responsible for counting poached reptiles and releases them in suitable environments. Koh Thom district is to be closely monitored (see "On The Trail" n°13 p.22)!¹



PAKISTAN

August 30, 2016

Thatta, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

Dinner time! Arrest of the gang leader provider of Indian flapshell meat (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) and live snakes to restaurants in Thatta (population 220,000). His action range spreads far beyond Thatta. He organized smuggling towards other Asian countries.²

EUROPE

ITALY

July 8, 2016

Aversa and Naples, Campania Region, Italy

Seizure 20 km away from Naples of a ball python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) in the back of a car followed by the seizure inside an attic of 2 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), 6 ball pythons and many mice on which they would feed. The place smelled horrendously and it was impossible to breathe inside. The 2 individuals handed to the carabinieri CITES certificates of which the authenticity was rapidly questioned. They have been taken before justice.³



THE NETHERLANDS

August 17, 2016

Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport, Province of North-Hollande, Netherlands

He had been shopping in South Africa for the next Hamm International fair in Germany. The 40 reptiles were in his briefcase. € 30,000 according to the Schiphol customs and no doubt counting among them lizards from the *Cordylus* genus (Appendix II).⁴

September 3, 2016

Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport, Netherlands

Seizure of 259 reptiles estimated worth € 80.000 coming from Mexico including San Esteban Island chuckwallas (*Sauromalus varius*, Appendix I). Arrest of 3 Spanish citizens.

These chuckwallas are endemic to the San Esteban Island in the California Gulf in Mexico. They can measure 60 cm long and resemble iguanas at least in terms of size. They are an example of the island gigantism only found in animal species devoid of natural predators. The drawback is they are easily found by traffickers and attract attention of collectors all over the world. Ten individuals were dead at the time of the seizure. The threesome is charged with trafficking of threatened animals and cruelty.⁵



Amphibians

AMERICA

BRAZIL

September 23, 2016

Sao Paulo, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

A French female scientist whose identity was not disclosed was caught before the plane's departure towards Paris with 50 dead frogs slid inside test tubes inside her luggage. Custom services acted in collaboration with IBAMA after having received secret information. At first the suspect claimed to have nothing to hide, she later presented an export certificate that had expired. She was fined for an equivalent to 15,000 euros.¹

EUROPE

GERMANY

Beginning of July 2016

Siegen, Land of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Seizure of 11 red-and-black poison frogs (*Oophaga histrionica*, Appendix II) endemic to Colombia and estimated at 5,500 € or 500 € per specimen. Following an anonymous tip, customs discovered a clandestine breeding of this rare species in a locked room at a breeder of common frogs.²



Oophaga pumilio

Arachnids

EUROPE

ITALY

July 7, 2016

Basiano, Region of Lombardy, Italy

Arachnophelia is building its web in Italy. The posted parcel contained a tarantula that experts believe so far comes from Amazonia. The Basiano postal service was evacuated for several minutes.¹

Lepidoptera

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Beginning of August 2016

Mount Hebo, Oregon State, United States of America

The Oregon silverspot butterfly (*Speyeria zerene hippolyta*) flutters in salty meadows along the Pacific coast from British Columbia to California. Its morphology is adapted to fog and wind, its average life span is 15 days. Its ecosystem includes hookedspur violets (*Viola adunca*) near which females lay their eggs. The leaves are the sole food of the larvae. The drama of silverspot butterflies is that the salty meadows and hookedspur violets disappear in favor of residential condos, golf courses and car parks. Dunes, its other preferred habitat, are scarred by ATVs. Since October 1970, it is registered on the list of endangered species in the US. Since 2001, the Portland Zoo has been breeding its caterpillars in privileged conditions safe from natural predators such as voles and white-crowned sparrows. A release of 450 butterflies has just taken place north of Lincoln city. The US Fish and Wildlife Service plan (113 pages) for the recovery of Oregon silverspot butterflies is available on the website of the US agency.²



Birds

AFRICA

BOTSWANA

- From May to August 2016. Shorobe, North West District. 156 poisoned vultures.
- August 7, 2016. Maun, North West District. 120 poisoned vultures.
- 17 August 2016. Masunga, Northeast District. 36 poisoned vultures.



Birdlife Botswana receives almost every week a report about vultures poisoning. Its chairman Kabelo Senyatso notes that the use of pesticides to kill hyenas, jackals and lions spreads in agriculture. Vultures are the indirect victims of carnivores chemical hunting. Birdlife agrees with Mr. Bulawa president of the Northwest District Council. "It is common knowledge that vultures alert anti-poachers to any kill and more often these are seen as enemies to poachers and their war on vultures is to wipe them out." He also recalls the terrible episode of July 2013 (see "On The Trail" n°2 p.59) in Namibia when 5 to 600 vultures had been poisoned by a toxic elephant carcass.¹



ZAMBIA

End of August, 2016 Tateyoyo, Kafue National Park, Southern Province, Zambia

- Seizure of 23 kg of bush meat. Many different species are concerned. Two arrests.
- Seizure of a fair amount of live shoebills (*Balaeniceps rex*, Appendix II). Two arrests.²



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

July 18, 2016

Argentina

She sold a common toucan (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) on Facebook. She was reported.³

September 5, 2016

San José de Metán, Province of Salta, Argentina

Captured, abused, wings clipped, taken by police to the vet. The unfortunate common toucan (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) succumbed to his injuries and stress of the assault. Two minors and a 18 years old have had the bad taste to film their mischiefs. They were questioned by police but not yet put under arrest.⁴



September 16, 2016

Province of Mendoza, Argentina

More than 40 wild and exotic animals including birds were seized during 2 operations in the departments of Las Heras and Guaymallén.

In a third operation in a factory in Colonia Segovia, department of Guaymallén, a smugglers' gang is dismantled. In addition to selling drugs, electronic equipment and stolen clothing, they enjoy poaching wild birds and capture pets. Seizure of 24 birds, 147 cages, 5 traps and 6 poodles including a female and 3 puppies.

In Argentina, some 2,600 wild animals are seized every year from illegal trafficking. Main victims are tortoises, toucans, flamingos, monkeys, parrots.⁵

September 28, 2016

La Rioja, Province of La Rioja, Argentina

The minibus comes from Oran (Province of Salta) and goes to Mendoza (Mendoza Province). 1500 km. Roadside check on National Highway 38 in La Rioja. Already 900 km traveled. Only 10 hours from destination. A Toco toucan (*Ramphastos Toco*, Appendix II) is found in a cardboard box. Its owner is identified. The minutes are recorded; there will possibly be prosecution.⁶

BRAZIL

July 13, 2016

Assis, Sao Paul State, Brazil

Seizure in a private house of a blue fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). The bird was entrusted to the NGO APASS. Alert Number: 0800-0555-190.⁷

July 22, 2016

Regente Feijo, Sao Paulo State, Brazil

Seizure of a white-eyed conure (*Aratinga leucophthalmus*, Appendix II), a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) and 4 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) in a country house. Fine of 10,000 real (\$ 2500 US).⁸



August 5, 2016

Três Lagoas, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

A blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) was shot to death by an air rifle. The body of the bird landed on the deck of a veterinarian. The doctor is indignant: macaws are hunted. They would "invade" houses looking for food. They are regarded as pest although they are protected by CITES and national law. The natural habitat of macaws is destroyed for the needs of industrial agriculture.⁹

August 16, 2016

Pirajuí, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 3 guns and 2 birds, one a parrot. Man, 48, arrested.¹⁰



September 2016

Sao Paulo, São Bernardo do Campo, Diadema, Sao Paulo State, Brazil

Seizure of 33 birds among them rosy-faced lovebirds (*Agapornis roseicollis*).¹¹



September 2016

Vilhena, Rondonia State, Brazil

Routine roadside check. Four young amazon parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I ou II) in a cardboard box. One arrest.¹²

ECUADOR

September 26, 2016

Santo Domingo de los Colorados, Province of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Ecuador

Seizure of 4 Pacific parakeets (*Aratinga strenua*, Appendix II) in a market in Santo Domingo center (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 99).

The species' range is confined between western Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and southern Mexico.¹³



MEXICO

July 10, 2016

Tlacotepec de Benito Juarez, Puebla State, Mexico

Seizure in a salad basket of 4 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) and 137 birds of various species during a roadside check.¹⁴

August 11, 2016

International Airport of Mexico City, State of Mexico, Mexico

Seizure of 152 birds, most of them alive, including red-legged honeycreepers (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*), black-headed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), blue and yellow tanagers (*Thraupis bonariensis*), motmots (*Momotidae*), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). They were about to take off to Madrid with IBERIA company in the luggage of

a Spanish passenger. European goldfinches have occasionally been introduced in South America.¹⁵



Cyanerpes cyaneus

End of September 2016

Copainalá, State of Chiapas, Mexico

The tyrant hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*, Appendix II) was exposed to the sight of all. He was wounded on a wing, a bullet, probably at the time of his capture. He was entrusted to the zoological park Miguel Álvarez del Toro of Tuxtla Gutiérrez. Last year, a female was rescued in the area and transferred to Tuxtla Gutiérrez. Research is under way for determining whether it is a pair.¹⁶

The tyrant hawk-eagle lives exclusively in Central and South America. It feeds on small monkeys, squirrels, snakes, big lizards or other birds such as passerines, toucans and guans. The tyrant hawk-eagle lives alone or in a pair.



© PGIE de Chiapas

ASIA

CHINA

July 11, 2016

Lantau Island, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

46 live macaws (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 24 live robins of the *Copsychus* genus and 16 boxes of fur were about to board the speed boat at night. Destination Shenzhen. Maritime police is tracking down bird smuggling in order to both countering bird flu and trafficking in endangered species. As police approached, the boat left towards continental China. It was super powerful and maritime police didn't manage to catch up. Total

value of the seizure is 2 million HK\$ (\$ 25,800 US). A macaw can be sold for the equivalent of \$ 1300 US to Hong Kong, 2 or 3 times more in continental China.¹⁷



© SCMP



INDONESIA

July 19, 2016

Province of Lampung, Java, Indonesia

Seizure of 20 black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II).

Black-winged kites are small raptors part of the same family as buzzards and eagles. Populations are in constant decline on the Island of Java. They're disappearing from the Island of Borneo. They feed on small mammals less than 100 g, reptiles, birds and insects that they catch in flight during the night.¹⁸



© kokhuitan

August 1, 2016

Merauke Kabupaten, Papua Province, Indonesia

The marine officer was hiding rare birds: 59 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), 2 palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Annex I), black-capped lory (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), a parrot and 5 lorikeets (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II). Ports are gateways for wildlife trafficking.¹⁹

IRAN

End of August 2016

Minab, Hormozgan Province, Iran

Seizure of 17 falcons including a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) bound for Persian Gulf's countries. As is customary, the raptors were cared for. They will be released in the desert as soon as possible. The convoy came from Pakistan. Its final destination was Qatar or the United Arab Emirates. One arrest.²⁰



September 1st 2016

Pa band National Park, Province of Mazandaran, Iran

Arrest of poachers of kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II). The Park is home to leopards, brown bears, lynx.²¹

September 3, 2016

Province of Khuzestan, Iran

Reading of their cell phones left no glimps of a doubt. The 3 men, 2 Iranians and a citizen from the Persian Gulf, came to the desert to hunt houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) with falcons.²²



Mid- September 2016

Province of Khorassan, Iran

Seizure of 22 live houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) transported by truck in banana crates from the North of the country and the border to Turkmenistan and Afghanistan destination the Persian Gulf. One arrest.²³



KOWEIT

Beginning of September 2016

Territorial Waters, Koweit

The Iranian ship was transporting 100 houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) and 16 falcons belonging to different species, mainly peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I). Coast-guards uncovered the smuggling before the ship got to Doha Port. The new Eldorado for houbara bustard and falcon poachers would be Uzbekistan.²⁴

PAKISTAN

September 4, 2016

Dera Ismail Khan, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Seizure of 25 live cranes (*Gruidae* spp., Appendix I or II). The truck was stopped at the Daraban check-point after 500 km on the road. It had left from Balouchistan. Final destination was Lakki Marwat (Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).²⁵



VIETNAM

September 22, 2016

Hoan Kiem District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure of a raptor (Appendix II) in a restaurant. He was taken to the Soc Son refuge.²⁶

EUROPE

FRANCE

July 5, 2016

Agen, Lot-et-Garonne Department, France

Five persons sentenced to suspended fines for capture, transport, sale on the internet via "Le Bon Coin", purchase, possession of protected species of birds prohibited of sale. The problem in the south west of France is that judges are often hunters. They have empathy with poachers and wildlife snoopers. The prosecution has appealed. It had required strong and firm fines and suspended prison sentences.²⁷

August 17, 2016

Ambert, Puy-de-Dôme Department, France

Lead pellets shot a white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*). One wing paralyzed. Hunting vandalism is persistent in France.²⁸



September 28, 2016

Limoges, Haute-Vienne, France

Sentence increased on appeal for 4 poachers of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*).

In France, the songbird is protected : hunt and capture are forbidden since 2009. The species is victim of international traffic in the Mediterranean and Europe. Overall fine of € 15,000 for the detention of about twenty birds, birdlime, traps and transport cages.³⁰



ITALY

Mid-july, 2016

Marina di Grosseto, Toscane Region, Italy

Seizure of nets, cages and goldfinches (*Carduelis* genus) at the home of a Tunisian national already on probation for other misdemeanors.³¹

September 22, 2016

Province of Frosinone, Italy

There were 98 goldfinches in the trunk of a car on the A1 towards Naples. The best singers sell for € 1500 to 2000 in Europe and North Africa. Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) is not protected under CITES but forbidden from hunting and catching in Italy. In cooperation with qualified personnel, the passerines were released in favorable natural wild spots. Three men were arrested. They live in Naples and are aged 55 to 65.³²

End of September 2016 Province of Brescia, Region of Lombardy, Italy

Poaching of a female peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I). Her wings were hit by many lead bullets. She's in the CRAS (Centro Recupero Animali Selivalici) care center in Valpedina.³³



September 1st, 2016

France

France is a glorious country. September 1st opened the official season of ortolan poaching (*Emberiza hortulana*), a small migratory bird protected within the European Union and especially mistreated in France to the point that the country could be prosecuted by the Union. The current doctrine of the French State is that under 30 trap cages and 5 "callers", poachers are honest people who respect a custom and ensure their food security for the winter. The ortolans are subject to local traffic for upscale restaurants and celebrations. The Federation of hunters from the Landes claims derogations for the destruction of protected species. 30,000 ortolans, 300,000 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and 50,000 bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*) would be killed each year.²⁹



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Pangolins

The four African pangolin species (*Manis gigantea*, *M. temminckii*, *M. tetradactyla*, *M. tricuspis*) et the four Asian species (*Manis crassicaudata*, *M. culionensis*, *M. javanica* and *M. pentadactyla*) are listed under CITES Appendix I since CITES CoP17 (October 2016).

The seizure from July 1st to September 30th is equal to 30,728 pangolins
Taking the average weight of 3 pangolins for 1 kg of scales.

“On the Trail” n°14
The value of scales on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	Hong Kong	247	10
	(China)	295	13
	China	221	18
	India	900	22

“On the Trail” n°14
The value of a pangolin on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/animal	Ref.
Africa	South Africa	3625	2
	Zimbabwe	1500 - 2500	7

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 8, 2016
Malalane, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

He had been captured in Kruger Park. He was found alive in a car trunk. A few days ago in the Park another pangolin was less lucky. A guide gave him a violent kick. The scene was taped by a fix camera. The video caused great upset. ¹

August 17, 2016
Tzaneen, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
Seizure of a live pangolin. Price 50,000 rand (\$ 3625 US) according to the media. Arrest, court hearing, bail out for R 4000 (\$ 290 US). ²

CAMEROON

July 5, 2016
N5 between Nkongsamba and Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon
Alert! Pangolins for sale on the side of the road. ³



End of August, 2016
Ngaoundal, Region of Adamaoua, Cameroon
Seizure of 128 kg of scales. Two arrests. ⁴



Handcuffs and nearly 400 pangolins.



UGANDA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 24, 2016

Koch Goma, North Region, Uganda

Seizure of 25 kg of scales. One couple arrested.⁵

ZAMBIA

July 2, 2016

Zambia

Two of the 6 pangolin sellers who were stopped by officers from the National Parks and wildlife Department (see "On the Trail" n° 12, p. 37) have been sentenced to 5 years prison with hard labor. Their vehicle has become State property. The youngest of the suspects, a policeman, was acquitted.⁶



ZIMBABWE

August 28, 2016

Mbare Neighborhood, Harare, Province of Harare, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 2 pangolins. Two arrests, 39 pangolins seized and 83 poachers brought in since the beginning of the year 2016 in the country.⁷

Beginning of September 2016

Chiredzi, Province of Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 2 pangolins and custody for a former police inspector.⁸

ASIA

CHINA

July 15, 2016

Shenzhen, Province of Guangdong, China

Not only he was not wearing the seatbelt, which caught the eye of the police officers, but he was also transporting in the back trunk 25 pangolins and 3 fake license plates. Trafficking from Viet Nam is suspected.⁹

July 19, 2016

Kwai Chung, Hong Kong, China

The container inspection center in Kwai Chung looked closely at a maritime container that left from Nigeria and transporting, as stated in the registration papers, "660 bags of plastic particles to be recycled". Plastic and scales make the perfect pair. Almost half of the bags were in fact full of pangolin scales, 7300 kg, being the equivalent of 20,000 pangolins. Estimated value: 14 million HK\$ (1,804,488 US\$), i.e. 247 US\$/kg.¹⁰



July 26, 2016

Tengchong Xian, Province of Yunnan, China

Seizure of 2 live pangolins and arrest of 3 smugglers at the border to Myanmar.¹¹

July 26, 2016

Meizhou, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of 130 kg of scales. Two arrests. One of the men is a pharmacist.¹²

July 28, 2016

Kwai Chung, Hong Kong, China



Seizure of 2,100 kg of pangolin scales. The label "plastic" with the well known Africa-China recycling chain is often used by traffickers. The value estimated by the Treasury national administration in Hong Kong is of \$ 295 US per kilo. The maritime container it seems has come from Ghana.¹³

August 1st, 2016

Liuzhou, Province of Guangxi, China

Seizure of 4 live pangolins, a pangolin, 2 coucals (*Centropus sinensis*) and 5 geckos frozen in a shop selling seafood and turtles. Coucals are birds close to the cuckoo.¹⁴



August 2, 2016

Caoyang, Province of Shanghai, China

Seizure of 2 live pangolins and a bear paw in a market place. One arrest.¹⁵



August 8, 2016

Dongxing, Autonomous Region of Guangxi, China

Court hearing for transporting 50 live pangolins. The suspect who was driving a Toyota with a fake license plate was heading for the port area. He faces up to 10 years prison time. He had been paid 155 US\$ for the convoying (see "On the Trail" n° 11, p. 33).¹⁶

August 17, 2016

Nasuozhen, Autonomous Region of Guangxi, China

He has been sentenced to 2 years in jail and à 3000 Yuan (\$ 450 US) in fine for transporting 7 pangolins (see "On the Trail" n° 13, p. 37) smuggled from Viet Nam.¹⁷



August 23, 2016

Guangfu, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of 60.5 kg of scales estimated worth 89,178 Yuan (\$ 13,374 US). Two arrests.

One of the suspects' bank statements reveal large account movements linked with traffic.¹⁸

September 27, 2016

Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 61 live pangolins in a Toyota stopped at a tollbooth. The car came from Fangchenggang. The pangolins may have been illegally imported from Viet Nam.¹⁹



Between 2010 and 2013, none of the pangolins seized in the Guangdong province and taken to zoos has survived captivity. They launch some sort of hunger strike or suffer from digestive problems and stomach ulcers or else they catch cold and die of bronchitis or pneumonia.

INDIA

July 8, 2016

District of Kudal, State of Maharashtra, India

Twelve days after the poaching of a pangolin, of which she had been informed by an anonymous call, police raided the Vadose village and arrested 7 people who confessed the acts and were released under bail because of lack of exhibit.²⁰

July 29, 2016

Shillong, State of Meghalaya, India

Seizure of 121.64 kg of scales and 261 kg *Paris polyphylla* rhizome (see "On the Trail" n°9 p. 34) destination Myanmar. Two arrests.²¹

August 5, 2016

Digapahandi, State of Odisha, India

The small mammal had not yet been scaled. The price of a kilo of scales on the market would be of \$ 900 US according to local NGOs, much more than the value estimated by Hong Kong authorities. The suspects claim they killed only to eat.²²

INDONESIA

July 19, 2016

Medan, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia

Seizure of 12 alive pangolins and one dead. The North Sumatra BKSD's rapid decision was for the survivors to be released that same night in a location that will remain undisclosed so as to avoid poaching.²³



July 26, 2016

Labuhan Batu Regency, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia

Seizure of 11 pangolins, including one dead. The vehicle was heading towards Medan. The driver was arrested.²⁴

August 15, 2016

Jombang Regency, Province of East Java, Indonesia

Seizure of 657 scaled pangolins in 5 freezers inside a house whose owner denies any responsibility except that of having loaned his freezers to a friend of whom he knows only the initials. The scales-more than a ton- have disappeared. More fake "frozen fish" destined for continental Asia.²⁵



MALAYSIA

Beginning of August 2016

Kuching, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Well disposed people bought pangolins from a street vendor and turned them over to the SFC, the Sarawak Forestry Corporation. The SFC reminds us that such rescues bring money to the traffickers and in some way encourages them to continue. "It's better to call local authorities." One can hope in that case they come immediately.²⁶

August 18, 2016

Lahad Datu, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Sentencing of a man to a fine worth 25,000 ringgit (\$ 6176 US) for illegal possession and transport of 25 pangolins and 900 g of scales (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 38). The pangolins had been examined by vets from the Sepilok orangutan shelter and 20 of them released into the forest.²⁷



NEPAL

July 12, 2016

Gothatar, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of a pangolin skin with the scales and arrest of 2 smugglers in a suburb East of Katmandu. Bulletproof vests made of pangolin scales are in style.²⁸



THAILAND

September 2, 2016

Padang Besar, Province of Songkhla, Thailand. Border to Malaysia

Seizure of 211 pangolins among which 3 were dead and 2 kg of scales. The convoy was made of 3 large pick-up. Three Thailand citizens and 3 Vietnamese citizens arrested.²⁹



VIET NAM

July 2016

Province of Tay Ninh, Viet Nam

Pangolin breeding is over in this province. For 4 years, forest services delivered licenses. NGOs deemed them illegal and biologists describe them as useless. Holding pangolins in captivity is already very difficult because of their extremely specific diet. Pangolin reproduction in captivity is little less than a miracle. The only births that happen in a cage come from females already pregnant when captured from the forest. The ENV directory says family breeding farms are used to "laundry poached pangolins".³⁰



July 31, 2016

Quang Yen, Province of Quang Ninh, Viet Nam

Seizure in a car of 7 pangolins (37.6 kg), i.e. 5 kg per pangolin. Two arrests.³¹

August 4, 2016

Halong, Province of Quang Ninh, Viet Nam

Seizure of 51 live pangolins (310 kg) cleverly hidden in a truck heading for Mong Cai, a border city to China. Two truck drivers arrested.³²

August 10, 2016

Northern Viet Nam

Release of 20 pangolins. They had been seized during the month of June (see "On the Trail" n° 13, p. 41) and taken to the Cuc Phuong refuge. In 2 months they have moved from 1 to 1.5 kg. Two of their companions didn't survive the care and quarantine time.³³

Mid September 2016

Province Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam

Three seizures on a bus. They were given for care to the SWT (Save Viet Nam Wildlife) who, the day before, had released into the wild 35 survivors of poaching and trafficking towards China. Location of the forest that now harbors them has remained secret.³⁴



Pangolins and Elephants

AFRICA

UGANDA

September 31, 2016

Kampala, Province centrale, Uganda

Another two clergymen have been caught in the act of poaching sin. John Kiiza et Christopher Kato were working with a Congolese national, Prince Kazanga. They were carrying 13 kg of ivory and 17 kg of pangolin scales.



Primates

Gorilla (*Gorilla* spp.), chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), orangutan (*Pongo* spp.) are listed in CITES Appendix I. Macaques (*Macaca* spp.) are in Appendix II except the lion-tailed macaque (*Macaca silenus*) and the Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*) listed in Appendix I.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 24, 2016

Kruger National Park, South Africa

Vandalism against animals. Right in the middle of Kruger Park on a picnic ground, a dozen men are firing paintball guns at monkeys, birds and in the river. The most well known monkeys in the Park are chacma baboons (*Papio ursinus*, Appendix II) and vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II).¹



Papio ursinus in the Kruger Park

CAMEROON

End of August 2016

Méfou, Center Region, Cameroon

Shelter given to a 10 month old female chimpanzee recently separated from her mother. Very grumpy, shut down on herself, wounded on the hip she's been slowly gaining in trust.²



September 5, 2016

Edea, Littoral Region, Cameroon

He is 16. He has been in the hands of Edea's vicar for a very long time. The poacher would have given him to the holy man after he had killed the mother. The seizure by MINFOP (Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife) and by volunteers of Limbe refuge was friendly. The vicar did not protest.³



LIBERIA

Beginning August 2016

Monrovia, County of Montserrado, Liberia

Seizure of a baby female chimp 5 to 6 months old. Only one tooth. She was given for care to the dedicated orphanage in the Monrovia suburb.⁴



MADAGASCAR

September 30, 2016

Between Ampanefena and Vohemar, Sava Region, Madagascar

Seizure of 56 grilled specimens ready to be served in restaurants in Sambava. Misfortune continues to hit the lemurs (Appendix I). They could be killed by poisoned bananas that would serve as bait in the protected area of Loky Manambato. Already 62 lemurs among which "ankomba", the local name for black lemurs, were seized in July. A man was arrested when he came to pick up the package at the arrival of the bush taxi.⁵



NAMIBIA

Beginning of September 2016 Windhoek, Region of Khomas, Namibia

If one of them deserves the prize of the cruelest martyr, it is he. The baboon (*Papio* spp., Appendix II) locked in a cage for more than 3 years was tangled in the metal wire of a trap with a tin can on his backbone. After the neighbors denounced this cruelty he was freed, sedated, the constraining device removed, his wounds cared for, and he was waken and taken to what will be paradise for him: the Naankuse shelter 20 km from the capital.⁶



UGANDA

August 23, 2016 Kibale Forest National Park, Western Province, Uganda

Poaching of a female chimp. She was eating wild ginger with her group by the side of a small road close to a tea plantation and the Sebitoli village. Armed with spears and machetes, farm workers attacked courageously and killed horrendously the chimp of whom all that remains 3 days later when one of the poachers was arrested was the head and burned limbs. The NGO Sebitoli Chimpanzee Project is devastated. This is the first time in the region that use of chimp meat is revealed with proof.⁷



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

July 2, 2016 Pinga, Province of Nord-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo

Sagesse (meaning "wisdom") after quarantine will be admitted to the shelter where 60 chimps reside. Sagesse is sort of a political refugee. Thanks to the efforts of GRASP (Great Apes Survival Partnership) and the ICCN (Congolesse Institute for Nature Conservation) the orphan was sneaked out of the Pinga region, a war zone, in a terrible state and having lost the use of one leg because of tetanus. "Adult chimps are chased by dogs then shot dead." The meat is sold in towns and villages. The feet, hands, skulls are filtered into the trafficking networks. The baby chimps are often sold as pets or kept hostage for later.⁸



Beginning of July, 2016 Virunga National Park, Province of Nord-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo

"He would have heard a sudden whipping sound of branches releasing from tension. Before he could discern the direction from whence the sound came, he would have felt a sudden and powerful tug on his arm, followed by a searing pain in his hand ». An invisible killer had just come down on a young mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei* ssp. *beringei*, Appendix I). Mutaganzi was very lucky. A ranger patrol came across her unfortunate position before the wound to her hand turn into septicemia. Traps are a plague. And they don't often catch poachers.⁹



July 29, 2016 Democratic Republic of Congo

Lwiro Primates has taken in a red-tailed monkey (*Cercopithecus ascanius*, Appendix II) seized on a motorbike in the middle of a crate filled with chickens and an owl-faced monkey (*Cercopithecus hamlyni*, Appendix II) in a state of panic but who is just starting to drink and eat again.¹⁰



September 1st 2016
Gatovu, Virunga National Park,
Democratic Republic of Congo.

Jules Kombi Kambale.

Occupation: ranger, 30 year-old.
 He was following the gorillas
 from afar. He was shot dead by a
 sniper.¹¹



SIERRA LEONE

Mid September 2016

Freetown, Western Area, Sierra Leone

Nursing of a young chimpanzee less than a year
 old.¹²



She was for sale on the sly at the rear of a car. A US
 female citizen purchased and entrusted her to the
 Tacugama chimpanzee sanctuary (see "On he Trail"
 n°31, p.10, n°12, p.42).

AMERICA

BRAZIL

July 2016

Porto Velho, Rondônia, Brazil

Called for a fire, the police discovers several
 animal traps and a small woolly monkey (*Lagothrix*

lagotricha, Appendix II) barely 2 months old. In a
 poor state, he was attached with an iron chain. A 16
 year old was arrested.¹³



When he grows up he will weigh 10 kg

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 7, 2016

**Victoria, State of Texas, United
 States of America**



Under the name "Strange Cargo
 Exotic", he did business on the net from his home.
 The search led to uncover several animal skulls and
 30 human skulls said by the police to be legal and
 intended for personal collection. Customs caught
 on to the thread when they found a package from
 Indonesia and experts from the Fish and Wildlife
 Service of the San Francisco airport passed it
 through the X-ray and discovered 2 orangutan
 skulls. Graham Scott Criglow was sentenced to \$
 2500 US in fine and 3 years on probation. Question:
 when will skulls from the human genus be listed in
 Appendix I ?¹⁴

MEXICO

July 8, 2016

Mexico City, Federal District, Mexico

A gorilla died of a heart attack in the zoo of Mexico.
 Bantu was 24 and weighed 224 kg. To facilitate his
 transfer to the zoo in Guadalajara, he had been
 sedated. Overdose or adulterated medication, 20
 veterinarians attempted to resuscitate him. The
 Guadalajara zoo is home to two female gorillas.
 Bantu was the potential single breeding male.¹⁵



CHINA

August 24, 2016

Kunming, Province of Yunnan, China

Dressing up of an orangutan held in a zoo. It doesn't seem like much but this sort of clowning about reinforces the idea in the public opinion that baby orangutans are household toys.¹⁶



INDONESIA

ORANGUTANS

Compassion, pity, opportunity, fun, want of a baby, explanations are plenty when people from villages, forests and fields are caught by the BKSDA and NGOs in the company of an orangutan. Truth might be quite different. A captive orangutan means capital. In the Aceh province on the Sumatran Island and in Kalimantan on the Island of Borneo, a young orangutan is sold 10 to 15 million rupee (760 to 1140 US\$). On the Island of Java, the catch can reach 50 to 100 million rupee (3800 to 7600 US\$). The Island of Java is one of the gateways towards continental Malaysia and Thailand. There is strong demand from zoos for these great apes considered easy to keep, cheap to feed and good for business. Despite a ban in petrol Emirates by the Persian Gulf to keep wild animals at home, rich homes have their door wide open to orangutans. Orangutans carry a heavy heritage as grooms and clown and even live dolls for the youngest.

July 9, 2016

East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia

Over the last 6 months, HOCRU has taken in 6 orphan orangutans. The last one to join is about 1 year old. The number of refugees is growing just as is the surface covered by industrial palm oil plantations.¹⁷



July 21, 2016

Province of West Java, Indonesia

Six months old. Starving and thirsty. Inmate in a village. Now recovering and cared for by the team in the Cikananga center for re-adaptation to life in the wild.¹⁸

July 24 and 26, 2016
Indonesia

- **Jakarta. Kampung Rambutan station.** Seizure of a young orangutan barely a year old. A 33 year-old man arrested.



- **Medan, Province of North Sumatra.** Seizure of 4 baby orangutans. They were from the Aceh province. Final destination: Jakarta (2000 km). Arrest of a 34-year old man. The monkeys were taken to the Batu Mbelin quarantine center. In both cases the orangutans were taken from the Mont Leuser National Park area.¹⁹



July 28, 2016

Southwest Aceh Regency, Province of Aceh, Indonesia

After 2 months of repeated requests from forest guards and brutal refusal from the family that was detaining him, the young orangutan was finally released after showing an official arrest warrant for the master and order of seizure for him. He also was taken to the specialized quarantine at the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Program.²⁰



Beginning of August, 2016

Lubuk Batu, North Kayong Regency, Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Release of a female around 5 years old who had been living for the last 4 years among the dogs in the village. Fed with rice and salted fish, during the day she would climb to the top a bare tree and at night she would climb down to her open cage. Her owner had found her on cleared land. Pity for her is what led him to take her in.²¹



August 4, 2016

Sampit, Province of central Kalimantan, Indonesia

"I gave her a banana but she only ate a bit." The little female orangutan is about 7 months old. The farmer found her in a rubber tree. The whimpering orphans caught his attention. She was given for care to the Sampit local branch of the BKSDA. It will take months, maybe years before she can return to freedom in the jungle.²²

**August 6 and 8, 2016
Indonesia**

The 2 survivors are in the hands of the SOCP:

- **Sidiangkat, Province of North Sumatra.** Rescue of a seriously wounded male. He had been roaming for days near the plantations and housings.

- **Tamiang Aceh Regency, Province of Aceh.** A 2-year-old female voluntarily turned in. The villager wasn't able to sell her. The traffickers seem to fear judicial procedures and convictions.²³



Province of Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

- August 8, 2016. Tumbang Samba.



Eighteen months. Recently taken hostage by a worker on a palm oil plantation. She still behaves as a wild animal. She bites.

- August 18, 2016. Bangkuang.

Four or 5 years. Almost all spent in captivity. Raised with the family's children. Same food as

them. Family outing. Shaved around the neck. Bathed twice a day. Domestication of orphan orangutans is a cover up for their extinction. Those who adopt them present themselves as their saviors.²⁴



August 11, 2016

**Jakarta, Capital Territory
Jakarta, Indonesia**

In second instance, Sago Prima subsidiary of the major palm oil producer Sampoerna Agro is sentenced by the Jakarta Court to pay 1.07 billion rupee (US \$ 81.7 million) for failing to take the necessary measures to control a clearing fire voluntarily lit in view of the extension of the plantations on the Meranti islands off the



Island of Sumatra. The uncontrolled fire destroyed 30 km² of peat lands and forests. Sampoerna Agro, an Indonesian company listed on the stock exchange, operates 1280 km² of oil palms through several subsidiaries. One of the judges considered the fire to be "a natural disaster". The companies are considering appealing.²⁵

Sampoerna Agro is a member of the RSPO (Round-table on Sustainable Palm Oil).

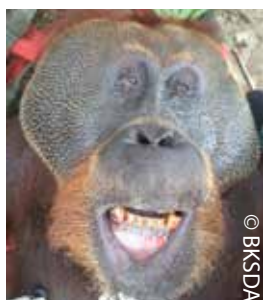
Indonesia

The parliament opens an investigation about the dismissal of charges against 15 companies suspected of having a responsibility in last year's forest fires in Riau province, the country's leading producer of palm oil. The fires have resumed this year. The Minister of Environment of Malaysia says that smoke plumes are already visible in Peninsular Malaysia and on Borneo.



August 23-30, 2016 Province of Aceh, Indonesia

- The orangutan wandered in the fields. Not a tree left to nest. He was captured and released the same day in the Leuser Mountains.



- The male orangutan was roaming in a banana plantation. Shot by 3 air rifle bullets in the head and 2 more in the back. Badly wounded he is in care and quarantine. His future is uncertain.²⁶

August 29, 2016 Tenggarong, Eastern Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Eleven months. He is the 15th in 7 weeks to be transferred from a private home to the COP shelter in the north-east of the province.²⁷



29 August 2016 Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia



Here is the 16th. He is less than one year old.²⁸

End of August, 2016 Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

He was born in captivity. For several years he studied in a "jungle school". Within the framework of a bilateral program, the Perth zoo in Australia and the BSKDA released the 8-year-old male orangutan into the forest. The first attempt ended in a semi-fail. A male, 7 years old, had been found dead 2 years after his liberation. He would have been bitten by a poisonous snake.²⁹



September 6, 2016 Kinangkong, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Sick, rectum tumor, male adult, he was secluded in an industrial plantation. In treatment. If he lives, he will be released in the Leuser Park.³⁰

Province of Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

- September 8, 2016. West Kutai Kabupaten

Seizure of a 6-year-old orangutan damaged by captivity.

- September 9, 2016. Bawan, Pulang Pisau Kabupaten

Seizure of an 8-month-old orangutan. He had been "found" on cleared ground by a guy from the village. X-rays show there is an air-gun bullet near his knee.



- September 19, 2016. Petak Bahandang, Katingan Kabupaten

Seizure of an orangutan about 8 months old at the house of a palm oil farm worker. He had "found" him on the path to the plantation.



The babies are under the care of vets from the BOS (Borneo Orangutan Survival) in Nyaru Menteng. The sub-adult is in quarantine in Samboya Lestari.³¹

September 9, 2016

Meulaboh, Province of Aceh, Indonesia

Seizure of a 2 year old orangutan at the home of a member of parliament. Another victim of forest clearing for palm oil plantations and poaching of his mother. He was dressed like a child so to be returned to the wild he will surely require a long learning period.³²



September 20, 2016

Pontianak, Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Voluntary handing over of a female orangutan aged 9 months. In the days to come she should be welcome in the YIARI (Yayasan Inisiasi Alam Rehabilitasi Indonesia). Since 2009, YIARI has taken in 180 orangutans. Sixty of them have regained enough autonomy to be set free in the forests of the province.³³

Indonesia, except orangutans

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Early July 2016

Island of Borneo, Indonesia

Seizure of a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) held by a pair of traffickers.³⁴

July 18, 2016

Langkat Regency, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia

Rescue of a white-handed gibbon (*Hylobates lar*, Appendix I). He was kept in a cage at the home of a former political leader who should have in turn been jailed for capture and possession of gibbons is banned by law but he was in no way troubled by justice.³⁵



End of July 2016

Kabupaten of Ciamis, West Java Province, Indonesia

Release in a natural habitat of 4 slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), 3 females and one male, ex-pets.

The procedure is long. A year of forest school where they re-learn to eat natural, to climb, to fetch food, a few days in a cage of habituation after being transported on men's back in the heart of the natural reserve of Mount Sawal, withdrawal of the cages and of all human presence if all the aptitudes to live in autonomy in the wild are verified. Once released in the great bath of the virgin forest, survivors will have to be wary of predators and poachers.

The role of the Sunda slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) is emphasized by the Head of the Conservation of Natural Resources Center: "They play a vital role in seed distribution and pollinating flowering plants as well as performing a pest control function by controlling insect populations".³⁶

Beginning of August, 2016

Surabaya, Province of East Java, Indonesia

Rescue by the NGO COP (Centre for Orangutan Protection) of 4 slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) and 2 ebony leaf monkeys (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II).³⁷

September 23, 2016

Sipirok Forest, Kabupaten of South Tapanuli, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

One agile gibbon (*Hylobates agilis*, Appendix I), 2 siamangs (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I) and 3 gibbons were released in the forest of Sipirok. All 3 were 5 years old, they had been seized from traffickers months ago. They were released after several months of relearning to wildlife.³⁸

End of September 2016

Indonesia

Young Sunda slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) expropriated from their forests were for sale. The seller was arrested and admitted supplying the Medan pets market. It is a special brigade known as the ForWPU (Forest and Wildlife Unit) which intervened. It patrols the Mount Leuser. Since 2013, it has arrested 18 poachers, 8 illegal wood cutters and saved Sumatran serow, gibbons and eagles.³⁹

KOWEIT

July 2016

Koweit, Province of Al-Asimah, Koweit

Car accident. The driver had consumed narcotics. Next to him, a baby orangutan was in the same daze. The man explains he felt the need for a companion with whom to share his secret addiction to drugs. The orangutan was taken to the city zoo. His presence in the Arabian Peninsula remains unexplained. Local authorities wish that after the needed time in rehab he be returned to Indonesia.⁴⁰



LAOS

More and more people abandon their animals in front of shelter doors when they are closed just as they abandon trash in front of closed dumps. Inside the anonymous bag, the northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) was in a maximum stage of hypothermia.⁴¹



Mid-July, 2016

Vientiane, Laos

Overall she's not in that bad shape, except she's missing some teeth, and some bits of ears and fingers. Some of the mutilations could be legacies of her former life in the wild. Fights between macaques are not rare. Yet conflicts between females are less violent than among males. For the time being she's in a pen with 3 companions of her own age and with many climbing structures. Enough to keep in shape and maintain vital instinct with in mind the distant goal of release into the wild or semi-liberty.⁴²



MALAYSIA

Beginning of August, 2016

Kanowit, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Seizure of a Bornean gibbon (*Hylobates muelleri*, Appendix I) of about 3 years. He grew up in a cage. He arrived there when he was still a baby.⁴³

THAILAND

July 3, 2016

Chaweng Beach, Island of Koh Samui, Province of Surat Thani, Thailand

Rescue of a slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I). Covered with ticks, teeth ripped out, one rib broken. Convalescence will be difficult. Return to complete liberty is unthinkable. He was found abandoned on a tourist beach where wild animals are exploited day and night posing for priced selfies giving exotic souvenirs to entire families (cf. "On the Trail" n°11, p. 41).⁴⁴



July 4, 2016

Phetchaburi, Province of Phetchaburi, Thailand

Seizure of a Southern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) and a Northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) inside a temple. The monks, suddenly eager to get rid of them claimed they were 2 years old and very tame. Once on site, the rescue team from the WFFT (Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand) were confronted with a hefty pair, quite aggressive, aged 4 and 8. The story around their captivity is fishy. As often in such cases the monks feed out the most unbelievable stories. The prisoners were kept in cages without access to water.⁴⁵



Beginning of August, 2016 South Thailand

Voluntary handing over of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) about 5 years old who spent almost his entire life in a cage. The WFFT hopes that within a few months they will be able to have him enter a large pen with many others of his species.⁴⁶



September 14, 2016 Thailand

Rescue of a white-tufted-ear marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II). A new resident in the WFFT shelter. True, he does not take up much space but unfortunately it will be impossible to release him in his home continent, South America. Pet marmosets fashion rages in Asia. The species is also used for animal experiments (see "On the Trail" n°7 p 42, n°13 p.46).⁴⁷



September 25, 2016 Thailand

Rescue of 2 northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II). In a hotel attic, they were used as scarecrows against long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) who are moving into the cities. They were tied by the neck with a steel collar.⁴⁸



September 25, 2016 Thailand

The Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I) had just been poached. It was bought 400 baht or \$ 12 US by locals who handed him to the WFFT. Lorises are subject to international traffic for traditional medicine, human consumption and the pet market. WFFT will soon release him in the wild.⁴⁹

VIET NAM

July 15, 2016

Nha Trang, Province of Khánh Hòa, Viet Nam

The 2 macaques were detained in a small café in town. They were set free in the Hon Ba forest.⁵⁰

July 27, 2016

Tan Phuoc, District of Nong Cong, Province of Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam

Seizure of bone glue and macaque bones. The forest services, after beginning investigation following photos published on Facebook, rushed and found a certain Le Van Sau over his stove while simmering glue (see "On the trail" n° 12, p. 49).⁵¹



July 2016
Viet Nam

The 3 men between 19 and 35 were transporting the dried monkeys by bicycle. They had killed them deep in the forest to be sold in the traditional medicine circuits. They are on home arrest until trial. A new group a 40 black-shanked douc langurs (*Trachypithecus delacouri*) would have been spotted in the north of the country. The langurs suffer from the double threat of poaching and habitat loss. They are critically endangered.⁵²

Beginning August, 2016
Province of Binh Thuan and Province of Ninh Binh, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of 2 lorises (*Lorisidae* spp., Appendix I or II) in 2 provinces of the north and south of the country. The owners quickly realized that their recent acquisitions were illegal and could very possibly cause them some trouble. The 2 lorises went back to the forest.⁵³



Mid-August, 2016
Tu Mo Rong, Province of Kon Tum, Viet Nam

Seizure of a yellow-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I) long held captive to a family, and transferred to a specialized shelter in Ninh Binh.⁵⁴

August 19, 2016
Province of Ninh Binh, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of a black-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nigripes*, Appendix I).

His owner who had recently bought and adopted him as a pet was unaware of the animal's protected status. The langur is now in a specialized shelter in the Ninh Binh province after transit through the Ho Chi Minh City forest services.⁵⁵



August 27, 2016
Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 6 pygmy lorises (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) thanks to the alert phone number of Education for Nature-Viet Nam (ENV) 1800 1522. Two arrests.⁵⁶

End of August, 2016
Province of Dak Lak, Viet Nam

The gibbon's vocalization (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I) were noticed coming from a house. After a month of hideout, not one chance to catch him on camera. He finally was turned in to the forest services. He had been held captive for 10 years.⁵⁷

September 5, 2016
Hop Thanh, Hoa Binh Province, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of 3 pygmy lorises (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) to EPRC (Viet Nam's Endangered Primate Rescue Center). Residents say that the forest around is destroyed and that lorises take refuge in gardens and homes.⁵⁸



September 28, 2016
Province of Kon Tum, Viet Nam

Seizure of a gibbon (*Hylobatidae* spp., Appendix I).⁵⁹



He was being peddled on the sidewalk. He was rescued by forest services and turned over to the EPRC.

EUROPE

FRANCE

Night of August 8, 2016 Aisne Department, France

Theft by night of 2 emperor tamarins (*Saguinus imperator*, Appendix II). The exotic garden of Folembray in the north of France covers 2.5 ha and is home to 43 monkeys of 13 different species. Most of them come from seizures. The male and female taken in in June were to be the subjects of a reproduction attempt. Only connoisseurs could have carried out the forfeit.

The emperor tamarin lives in family groups of maximum 15 individuals in tropical forests of the Amazonian basin. They are tree bound and diurnal. They feed off of ripe fruit pulp, sap, flower nectar and insects. Gestation lasts 140 to 150 days. A young emperor tamarin will ride on the adults' backs until he can take care of himself, that is to say for 7 months. The species is endangered because of habitat loss and because of the pet trade.⁶⁰



Alert ! Monkey snatching



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.

LEOPARDS

AFRICA

GABON

Lambaréné, Moyen-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Seizure of 2 leopard skins and a chimpanzee skull. The band is led by an experienced hunter, Jean Félicien Nzambé. He was arrested in his village of Massika. The other 3 are almost beginners. They had been selling off the merchandise for less than a year. Their main customers are traditional healers using the protected animal parts in their initiation and healing rituals.¹



ASIA

INDIA

Lynching

July 1, 2016**Rojmal, District Botad, Gujarat State, India**

We will never go back to Rojmal. The male leopard accused of plunder was surrounded and killed with sticks and stones. He was 2 to 3 years old. After the lynching, 7 or 8 people were heard by the Court. After lynching, investigations are open but they do not close on suspects and even less on judgments.²

July 3, 2016**Forests of Khammam district of Telangana State, India**

Two corpses. A mother and a baby leopard. Four paws cut off. Probable cause of death: poisoning. Probable motive: retaliation after an attack on cattle.

Forest Police confirmed that farmers in the area are practicing nomadic agriculture with illegal burning of used land (Podu) inside forests for the grazing of their herds.³

**FAMILY AFFAIRS****July 11, 2016****Paharganj, Delhi, India**

His father had said that hunting and wildlife trafficking were hereditary. Akash Chand, son of Sansar Chand, the northern Veerappan, is behind bars. He took over from his father in March 2014 (see "On The Trail" n°9 p.47). The arrest was difficult. Dozens of supporters of the Chand clan converged on the house where a family reunion was held. The officers were greeted with kicks and bites. Only after the arrival of reinforcements the arrest of Akash Chand could take place. He was transferred to the neighbour State of Rajasthan which, after receiving the confidences of 2 leopard skins traffickers, had issued an arrest warrant against him several months ago. In May 2015, the mother of Akash was also arrested and transferred to Rajasthan. Poachers claimed she had taken control of the traffic while her husband was in prison. According to unconfirmed reports, she would have managed to escape.⁴

**Ashok Kumar**

1935-2016



Ashok Kumar has been for the 30 years a thorn in the flesh of poachers and wildlife traffickers in India, most of all the terrible Sansar Chand. Teams from Wildlife Trust of India that Ashok founded in 1998 are pursuing his work.

End of July 2016**Hanchipura, Karnataka, India**

The 2 big cats, including one black panther, were found dying on the periphery of the village. Despite the arrival of veterinarians on site, they could not be saved. They were poisoned supposedly in retaliation. They would have attacked a dog or cattle according to various witnesses. A poison bottle found at the scene allowed Rana, a sniffer dog, to go back to the home of Kumar, a tailor craftsman. Three accomplices fled.⁵

**End of July 2016****Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand State, India**

Seizure of a 2.44 m long skin. One arrest. The skin was on the way to China via Nepal.⁶

LEOPARDS - FOLLOWED

August 22, 2016

Bhiwapur, Maharashtra, India

Ten years after, 5 poachers are sentenced to 3 ½ years in prison and 20,000 rupee (\$ 300 US) in fine. The skin had been discovered in a plastic bag at Gulab Barekar Ram's home, a farmer aged 55.⁷



September 8, 2016

District of Tehri-Garhwal, State of Uttarakhand, India

Delirium *Panthera pardus*

The leopard rush is growing in northern India. Bounty hunters offer their services to villagers to rid them of the "man-eaters" that would be 140 in Uttarakhand. The veterinarian who performed the autopsy can't get over it. He found fragments of forelegs in the stomach of the tormented leopard. "Never have I seen such an incident, I believe the pain in its spinal cord was unbearable and so he chewed on its own paws."

Ground hunters can count on the support of drones in tracking down man-eaters. Authorities indeed count on "eyes in the sky" as they are named by the Times of India to spot leopards in sugar cane fields.



The 12-year-old leopard was stopped by the first bullet in the spinal cord. He was neglected on the spot before being triumphantly finished off 24 hours later in the presence of delighted villagers. He is accused of attacking and killing a girl.⁸

September 12, 2016

Dehradun District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Arrest of Babu Ram Uniyal and Himalayan Sherpa. Seizure of 2 leopard skins estimated worth Rs 12 lakh (\$ 18,000 US) on the international market.⁹

September 24-26, 2016

Narmada District, State of Gujarat, India

Discovery of a mutilated female leopard carcass. The front paws were cut off. All claws have disappeared. They are used as charms in black magic. The feline was strangled to death. She was caught in a trap. The body was incinerated. According to experts, she maybe was mutilated while still alive. A 17,500 rupee (\$ 260 US) award is promised by the IARF (International Animal Rescue Foundation) for anyone who would provide decisive information about the murderers.¹⁰

INDONESIA

Beginning of August 2016

Cipangparang, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia

Two leopards were killed near the village. Death by poisoning, they were accused of eating pets. Skins and other parts of the cats disappeared.¹¹



IRAN

July 26, 2016

Savadkuh, Mazandaran Province, Iran

Two years imprisonment... suspended. The victim was poisoned.¹²



August 13, 2016

Rudbar, Gilan Province, Iran

Seizure of a skin and large-caliber ammunition. One arrest.¹³



September 3, 2016

Province of Mazandaran, Iran

Seizure of a skin. One arrest.¹⁴



LEOPARDS - FOLLOWED

NEPAL

July 31, 2016

Bancheur, Makwanpur District, Development Region, Nepal



2.13 m long and 4 kg of bones. Two arrests.¹⁵

August 1st, 2016

Chandragiri, Central Development Region, Nepal

It happened just 12 km away from Kathmandu. The "monster" would have attacked 7 villagers. He was lynched with stones. He was buried within the central zoo. "If this continues, there will be no more wild leopards in the country in the next few years" announces Dr. Indra Sapkota in charge of the Forests central office in Kathmandu.¹⁶

September 19, 2016

Jadibuti Bus Station, Katmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of a leopard skin. Three arrests.¹⁷

TIGERS

ASIA

BANGLADESH

July 20, 2016

Khulna, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

The RAB, Rapid Action Battalion, got his hands on 2 guys trying to sell 15 bones of a tiger from Sundarbans.¹⁸

August 24, 2016

Chatkatla, Upazila of Koyra, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

In the house, there was a gun, 3 cartridges and the skin of a Sundarbans tiger. Six people arrested at dawn. The body of the tiger would have been bought for 1.8 million Bangladeshi taka, or \$ 23,000 US, to a woman whose identity is kept secret.¹⁹

CHINA

August 3 and 4, 2016

Kunming, Yunnan Province, China

The couple of friends, 2 Chinese workers expatriated in South Africa, were returning home to celebrate the New Year with their family. They are sentenced to 15 years in prison. One, Huang, had in his luggage 7.763 kg of bones alleged to be tiger's ones and a cat skull. The other, Lee, had in his luggage 15 ivory trinkets, 8 pieces of rhino horn and a cat's skin.



Huang claimed that the bones would relieve his parents from rheumatism and that he was told in South Africa that it was buffalo bones.

Lee claimed he had transported unwittingly all parts of animals recognized as endangered by the international community.²⁰

August 15, 2016

Huzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

The car was trying to evade a roadside check. In the end, there are 3 small alive felines inside. The man claims that they are Persian kittens but also



recognizes that he works for a zoo in the province of Jiangsu. Experts confirm that they are white tigers striped with black, with a genetic oddity different from albinism. The breeding of white tigers in China

and Thailand is under fire. Inbreeding exposes cats to health problems. Zoos or other animal showers and sellers falsely present them as a subspecies unanimously recognized by the scientific community.²¹



INDIA

July 13, 2016

Haridwar, Uttarakhand State, India

A tiger hunter wanted for 7 years and expert in extraordinary escapes almost slipped away once again pretending that he needed a pee while in the drunk tank. Member of the Sapera community known and feared for its ancestral hunting culture, Amarnath had already managed to escape when a police operation had surrounded 12 of his accomplices about to hit Delhi to deliver tigers remains (see "On the Trail" n°3, p.44).

The Sapera are well established in Uttarakhand and would now be recruited by Bawaria, another tribe specialised in poaching and international traffic. In May 2016, WWF and Traffic animated several sessions of puppet shows designed to enhance coexistence with wildlife for 250 members of the Sapera community. It seems that children have enjoyed these educational entertainments.²²

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

July 21, 2016

Kalyanpur, Nayagarh District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of a tiger skin and a deer skin. One arrest. Prasant Kumar Mishra was reported.²³

August 12, 2016

Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Karnataka, India

The shooting of the beautiful adult tiger aged 10 to 11 years was premeditated. Naveen Kumar, chief ranger of Chamrajnagar district is categorical: "Whatever their target, a herbivore or other, the tiger has been clearly shot dead. Therefore now they should be deemed as tigers poacher." NGOs are furious and very severe: "There is an anti poaching camp near the crime scene, but as usual the staff were either drunk or sleeping." "They never keep a vigil nor follow leads left by offenders." Again Naveen Kumar meets the views of NGOs. Arrived on site to collect evidence, he was surprised that the guards did not hear gunshots in the dead of night and did not spot the 3 campfires of which tracks were spotted by investigators. So there is a tiger less in the 874 km² reserve. They would be about 100, a little more or a little less.²⁴



August 12, 2016

Akot, Maharashtra, India

Three sentences to 3 years in prison and fines ranging from US \$ 150 to 330 for poaching a tiger in the Melghat reserve. In default of payment, they would have to undergo additional 6 years in prison. Two other suspects were released on bail and disappeared from the radar of justice.

The tiger was trapped during the harvest season by Mamru and Arkas, each having been paid 15,000 rupee (\$ 223 US) for the service by Ranjit who himself sold the skin and bones for close to \$ 10,000 US (see "On the Trail" n°3, p.44 et n°11, p.48).²⁵



Death of a Great Lady

August 19, 2016 - Ranthambore National Park

T16, better known as the Lady of the Lake, was the glory of the Ranthambore National Park. She captured the attention and admiration of the guards by her courage and agility during the flood of 1997. In 2003, in full drought, she is in competition with a crocodile at the edge of a water point. After putting her baby tigers in safety, she finally killed the crocodile 4.30 m long after an hour and a half of fighting. At 11 years old, she hunts, she raises her cubs and defends them. In a fight, she loses 2 canines.



At the age of 13-14 she started losing territory gradually. When she died at nearly 20, she had practically no teeth left and the guards had been feeding her for several months. She had given life to at least 9 baby tigers. She was hyper-maternal with her young and never was aggressive with visitors of the Park. Her cremation on the hill was conducted in the presence of 70 guards and officials with a few tons of wood and 200 kg of dry dung.²⁶



September 5, 2016

Sargiguda, Malkangiri District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 2 Bengal tiger skins. The felines were less than a year old. The skins were for sale for just over \$ 1000 US.^{26bis}



They were captured in the Mathili forests

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

Beginning of September 2016

Libaspur, Delhi Territory, India

Seizure of 2 tiger skins, 2 skulls (12 kg), 12 kg of bones and 34 kg of tiger inner organs. Two arrests. The duet is also specialized in pangolin scales.²⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 25, 2016

Kerala, India

In the car there was a tiger skin and 3 passengers. The skin was seized, passengers including a father and son are in custody. The owner of the skin could be a key link in traffic, he was subsequently arrested. The starting price was fixed to Rs 40 lakh, or \$ 60,000 US. The skin was to be shown to a customer at the end of the trip in the town of Kumily.²⁸

September 26, 2016

Hoshiarpur, Punjab State, India

Arrest of Ram Bhagat, leader of a gang of tiger poachers. He was on the run since the month of March (see "On the Trail" n°12, p. 57). Good cooperation between the States of Punjab and Uttarakhand.²⁹

September 28, 2016

Sarkawada, Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a tiger skin. The 19 year old student wanted to sell it for more than \$ 13,000 US.³⁰

INDONESIA

September 10, 2016

Teluk Kuantan, Kabupaten Kuantan Singingi, Province of Riau, Indonesia

Conviction of Herman alias Man bin Mausin and Adrizal Rakasiwi alias Adri, sentenced to 4 months prison time. Fine worth 60 million Indonesian rupee (\$ 4560 US) or in case of non-payment to 3 extra months in jail. They had attempted to sell a Sumatran tiger skin for 150 million Indonesian rupee (\$ 11,560 US), cf. "On the Trail" n° 13 p. 110.³¹



September 29, 2016

District of Indragiri Hulu, Riau Province, Indonesia

Seizure of tiger bones and a skin 2 m long. No bullet holes from head to tail. Professional trapping. Two arrests. The investigation was conducted by the BKSDA, the natural resource protection agency, with the help of WWF.³²

THAILAND

Tiger Temple - continued

July 21, 2016

Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand

The best defense is attack and silence. The Tiger Temple filed a complaint for defamation against an Australian animal rights defender claiming that tigers were sold clandestinely in Laos.

The counsel for the senior monk of the Buddhist temple assured that the tigers were sold legally. All judicial proceedings against the Tigers Temple have stalled. Phra Visuthisaradhera alias Luang Ta Chan refuses to comply to court summonses under the excuse of serious health problems.³³

EUROPE

UNITED-KINGDOM

August 19, 2016

Norwich, Norfolk County, England, United-Kingdom

The tiger tail and pieces of the 4 paws had been found by border police at the London-Heathrow airport in a package addressed to Shanghai and sent by MZ Trading Ltd, Norwich, specialized in clothes and home care articles. The director Ruolan Mi was sentenced to £ 2185 (€ 2536) in fine. She is also strongly suspected of having delivered the tiger skin to China.³⁴



September 29, 2016

London, England, United Kingdom

She was selling 2 tiger skins on eBay under the name of Mr. Muffins Tiny Shop. She claimed they dated from before 1947. Carbon 14 dating showed that the remains were recent. According to experts, a skin comes from one of the last specimens of the Bali tigers (see "The ex- Bali and Java Tigers" in "On the Trail" n°9, p. 54). The starting price for the auction was 5000 pounds (€ 5800). Dovile Vaitkeviciute, 31, was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years, 685 pounds fine (€ 800) and 180 hours of community service. She must also repay the scientific analysis costs, 520 pounds (€ 600).³⁵



LIONS

AFRICA

AFRICA DU SUD

End of August 2016

Marble Hall, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Poaching of 2 lions, 2 of their paws were taken. Ritual crime, say experts in local traditions.³⁶

September 24, 2016

Groblersdal, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Seven lions poisoned. Vets managed to save 3.³⁷



September 28, 2016

Waterberg District, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Two lions poisoned at dawn. One of the heads was cut off and taken by the poachers.³⁸



MOZAMBIQUE

August 3, 2016

National Reserve of Niassa, Mozambique

Caught in a trap, she received several spear thrusts before escaping in a desperate burst. She died after being taken in and cared for by rangers. She was 10 years old. Her body was burned to avoid butchering and marketing of her head, mane and bones. "Lions are in crisis: they are less of them than rhinoceros" worries once again the reserve staff.³⁹



August 29, 2016

Ecosystem Gorongosa, in Sofala Province, Mozambique Centre

Difficult rescue of a lion with a front paw caught in a trap and a bad injury on the back from a bite that veterinarians attribute to another lion. There are also elephants, zebras and buffaloes in the 4000 km² Park that has been suffering since 1976 from a civil war between government forces and Renamo (Mozambique National Resistance). The Park is also regularly stricken by drought. Animals gather near the ultimate water points, which makes trapping easier for poachers.⁴⁰



NAMIBIA

9 August 2016

Kunene Region, Namibia

In northern Namibia, the small population of lions adapted to life and food quest in the desert is the only one in the world to survive outside parks and reserves. Alas, 3 of them have just been poisoned by semi-nomadic herders fearing for their livestock.

Minister Shifeta claims there are other ways to dissuade lions from approaching livestock. He cites ultrasounds, flares. The Integrated Rural Development for Nature Conservation (IRDNC) works with village communities to solve these conflicts. As a last resort, "problem" lions could be transferred to Skeleton Coast Park. There are between 600 and 800 lions in Namibia.⁴¹



LIONS - FOLLOWED

Overview of the facts:

Early August. Lion / man conflict around the village of Tomakas and the Gomatum River becomes unmanageable. A farmer riding a donkey took refuge in the mountain 3 km from the village when 4 adult male lions and brothers known in the area under the nickname “Musketees” attacked the equine. Only the saddle will be found intact. The band of 4 had killed 2 goats a little before. To be complete, it must be said that the semi-nomadic herdsmen penetrate further and further inside the hunting ground of the lions.

August 9. The GPS collars of XPL90, XPL91 and XPL92 no longer transmit. They are victims of retaliation. They ate a poisoned cattle. They are dead.

August 11. With the approval of the Ministry of Environment, the NGO Desert Lion Project decides to exfilter XPL93, the only survivor of the siblings. After having plunged him into artificial sleep, the Desert Lion team takes him 300 km south of Tomakas to the delta of the Uniab.

August 19. After 8 days of exploration and appropriation of his new territory, XPL93 comes face to face with XPL74, a dominant male. XPL93 leaves the scene and heads north. In 20 days, he travels 200 km hunting here and there a zebra or an antelope.

End of August. In Okongwe, less than 50 km from Tomakas where his return would be very badly seen by the herdsmen, XPL93 approaches 4 lionesses and mates with XPL104.



The Desert Lion Project team is relatively optimistic. Instead of getting closer to Tomakas and trying in vain to reconnect with his 3 brothers of which carcasses have been burned, it is possible that he remains as a dominant male in Okongwe.⁴²



ZAMBIA

End of August, 2016

Tateyoyo, Kafue National Park, Southern Province, Zambia

Seizure of lion fat, a civet skin (Viverridae family), warthog meat (*Phacochoerus africanus*) and 2 rifles. Two arrests.⁴³

ZIMBABWE

21 July 2016

District of Tsholotsho, North Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe

His mother is not identified. To release him immediately would offer on a plate the 2 years old cub to adult lions or other wild beasts. Wounded in the shoulder, he was saved from a trap by wildlife guards and veterinarians.⁴⁴



September 26, 2016

Zimbabwe

While the listing of African lion in CITES Appendix I is considered, the direction of the Buby Valley Conservancy says that lions have recently killed two small black rhinos. The reserve covers 3400 km². There were 24 lions 18 years ago, about 500 today. Some experts say that lions overpopulation is organised to facilitate hunting and export of trophies. The direction of the BVC seeks to transfer the redundant lions in countries such as Rwanda, Malawi, Zambia.⁴⁵

Proposal to transfer lions from CITES' Appendix II to Appendix I has been withdrawn. An annotation on existing Appendix II sets a zero quota (no trade allowed) for bones, claws and teeth from lions caught in the wild. This annotation does not apply to lions raised in captivity in South Africa.

INDIA

ASIA

Beginning of August 2016

Gujarat State, India

Ravindra Jadeja, the famous cricket player, is sentenced to a fine of Rs 20,000 (\$ 298 US) for improper selfie in front of lions (see “On the Trail” n°13, p.63).⁴⁶



LIONS - FOLLOWED

IRAN

August 7 and 11, 2016

Province of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran

Seizure of 2 lion cubs. Two arrests. The first was found in a car by police during a roadside check. The driver was arrested. The second was seized in a house searched on rogatory warrant of the prosecutor.

The Asiatic lion has disappeared from Iran since 1942.⁴⁷



LEOPARD CATS, PUMAS AND SNOW LEOPARDS

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

July 12, 2016

Lopez, Santa Fe Province, Argentina

Seizure of a young puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I) brought up as a pet. He has been quarantined in the Park "La Esmeralda".⁴⁸



ASIA

CHINA

August 19, 2016

Qilian County, Qinghai Province, China

Appearance of 5 idiots who captured 3 babies snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*, Appendix I) in the neighboring Gansu province. Five months later, they sold the lot to a zoo for \$ 4500 US. During the trip, the 3 young cats died by suffocation.⁴⁹

THAILAND-VIET NAM

Beginning in July 2016

1 - Bac Giang Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a private home of a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II). He has been temporarily entrusted to the refuge of Save Viet Nam's Wildlife. We hope he can find full freedom again.⁵⁰



2- Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

He was becoming aggressive with age. His mistress could no longer manipulate and tease him. He was kept in a cage in the garden. During 3 years, he passed from hand to hand. He was finally handed over to the WFFT.⁵¹



VARIOUS SPECIES FELINES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid July 2016

Welkom, Free State Province, South Africa

After denunciation, 4 lion cubs 2 weeks old and 4 young cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I) one of which was sick were seized. The master of the place and a woman carer have been charged with violating the biodiversity law and the Nature Conservation Act.⁵²

ASIA

INDONESIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 2, 2016

Jambi, Jambi Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 2 tiger skins, a stuffed clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebula*, Appendix I) and a stuffed pangolin, a spotted deer trophy (*Axis axis*) and 5 sambar deers trophies (*Cervus unicolor*) at the home of a couple of traffickers.⁵³



Bears

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

July 4, 2016

Mendoza, Province of Mendoza, Argentina

The saddest bear in the world has finally found peace. At 31, "Arturo" died in his pen in the zoo of Mendoza. He was the last polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) in captivity in Argentina. The bear had never seen the ice field. He was born in captivity near New York. Animal rights activists were campaigning for him to finish his life in a zoo in northern Canada. The zoo of Mendoza has a bad reputation. Captives mortality rate raises concerns and even outrage.¹



COLOMBIA

September 12 2016

La Cruz, Department of Nariño, Colombia

A package arrives at the administrative headquarters of the national parks. Inside, a spectacled bear paw (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I) and a message: "We will kill all of them, believe me. Already 2 less in 5 days." This would be a warning from farmers hostile to the incursion of bears into their lands. Two marches were organized in La Cruz and Pasto, 100 km away to protest against this barbarity and to support the spectacled bear, one of the symbols of the nation.²



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 19, 2016

Asheville, State of North Carolina, United States of America

Appearance for trafficking throughout the year 2014 of 18 gall bladders, 16 claws, 2 paws and approximately 22.7 kg of meat of American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). The organs and limbs come from bears of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Vu Johnnie Nguyen pleads guilty.³



ASIA

CAMBODIA

July 18, 2016

Svay Chek District, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 4 paws and one gall bladder of Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). One arrest. The women would be accustomed to cross-border traffic between Thailand and Cambodia. The organs were stored in ice inside the car. They were destined to restaurants in Phnom Penh.⁴

CHINA

1 July 2016

Xunyang county, Shaanxi Province, China

Seizure of 2 Asian black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) with a value of one million yuan or \$ 15,000 US. One arrest.⁵



Beginning of August 2016
Mengla County, Yunnan Province, China

Sentence to 2 years in prison suspended and 40,000 yuan (\$ 6,000 US) fine for the illegal transport of 8 paws, 2 gall bladders, 6 teeth and meat of Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Annex I) and porcupine entrails (see "On the Trail" n°13, p.66).⁶



Beginning of August 2016
Chaoyang District, Beijing Municipality, China

Three years suspended sentence and 30,000 yuan (\$ 4,500 US) fine for illegal transportation from Moscow of 39 brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) gall bladders (2.79 kg). The vesicles were in boxes of chocolate. The hoax was uncovered at Beijing airport. The attention of controllers was attracted by strange shapes on the screens. The fake hunting certificate issued by a Siberian accomplice did not convince justice.⁷



September 21, 2016
Xian of Baihe, Shaanxi Province, China

Arrest of a bear paws seller (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II).⁸

INDIA

August 4, 2016
Ramanagara, Karnataka, India

Poaching of a sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I). The tactic is particularly cruel. Bears are baited by a big feast. They feed on. An artisanal bomb is hidden inside. Usually it kills the bear. In this case he is disfigured and injured in the mouth with jaw fractures. The prognosis is very bad. Claws, teeth, fur are considered aphrodisiacs.⁹



September 26, 2016
Coimbatore, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Two ex-anti poaching watchers removed from their position in 2009 for their involvement in deer poaching were stopped by a lawful patrol. As they escaped, the 2 men followed by 2 accomplices abandoned a bag containing a deer skin and a sloth bear skin (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) and another bag with 2 weapons and rope. The 4 men were identified by local rangers.¹⁰

IRAN

Mid August 2016
Khatirkuh, Shahmirzad District, Semnan Province, Iran

Poaching of 2 young brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) at 216 km from Tehran. The mother disappeared.¹¹



September 20, 2016
Province of Alborz, Iran

Poaching of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). The skin, the legs, the meat were in the car. Two arrests.¹²

LAOS

August 17, 2016
Houaphan Province, Laos

Seizure at the market of an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) who was taken in by Laos Wildlife Rescue Center. Founded 15 months ago, the NGO is on its fifth bear rescue.¹³



MALAYSIA

August 8, 2016
Tanjung Aru, Sabah State, Malaysia

Seizure of 8 teeth, 8 paws and 2 gall bladders of sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), a pick-up and several mobile phones. Two arrests.¹⁴



August 20, 2016
State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure of a gall bladder and 4 legs of sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I). Two arrests. The responsible for wildlife in the State is pessimistic. It seems that there is no safe place for wildlife anymore. "New roads crossing protected forest reserves and wildlife sanctuaries have severely increased illegal hunting activities throughout the State of Sabah."¹⁵

VIET NAM

July 26, 2016

Province of Thanh Hoa Viet Nam

Seizure in a bus of 18 sun bear paws (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I). The driver and the vehicle owner admitted they had been paid to transport the bear remains from Laos. Pending completion of the investigation, the bus was also seized.¹⁶

August 2, 2016

Lam Dong province, Viet Nam

He lived there for 7 years. Without sun, with nothing to climb on or nest. Before he was exploited by a bear-tamer and may be as a bile producer. The directors of the archaic zoo voluntarily surrendered him to Animals Asia. He was taken into the NGO shelter 1500 km away. For him



this will be paradise.¹⁷

August 8 and 18, 2016

District of Xuan Truong, Province of Nam Dinh, Viet Nam

A sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) of 50 kg detained illegally for at least 6 years was reported. He was seized and taken to the refuge of Tam Dao at 186 km.¹⁸

September 22, 2016



Phuc Tho district, Hanoi, Viet Nam

The female Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) about 20 years old had spent her entire life in a cage. She was released by ENV. She will spend the rest of his

life at the Soc Son shelter.¹⁹

September 29, 2016

District of Long Xuyên, Province of An Giang, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of the last 2 captive Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) in the province. They would not have suffered bile extraction. They appear to be in good health. The male and the female together weigh more than 300 kg. They were taken to the bear refuge of Hon Me. There are 1,200 captive bears left in the country.²⁰



EUROPE

RUSSIA

14 September 2016

Poltavka Customs, Federal District of Far East, Russia

Seizure of 2 bear paws (*Ursidae* spp., Annex I or II) weighing a total of 1.6 kg under a seat of the bus traveling to China. The owner has not been identified.²²



Polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II)

July to September 2016

Russian experts are worried. Throughout the Arctic there are echoes of poaching (see "On the Trail" n°12, p. 65, n°13, p. 66).

Iceland

- Mid-July. Saudarkrokur, municipality of Skagafjörður

Egill Bjarnason did not hesitate a second when he saw a polar bear land on the island. He killed him at once with a gun. For the present time, this has already happened in 2010 and 2008. For the ancient times, the Institute of Natural History of Reykjavik counted several dozen landings of polar bears on the island. The polar bear did not succeed in colonizing Iceland while entering the folklore of the country and in the museums after stuffing.

Polar bears drift on floating ice from Greenland and swim unto the island. Jon Gunnar Ottosson, director at the Institute, rejected the option of anaesthetising the bear and sending him back to Greenland. "Too expensive" "Too complicated." National policy is shoot bear at sight. He is considered a public emergency especially since after a long voyage at sea, he is hungry.

Russia



- 15 August. Narian-Mar, Autonomous District of Nenetsia

In Nenetsia, the 2 culprits of the poaching of an adult polar bear were sentenced to 240 hours of community service. This is the most severe sentence ever pronounced for polar bear poaching although the penal code provides for up to 3 years in prison. Victor Nikiforov, Director of the Program on Conflicts between Men and Polar Bears, looks forward to the promulgation by the Russian Minister of Natural Resources of the ban on the import of pelts. "It has not been formalized yet, so illegal sellers may pretend that they have imported these pelts from Canada."

- 27 August. Ryrkaypiy, Autonomous District of Chukotka

At the eastern end of Siberia, among the Chukchi, an abandoned bear cub about 8 months old is being rescued. Volunteers feed him fish. Breastfeeding of cubs lasts 3 months. He has to be transferred into a zoo specialized in polar bear housing. His mother was allegedly the victim of poaching. This is the hypothesis in which everyone believes.

- End of August. Yakutia or Republic of Sakha

In Yakutia, a one-year-old bear cub was spotted alone and wandering by caribou hunters.

- September. Conflict on the Island of Troynoy in the sea of Kara

The 9 polar bears sole residents of the island are disturbed by the sudden arrival of a team of meteorologists. They prowl around the camp and eat a sled dog. Nikiforov recalled that to avoid this kind of inconvenience scientists or workers in the Arctic must always have with them acoustic or luminous deterrents, not to mention pepper sprays, and never pile their food waste outdoors. It has long been known that polar bears are opportunists who do not dislike landfills.

Patience. The bears of Troynoy will leave the island in November after the formation of the ice field.²¹

Hippopotamuses

Hippopotamuses (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), are listed under CITES Appendix II.



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AFRICA

UGANDA



© Ofir Drori

REPEATED OFFENSE End of July 2016 Uganda

Three traffickers. 57 hippopotamus teeth. One of the 3 criminals had apparently been arrested in the past for the same reason. It is said that he was released after paying an "exit pass" of several hundreds of US dollars.¹



© EAGLE Uganda

Mid September, 2016 West of Uganda

13 kilos of hippopotamus teeth. One arrest. The man was making his way between Uganda and Tanzania.²

TOGO

September 23, 2016 Lome, Maritime Region, Togo

Seizure of 12 teeth, 4 skulls and 15 bones of hippopotamus. Two arrests. Mono river, a border between Togo and Benin, still hosts a few dozens of hippopotamus. In the Koumbeloti dam's reservoir, some individuals are observed.³

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*.

"On the Trail" n°14

The value of horn on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Réf.
Africa	South Africa	5,215	27
Asia	Cambodia	About 100,000 on the Chinese market according to NGO	53

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

August 29, 2016 Chyulu Hills National Park, Makueni County, Kenya

Crossfire with men from the Kenya Wildlife Service took place at night. The victim's is unknown. His body has not been identified. He's now resting at the morgue in the Makueni hospital until his family possibly comes to identify him. Another poacher is on the run. He is thought to be wounded.¹



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MOZAMBIQUE

July 13, 2016

Tete, Tete Province, Mozambique

In the province, 208 poachers have been arrested between 2014 and the first quarter of 2016. Poison, ammunition and hundreds of handcrafted guns were seized. The favorite target is elephant. As for rhino horns seized in the country, they surely come from South Africa. Rhinos are considered extinct in Mozambique.²

ZIMBABWE

July 19, 2016

Masvingo, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Chisango, 57, a Zambian citizen was sentenced to 10 years in prison. It is a comrade of Mashona already sentenced to 35 years in prison (see "On the Trail" n°11 p 57). The trial of Mugwira, Secret Service agent, has not yet taken place. All 3 plus a certain "Anywhere Mahzongwe" are involved in poaching of 2 or 4 rhinos depending on sources. Found with assault rifles, a Mauser rifle with a silencing device and telescope, the accused and especially Chisango claim they were only chasing zebras. Noting that the arsenal seized at the scene was ultra-powerful, that the band was tracking pachyderm prints and that dead and chopped rhinos were found in their hunting area, the Court did not believe them.³



July 26, 2016

Save Valley Conservancy, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Woe to the passing or grazing rhino! The 4 men aged 32 to 45 were roaming in the protected area armed with guns, silencers and cutlasses. They wore shoes without marks on the sole or socks over the shoes. We are dealing with discretion pros.⁴

End of September 2016

Zimbabwe

Operation to dehorn and register rhinos⁵

There would be 700 rhinos in the country. One hundred in national parks, 600 in private ranches. The government claims that preventive dehorning experiments carried out from 1992 to deter poachers had promising outcomes. Rhinos who endured this procedure had 30% higher chance of survival than those who were intact. Young rhinos' horns grow 6 cm per year. Up to age 5, they must be trimmed every 2 years. The government gave mandate to Aware Trust to spread this procedure to half of the National Parks in the country. Removing one horn costs about \$ 1200 US. This campaign is financed by an Australian NGO (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 74).



Each dehorning is both a military and surgical operation. An airborne team flies over the Park, locates a group and informs a helicopter team with a vet ready to act with his hypodermic gun. The targeted victim is then aimed at with the syringe. The rhino first starts to run then collapses. Once lethargy sets in, the rhino's ears are plugged and his eyes covered with a cloth to protect them from the sun and dust. During anesthesia, blood tests are done on every individual and pregnancy tests for all mature females. Oxygen is pumped into the nose to increase chances the animal will wake up at the end. After the horns are sawed off with the chain saw, vets inject an antidote to the sedative. Normally the rhino wakes up one to two minutes later. It takes about ten assistants to help him get up. In the mean time the young are roughly paint with a number like a license plate or registration card big enough to be read from an airplane. All the horns and clippings are gathered, wrapped up, managed and supervised by Zimbabwe Parks with the support of Traffic, one of the branches of the WWF multinational complex. A gram of ground up horn is sold in Beijing between 60 and 100 dollars.

Horns don't just happen by luck to grow on rhinos noses. They divide the skyline. They help organize social hierarchy among males and enable all to defend themselves against felines or intimidate them. Can we still talk of wild animals when they are mutilated, diminished, handled, medicated every 2 years and smeared in toxic paint?



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

KRUGER and around

July 11, 2016

Kabokweni, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Arrest of 2 men including a Mozambican citizen suspected of poaching, seizure of 7 guns, 3 pistols, ammunition, silencers, knives and other equipment.⁶



12-25 July 2016

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- Feeling pressure from poaching increase in the area, the team from the orphanage dedicated to the rescue of young and very young rhino found haggard and hungry after the poaching of their mothers, decided to proceed to horns shortening for safety purpose. The procedure requires the injection of sleeping drugs. "It has become an unfortunate necessity in the fight against poaching."

- A baby rhino to whom the nickname Zac was given arrived at the center by helicopter. He was found next to the corpse of his mother south of Kruger Park. Healthy, no open wounds. Demands a bottle day and night.

- Konica Minolta financially assists Care For Wild Rhino. Sanctuary Veterans for Wildlife, a British NGO, has deployed one of its experts to reinforce the culture of the local rangers in the fields of surveillance, poachers tracking and conservation of evidence.⁷



July 13, 2016

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



The former soldier and the herbalist named in "On the Trail" n°12, p. 69 and "On the Trail" n°10, p. 48 have failed to convince the Court of their good faith. The fable of the night search of medicinal herbs and 2 lost cows in the Park did not charm the judges. Mashego, 56 and Sithole, 53, were sentenced to 26 years in prison each. "It was a premeditated operation with weapons and ammunition" stressed Isabet Erwee, prosecutor. Mashego on the scene of the crime was in military uniform. The horns were transported in army bags.⁸

July 22, 2016

Kruger National Park, South Africa

MILKOR (South African manufacturer of grenades launchers) donates to the park rangers a non-lethal grenade launcher model, deafening, with tear gas and rubber chips, to use according to the direction of SANParks to force out and catch poachers hiding in the bushes.

The UBGL (40 mm Under Barrel Grenade Launcher) can also be equipped with lethal grenades, which is not the choice of SANParks. The UBGL can also launch smoke grenades, which facilitates locating a "hot spot" by helicopter. The UBGL attach to assault rifles used by rangers. The number of UBGL given by MILKOR was not disclosed.⁹

KRUGER and around - followed

July 22, 2016

Kruger National Park, South Africa



Mortal poaching of a mother and her baby.¹⁰

July 27, 2016

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Bad luck! A ranger celebrated for his competence and merits is caught in poaching action along with a veterinary under the Animal Health Park management authority.

Rodney Landela has been a ranger for 15 years. He is a member of the executive committee of the association of rangers. His wife operates a residential camp in the Park. The 2 men were chased by a patrol after the echoes of 3 detonations near Satara camp in the center of the Kruger Park. They were wearing green and khaki uniforms.

In their escape attempt, they threw the 2 horns and a gun of large caliber overboard which were found by rangers. In their car were found shoes covered with blood. The executive director of SANParks expressed his sorrow and satisfaction that field rangers had the courage to arrest their superiors.¹¹



Rodney Landela

July 28 and October 19, 2016
Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa



Escape of a man convicted for attempted poaching in Kruger Park. He had just been admitted to a penitentiary hospital. He had 22 years to serve. He escaped 4 months after sentencing.¹²



End July 2016

Skukuza, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Three men sentenced to 12, 15 and 21 years in prison for trespassing in the Kruger Park and premeditation of poaching.¹³

Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Court hearing for conspiracy to commit rhino poaching.

August 13, 2016. Hoedspruit. They were 3. Seizure of a .416 rifle, ammunition, an ax and knives.

August 15, 2016. Klaserie. They were 2. Seizure of a hunting gun and ammunition.¹⁴

August 17, 2016

Louis Trichardt, Province of Limpopo, South Africa



A very expensive nap. The 2 suspects defend themselves with whatever they can. They say they were there to "try out" a new weapon on small animals. Kubai is a repeated offender in matters of poaching. In 2008 he was involved in 11 court cases. He got away by pretending to repent, by turning himself in on his own to justice and by accepting to be used as bait to lure a Chinese buyer and catch him red handed. "Therefore, he was granted an opportunity to change his destructive behavior, yet, he himself chose once again the wrong route six years later by becoming an illegal hunter himself" regrets the public attorney. The judge shared his opinion that a simple fine would not be a sufficient deterrent and both of them, Kubai and Chauke, who were resting under a tree when they were found and arrested, were sentenced to a 11-year prison time.¹⁵

August 16, 2016

Kruger National Park, South Africa

He was suspected of having, with 4 other scoundrels, killed and dehorned Sabi, a baby rhino right inside a Care For Wild Africa orphanage in August 2014 (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 63). Russel Mokoena was since then freed on bail. On August 16, 2016 he was killed in crossfire during a new attempted poaching



KRUGER and around - followed

this time inside Kruger Park. His ex-accomplices had just been presented before the Nelspruit Court. Investigations showed that the little rhino didn't even try to escape the night he was circled and killed, it is because 2 of Russel Mokoena's accomplices worked for Care For Wild Africa at the time of the trap. "It was like shooting a dog that had been eating from your hand." Sabi's little horns were sold to a Chinese expat for 3400 rand i.e. \$ 2465 US.¹⁶

August 23, 2016 Hoedspruit, Province of Limpopo and Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

One arrest followed by 3 others. Seizure of a gun with a silencer and ammunition. Two releases under bail for 5000 rand (\$ 362 US).¹⁷



Large caliber guns to break through the rhinos armour.

Beginning of September 2016 Phalaborwa, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Four convictions to 5 years prison or 5000 rand fine (\$ 362 US) for preparing rhino poaching as an organized group and possession of firearms and ammunition without a license.¹⁸



September 20, 2016 Gravelotte, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Five arrests including a Mozambican. Seizure of a .375 caliber rifle with a silencer and ammunition, a .357 revolver and its ammunition, an ax, 9 cell phones and a car licensed in the Province of Gauteng. They will be heard by a judge for attempted rhino poaching committed as part of an organized gang.¹⁹

September 27, 2016 Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

The herbalist claims he entered Kruger Park to stock up on plants. Before the Court, his mother and a traditional healer confirm his testimony. According to the accusation, his gathering was of a different sort, that of horns (see "On the Trail" n°13 p. 71).²⁰

Rhinos South Africa, except Kruger and around

July 11, 2016 and September Durban, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Anything goes when it comes to pulling strings to postpone a Court hearing, tangle up justice and render procedures fragile. Miss Linda, the new lawyer for the kingpin "Gwala" (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 71) arrived 30 minutes late which prevented her from hearing and possibly questioning the reading of the facts. On September 5th, the same Miss Mpumelelo Linda claimed she had lost her cell phone and therefore having been unable to meet or communicate with her new client until 2 days before trial. The case was rescheduled once again. It is now set for October 21. In the meantime the Public Treasury has permanently seized 110.000 rand (\$ 7348 US) in cash and 2 luxury cars found in Dumisani "Gwala's" houses and garages.²¹

July 17, 2016 Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

The shots tore up the night. It was 2:30 am. The rangers and a tracking dog were able to locate the 4 poachers. Two were arrested, 2 horns and an ax are used as evidence.²²

OPERATION RHINO Province of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

-July 20, 2016. Arrest of 2 Mozambicans and 3 South Africans for trespassing, and unlawful possession of weapons and ammunition.



- Week of July 25, 2016. Dukuduku.

Preventive arrest of 3 suspects without any horn but with a large gun and silencer, cartridges, an ax and 7 cell phones. They were in the first stages.²³

July 20, 2016 Pilanesberg National Park, North Western Province, South Africa

Health care given to 2 seriously wounded. The head of the largest was x-rayed to locate the bullets. The wounds have been treated. The smallest is in a bad state, the prognosis is reserved.²⁴



**Weekend of July 23, 2016
Pilanesberg National Park, North Western Province, South Africa**

Poaching of mother leaves a one year old orphan. For safety reasons, he was transferred to another location. The corpse of the mother was hornless, ears and tail had been eaten by hyenas.²⁵



Search for bullets with a metal detector to find out ballistic evidence.

**July 27, 2016
Pretoria, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

Hugo Ras' trial (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 67, n°7 p. 71, n°10 p. 47, n°13 p.77) and 9 of his co-accused is rescheduled to 15 February 2017. Hugo Ras will remain in jail. His most recent request for bail has been rejected. The Court deemed that his pretrial detention didn't prevent him from having regular contact with his defense team. He was caught red handed in his cell using several cell phones. His wife, who is out on bail, runs a business for promoting hunting safaris. The 9 indicted in what is the most important open case in South Africa in matters of trafficking in adulterated rhino hunting permits and horns are faced with 318 charges including extortion of funds and money laundering.²⁶

**July 29, 2016
Wynberg, Cape Town, Province of the Western Cape, South Africa**



The man was arrested in the neighborhood of Lotus River (cf. "On the Trail" n°12, p.69). Six months later he was sentenced to 4 years suspended or a 200,000 rand (\$ 13,913 US) fine. The 2 kg horn is estimated on the local market to 150,000 R or \$ 10,430 US.²⁷

**Beginning of August, 2016
Polokwane, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Six men were appearing before the Court. They had poached and chopped 3. They remain in jail pending the trial (see "On the trail" n°13, p. 72).²⁸

**August 10, 2016
Equestria, Pretoria, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

Three steps seizure of 113 horns on and at the home of Pieter Van Zyl, 63 years old, rhino breeder and hunting organizer. With his 2 accomplices, Marco Swanepoel, 35 years old, and Stephan Mylie, 30 years old, he convinced the judges to let him out on bail for 10,000 rand, that is \$ 725 US.²⁹

**August 10, 2016
Hluhluwe, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Following the footprints of a hyena, a ranger discovered a poached white rhino who had been dehorned in the Thanda Mduna Reserve. The body was covered in wounds. The head of the Reserve had noticed one of his protégés was missing for some days.³⁰

**August 12, 2016
Bela-Bela, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**



Sentencing of a Mozambican man to 12 years in jail for poaching and dehorning a rhino in March 2015.³¹

**August 13, 2016
Dwaalboom, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Court hearing for conspiracy to commit rhino poaching. They were 3. Seizure of a .416 rifle, ammunition and an ax.



OPERATION RHINO

**Mid August 2016
Mtubatuba, Province of Kwazulu-Natal, Phalaborwa, Province of Limpopo and Skukuza, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**

Arrests, Court hearings and requests for bail. Eight suspects aged 19 to 40 had all the traits known to rhino trackers. They had 7 firearms, a proportionate amount of ammunition, long knives and axes. Some were riding in a stolen car and were hiding horns in their belongings.³²

August 18, 2016
Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve,
Province of KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa

The full moon means bad news for rhinos. The moon is a poacher's accomplice. They use the darkness to sneak into reserves and the moonlight to find the rhinos. Four dead black rhinos in a 300 m radius, a 5th one a bit further.³³



Under the full moon, the rhino skin shines

August 18, 2016
Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport,
Johannesburg, Province of Gauteng, South
Africa

Seizure of 10 horns, 84 decoration objects and 41 bracelets made of horn. Arrest of a 48-year-old Chinese citizen coming from Maputo, Mozambique, on his way to Hong Kong.³⁴

September 3, 2016
Rooiberg, Province of
Limpopo, South Africa

Discovery of 2 white rhinos:

- One is dead and dehorned.
 - The other dying and not dehorned was put down.
- A man hunt is on to get hands on the 5 suspects.³⁵



September 6, 2016
Pietermaritzburg, Province of
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Mitigation. The High Court lowered to 12 the 20-year prison sentence pronounced against Sbu Ntuli in a first instance judgment. He had killed on Christmas night 2 rhinos in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park.³⁶



6 septembre 2016
Krugerdsorp Correctional Center Hospital,
Province of Gauteng, South Africa

Death at the Krugerdsorp prison hospital of Zhiqing Miao. His trial hearing was scheduled for November 25, 2016.³⁷

September 9, 2016
Bela-bela, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Self defense. The 2 rhinos hit by non-lethal shots charged the attackers. With the impact a firearm came apart. The threesome in the end was arrested.

38

Mid September 2016
Balule Private Reserve,
Province of Limpopo, South
Africa

Poaching under a full moon of 2 female rhinos one of whom was pregnant.

The Black Mambas (see "On the Trail" n°10 p.56, n°12 p.84) are in mourning. They had never before lost a rhino since they have been in charge of supervising the Balule Game Reserve at the edge of Kruger Park.



The anti poaching unit Black Mambas has been on the job since 2013. It is composed of 36 women rangers. Their weapons are their courage, patrols on foot, education and gathering information. "It feels really bad, it is as if it was our fault." Collet Ngobeni, 32, who has been part of the team since the beginning expresses her upset and adds "Three rhinos is a lot". The Black Mambas were prized in 2015 by UNEP (United Nations Environment Program). Life isn't always easy for them. They are paid 3000 to 3500 rand per month (220 to 225 US\$). They work 21 days followed by 10 days off to go see their parents and sometimes their children. Their camp base is made up of huts where they live by groups of 3 or 4. The Black Mambas have much prestige but little financial resources to ameliorate their living conditions and effectiveness of their work.³⁹



September 27, 2016, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Benlida Mzimba and Mathebula Qualile, Black Mambas members, came to present their work to the CITES delegates. Here with Charlotte Nithart, Robin Hood.

Help for the
Black Mambas !

Like Lisa Boonzaier, leader of a citizens collective in Kamieskroon, a small town in Namaqua-

land, Province of Northern Cape, collect funds for the Black Mambas.

<http://www.blackmambas.org/donations.html>

September 21, 2016
Vanderbijlpark, Province of Gauteng, South Africa



The trial of the 3 white men assisted by white lawyers accused of trafficking 18 horns and released on bail has been rescheduled to end of October. ⁴⁰

September 22, 2016
Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

The Rhino Day brings misfortune. KwaZulu-Natal rangers are mourning. On September 22, the day of global celebration of rhinos, they found 6 dehorned carcasses in 3 different locations. KwaZulu-Natal suffers a big poaching fever - 20 since the beginning of the month - 113 since the beginning of the year. Bandits would seek easier targets since the anti-poaching measures have been strengthened in the Kruger Park. After several delays, the trial of the suspected horn big shot Dumisani Gwala (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 71) is scheduled for October 21 in Empangeni. ⁴¹



September 23, 2016
International Airport Oliver Reginald Tambo, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

This Chinese citizen was carrying 9.4 kg of rhino horns in his luggage. He says he bought them in Swaziland. The discovery took place a few hours before the opening of the 17th Conference of Parties of CITES. ⁴²

September 23, 2016
Private Farm, North Western Province, South Africa

Poaching of 5 rhinos. The survivor, 8 years old, critically injured, was transported by helicopter to a specialized facility in Gauteng. The vets are pessimistic. ⁴³

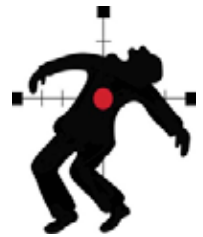
September 26, 2016
Evander, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

A horn wrapped in plastic was found by accident. Visual and genetic analysis are underway to confirm or infirm rhino origin. ⁴⁴

September 28, 2016
Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Right there where 6 rhinos had been killed and dehorned on 22 September, a fight between rangers and presumed poachers left 3 dead on the latter's side.

As a reminder, from the 1st of April 2013 to the 30th of June 2016, "On the Trail" counted 263 deaths among wildlife guards and poachers on the African continent and India. ⁴⁵



September 29, 2016
Rustenburg, North Western Province, South Africa

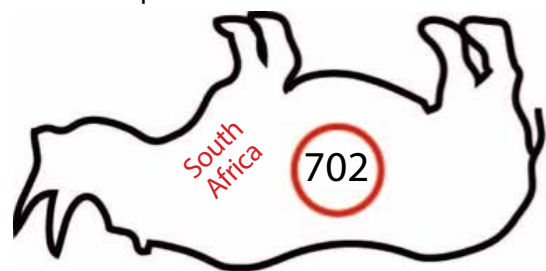
Appearance of a suspected poacher. A gun, a silencer and ammunition used to kill rhinos and elephants, an ax, a butcher foil were discovered in his car. He was heading toward Bloemhof. The man is known in Gauteng province for other misdeeds. His bail application will be considered within a week. ⁴⁶

South African Report

September 11, 2016:

Since the beginning of the year, 702 rhinoceroses have been poached, 458 of them in Kruger Park.

Compared to 2015, poaching has risen in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, and the Northern Cape.



414 alleged poachers have been interrogated. 177 were in Kruger Park, and 237 were in the rest of the country. ⁴⁷

NAMIBIA

The Mystery around Bail

A demonstration gathering ordinary citizens and reserve managers was held end of August 2016 in front of the Omaruru Court. The one slogan was enough with bail for rhino killers and horn smugglers. M. Shifeta, the Minister for elephants and rhinos could have been part of the rally. He too is sick of it. He repeats declarations and discussions with the general attorney on this issue. He wishes that at least when suspects are

set free that they be on house arrest and must confirm their presence 3 times at day at the local police station.



Pohamba Shifeta in front of a rhino carcass in the Etosha National Park

July 15, 2016

Otavi, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Seizure of 3 fresh-cut horns in the north. Three arrested during a roadside check at 21h. Five men were aboard a double cabin Toyota pick-up. Two managed to flee into the bush. A third one threw a bag in the ditch. It contained the 3 horns, 2 large ones and one small one. Inside the vehicle, a tent, blankets, water, canned food, ammunition, a caliber .303, a loaded pistol. In short the perfect equipment for week-end poachers in conspiracy. The prosecutor refused release on bail on the grounds that 2 accomplices were on the run. Two suspects have accepted State funded lawyers, the third one asks for a private attorney.

The Deputy Minister of the Environment has had enough. Rightfully, he rails against releases on bail granted to rhino horn traffickers. "We do not want excuses of 'you being the breadwinner or that your girlfriend or wife is pregnant.' Did she only get pregnant after you poached? You should have thought about those things before deciding to go poaching."

Last year, the minister himself, Pohamba Shifeta, criticized prosecutors who neglected the achievements of the police and pursuance of investigations and agreed to negotiate with indicted individuals and offer them releases on bail.

Ministerial common sense is not heard. Justice turns a deaf ear. It just released on bail a "Bling King", local name for a guy wearing fancy clothes entertaining beautiful girls and driving a Mercedes. The problem is that in his Mercedes on June 14 this year, the cops found 4 horns which circular bases

suggesting they were taken from black rhinos. Admittedly Namwandi better known as Mox - he thus promotes the brand of his shoes - is not free in his movements. However, he may meet other traffic actors and develop alibi scenarii. He can also discourage witnesses to speak.



Mox would have been "betrayed" by interested informants. If case of big catch, the rewards can reach the equivalent of \$ 4,200 US. The Deputy Minister says that the paid information are a good tactic and lead to more arrests, including those of poachers old style who roam the desert on horseback to track down rhinos.

Traffickers lawyers know that these arrests on denunciation or sting operations are controversial. A deft defense like "this is a personal vendetta," "the horns were put there without my knowledge" can open an exit door to Mox whose real name is Namwandi. The man also has in his wallet shares of 2 mines south of the Kunene desert, where the last black rhinos are concentrated. Their horns reach peak levels on the Chinese market.

Mox's main accomplice lives north of the country. He also had to surrender his passport. As a resident of the northern region, he can go to Angola with a simple certificate of an dizzy or complacent local administrator.⁴⁸

September 1st, 2016

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia

The Cuca Tops Club Bar was the scene of 2 spectacular arrests. The search squad was on the heels of pangolins traffickers, she came across two horns dealers. One is a former police officer now employed by Namibia Wildlife Resort which operates 23 touristic sites, the other is a resident of Rundu. Two horns were found in their car. The region has launched 3 campaigns to facilitate communication on crimes between the public and the police, House to House campaign, Women and Men Network and Turn Back Crime. The aim is to warn and spot law offenders and traffickers. Rundu in Namibia is separated from Angola by the Okavango river.⁴⁹



September 1st, 2016

Erindi Private Reserve, Erongo Region, Namibia

Weak consolation for the Omaruru vigilance committee (see "On the Trail" » n°12 p.72). Those guilty of slaughtering a black rhino with heavy weaponry were arrested on the road to Ojiwarongo and a horn was found in a shack. The Congolese man who lived there is on the run. The mastermind behind the crime is a professional hunter from Zambia, David Chihinga Kalwisi assisted by recruits from Angola and Namibia. The Namibian accomplice is a former policeman, another scoundrel who will be let out on bail. Met by an investigation journalist working for Oxpeckers, the general attorney for the Omusati region, one of the elephant poaching focal points, admits frankly she is overwhelmed. On top of the violence, theft of money and cyanide, family fighting, crimes for gold and diamonds, she is responsible for 29 cases of poaching. She agrees that 22 suspects are out of sight since they paid bail worth 5000 to 10,000 rand in cash (360 à 720 US\$). At the police station next to the general attorney's office, the register of bail deposits lays in a drawer. Everything is written by hand, by many different hands. One wonders if there isn't in Namibia just as in other African countries a solidarity fund fueled who knows by who that comes up with the money to give poachers their freedom.⁵⁰

September 30, 2016

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

The time of the verdict has finally come for the 4 Chinese citizens (see "On the Trail" n°11, p.65).

Three were arrested at Windhoek airport on March 24, 2014 with 14 rhino horns and one leopard skin. The fourth was arrested in May 2015. They were sentenced to 14 years in prison each, with 28 months to 5 years probation.⁵¹



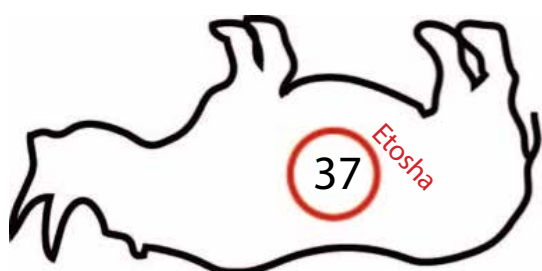
Namibian Report

August 11, 2016: Since the beginning of the year, 37 rhinoceroses have been poached in Etosha Park and its surroundings.

162 rhinoceroses have been poached since January 1, 2015. The number of elephants poached is also on the rise.

Minister Shifeta has not been able to hire a commander-in-chief for the fight against poaching.

"When I looked at those CVs it made me wonder if they would even be able to spend a week camping in the field."



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 8, 2016

San Diego Zoo Safari Park, State of California, United States of America

Incineration of one million dollars in the San Diego zoo. The horns and manufactured objects came from seizures. The rhinos living in the zoo applaud the measure. California has just promoted a ban on trade and sale of ivory and rhino horn.⁵²



ASIA

CAMBODIA

August 14, 2016

Phnom Penh International Airport, Cambodia

This time, it's a Chinese citizen after transiting through Doha who is caught landing at Phnom Penh with more than 4 kg of horns equivalent to \$ 400,000 US in his suitcase. Cambodia Daily underlines that only 10 to 20% of contraband is discovered. Weng came from Namibia. Chinese traders are very active in southern Africa. Namibia-China network is identified and continues despite spectacular failures. On the same flight, a Romanian was caught with 5 kg of cocaine equivalent to \$ 500,000 US.⁵³

INDIA

ASSAM

July 3, 2016

District Biswanath Charali, Assam, India

He attacked cars, knocked people over, destroyed homes and ravaged fields. After a week of vain tries, veterinarians managed to anesthetize him with a product specially shipped from South Africa. Probably the M99 (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 45). On examination, a gunshot wound was found on one leg of the rabid. The problematic rhinoceros would have been the victim of a failed poaching attempt during the floods that submerged the Park.⁵⁴

July 17, 2016

Districts of Karbi Anglong and Morigaon, Assam, India

- We had never heard of him. Yet this is one of the famous poachers in Assam and he has finally been arrested. He worked in the Park Pobitora. With the floods, he was out of the woods in search of stray rhinoceros.

- Three more were arrested near the Kaziranga. They had no horn on them but 2 guns of large caliber, 2 silencers and a large number of ammunition.⁵⁵



July 22, 2016

Golaghat District, Assam, India

Seizure of a horn and a pistol. Two arrests. Local press claims that the city of Dimapur, 385,000 inhabitants, 95 km from Golaghat, is a "safe haven" for horn traffickers.⁵⁶

July 24, 2016

District Biswanath, Assam, India

Four men were trying to sell the horn at high price, leaning on the current exchange rate for a kilo in China and Viet Nam. In the district of Biswanath only, 25 poachers were arrested in the last 2 months. The wanderings of wild animals chased away from nature parks by the floods get poachers out of their dens.⁵⁷

July 27, 2016

Nalbari town, Darrang District, Assam, India

Suite of the poaching in June 2016 (see "On the Trail" n°13, p. 75). Ikmadul Hussain, 30, was arrested at dawn in his village.⁵⁸

Flood

End of July 2016

Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India

The guards, NGOs and people who struggle with their means against the poachers must also fight against the raging elements. This is the season of monsoon rains. The Park is experiencing its worst floods since 1998. From the 178 anti-poaching camps, 108 are under water. Patrols save rhino babies adrift. Despite the speed restrictions, dozens of deer have died in collisions when crossing the road beyond which they could have reached the un-submerged hills of Karbi. 22 rhinos drowned including 8 babies and 4 mothers. Six aged one month to one year were recovered in a critical state, sometime too late. A baby rhino weighs 50 kg at birth. Hog deers (*Axis porcinus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), swamp deers (*Rucervus duvaucelii*, Appendix I), wild water buffalos (*Bubalus arnee*, Appendix III in Nepal), Sambar deer (*Cervus unicolor*), a python (*Pythonidae* spp. Appendix I or II), hog badgers (*Arctonyx collaris*) were washed away.

Worries about the lack of milk for orphaned rhinos have been erased. Nursing lasts one year minimum. Thanks to the mobilization and support of the State government, the milk will not be missing.

Floods are not only calamities. They leave on meadows and forests grounds silts that act as fertilizers.

A total of 2 million inhabitants of Assam have been threatened by the rising waters. The provisional toll of human victims is 31 dead. The mortality of wildlife amounts to 471. During the flood, 107 animals were rescued, 64 returned to the wild immediately and 15 under care. Even an owl was rescued from the water and a python is in recovery.

In the Manas National Park (Assam, India), the flooding also hit "Mainao" a female rhino transferred in 2006 from the remote Kaziranga Park 300 km away; she was found dead. It is not known what became of the horn. The banks of 2 rivers, the Manas and the Beki, going through the Park, have been washed away by the flood along with a bridge and 7 gateways.⁵⁹



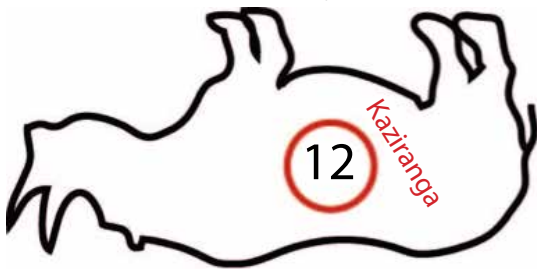
A New Mess in Kaziranga

To try to prevent a rhinoceros from leaving the Park and from going toward the village of Mihimukh, a novice ranger fired a warning shot. The bullet hit a 7-year-old child who was hanging around there.

August 3, 2016

Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India

Mother and baby were found dead inside the Park. Mother's horn was missing. Twelve rhinos have been killed there since the beginning of the year. Two poachers, Makbool and Noor were arrested by the united forces of Assam and Tamil Nadu. The 2 guys involved in the killing of a female rhino and her baby would be from Bangladesh. They claim involvement of the body-guard of former Minister, Nurjamal Sarkar. They would have received 30,000 rupee, i.e. \$ 448 US in exchange for the horns.⁶⁰



August 8, 2016

Assam, India

Some poachers stay in hotels, lodges and recreation centers around the Kaziranga Park. They pose as tourists. Poaching spreads. In Nepal, the situation is less worrisome. Almost no poaching in 2014 and 2015. Ms. Pramila Rani Brahma, the new Minister of Forestry of Assam, wants to understand why the fight against poaching works in Nepal and not in India. Assam means to copy Nepalese methods for monitoring and investigation. "The Government of Assam can not solve this problem alone." A delegation will meet in the near future experts from the Himalayan nation.⁶¹

A Deadly and Criminal Toll

From May to August 11, 2016 State of Assam, India

49 rhinos dead since the beginning of the month of May and the arrival of the new government. 22 died drowned because of flooding, 6 were poached. 21 are considered natural deaths. Out of the 49, only 19 still had their horns when the carcasses were found by forest services in the Kaziranga, Manas, Orang and de Pobitora Parks and surroundings.⁶²

Horns in Stock

August 11, 2016

Assam, India

Examination of the horns stocks has uncovered 2 tricks as "On the Trail" had been noting in Tanzania (see n°6 p. 71, n°11 p. 63). The "treasures" of horns of the State are split in 12 places held more or less secret. The most important are in Nagaon, Tezpur and Guwahati.

Twelve experts and qualified persons are proceeding to the inspection. The composition of the panel is severely criticized by groups of citizens. The fact of having given the direction to a retired Chief Conservator of forests who is believed to have let poaching rage when in functions is not appreciated.

The forum of journalists of Assam has long called for clear information on the number of horns in stock whether from poaching and seizures or collected from naturally dead rhinos or in the waters of the rivers during the flood.

Control of all inventories is made at the request of the new Minister of Forestry (see "On the Trail" n°13 p. 73). According to preliminary information, there are 1195 horns in 39 boxes in Golaghat. The Nagaon stock includes a horn of over 3 kg, 45 cm long with a basic circumference of 60 cm. It comes from a rhino dead "in unknown circumstances" in 1982 in Kaziranga Park. This record for an Indian rhino is only beaten by a horn in the British Museum in London.

The bad surprise comes from Tezpur. Among 56 horns, 5 are false and 5 were severely shortened.⁶³



August 23, 27, 28, 2016

Manas National Park and Guwahati City, State of Assam, India

- **August 23, 2016.** Monul Haq had given the horn to Babul Ali for him to sell it. He was in negotiations with Tafikur Rahman, Zehirul Ali and Muzammil Ali. The horn was seized. The 5 men are being held in custody. The horn very probably comes from the Manas National Park 95 km from Guwahati. The city is a back office for the whole horn mafia of Assam.

- **August 27, 2016.** Faruk Ahmed is stopped at the Raha pay-point in a bus headed for Guwahati. He is an official informant for the anti-poaching forces and as such has worked for years in and around Assam parks. His career has evolved and he has become a poacher and an informer to poachers.



- **August 28, 2016.** A rotting dehorned rhino is discovered by a patrol. The death dates back several weeks. This is the 10th rhino to fall under the twisted blows of poaching since the Manas Park was founded 5 years ago. The rhino population is under permanent enhancement thanks to transfers from Kaziranga and Pobitora. The presence of rangers day and night in the 950 km² of the Park is insufficient. Some areas harder to reach would harbor rebels from the NDFB (National Democratic Front of Bodoland).⁶⁴

September 4, 2016

Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

The 5 poachers were hiding in a village of the buffer zone waiting to enter "little Kaziranga" with an ax, 22 cartridges, a large caliber gun with a silencer and food.⁶⁵

**Evacuation in the
Kaziranga Park Buffer Zone**

September 19, 2016

Bandardubi and Deusur Chang, State of Assam, India

The government has announced that before 40 days, families native to Assam State and only them will receive compensation. The colony is badly located. It blocks an access to a water spot vital for mammals in Kaziranga Park. Illegal occupation of the land has been increasing over the years. 300 homes are concerned. The squatters met with stones the authorities sent there to apply a judgment from the High Court. The toll is a heavy one, 40 wounded and 2 dead among civilians, 10 wounded among policemen. Bulldozers and rangers on elephant-back all together destroyed the camp. Colonization of a strategic area for wildlife was exhausting the Parks natural resources and fueling poaching.⁶⁷

**A New Distribution of the
Anti-poaching Forces**

Kaziranga Park will be split into 2 administrative divisions. There will be a wildlife wing in the north, and another one in the south. There is a plan to extend the buffer zone where the development of human activities is restricted. The idea is to protect the area of Bandardubi, where squatters have just been forcefully evicted.

September 12, 2016

District of Karbi Anglong, State of Assam, India

Arrest near the Kaziranga Park of Sabar Inglang, age 35. He would have put 20 rhinos on his hunting wall in 4 years.⁶⁶

India Report

July 19, 2016: 102 rhinoceroses poached between 2013 and 2016. 94 in Assam, 8 in West Bengal.

Statements by Mrs. Brahma, the Assam Forest Minister:

"In Assam, a horn is sold for Rs 1.5 lakh and above. In Myanmar, it is Rs two crore and it is Rs three crore in China."

"The morale of forest staff is very low. " "There is no proper basic amenities. Transit camps are in dilapidated conditions and there are no facilities of drinking water. " "department had employed casual staff, but unfortunately their pays are not regular."

"We need to modernise the equipment. We need to provide good transit camps, uniforms, shoes and all other facilities."

"The government, she said, is currently working on short-term goal of modernising the arms and equipment with an allocation of Rs 25 crore under non-Plan section. "

"A video-monitored counting will be initiated soon on each treasury across the State to evaluate how many horns are stored and if those are real or made of bamboo."

NEPAL

July 8, 2016

Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal

He had been on the run for ages. Arrest of Lakshi Thapa, sentenced to 6 years of prison and a fine of 100,000 rupees (\$ 935 US) for rhinoceros poaching. He was taken to Bardiya prison.⁶⁸

July 11 to mid-September, 2016

Nepal

The Nepalese government agrees to gift 4 rhinoceroses to a Chinese zoo. The gift was to be officially made during the upcoming visit of the Chinese President Xi Jinping (cf. "On the Trail" n° 12 p. 73) China started modern panda diplomacy in 1950. It is used less and less. As early as 2005, India prohibited giving animal gifts to official foreign visitors. The 4 rhinoceroses will be captured in Chitwan Park. They will probably be dehorned before Mr. Jinping takes them away in his suitcases.

But it turns out that the latest diplomatic developments will delay the gift and the ceremony. The Chinese president is postponing his visit to Nepal. The cold seems to be due to Nepal's lack of interest in working together to modernize Route n°1, on the border of the 2 countries. China considers this is an essential project for developing trade links with the Indian subcontinent. Apparently China also frowned upon the 3-day visit of the new Nepalese prime minister in India in mid-September.⁶⁹

August 8, 2016

Chitwan District, Central Development Region, Nepal

She was electrocuted. An electrical cable was deliberately plunged into the marsh. She died recently. The horn and hooves are still there. The judicial administration of Chitwan National Park placed the employees of a neighboring lodge run by Indian interests in custody. The director was one of them. The district judge ordered their release on bail. They could face between 5 and 15 years of prison and/or a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 rupees, or \$ 750 US and \$ 1,500 US. The 2 suspects of Indian origin are from Uttarakhand and Kerala.⁷⁰



August 20, 2016

Chandranigahapur, Rautahat District, Central Development Region, Nepal

Mushroom pickers found it covered with 6 bullets on August 20. It died on 6 September. The carers thought that they would pull through. It was on perfusion for 2 or 3 days. Every 2 or 3 hours, they fed it on apples, bananas, and cabbages. They regularly disinfected the wounds near its right eye, and on its neck, forehead, and flanks. It still had its horn and hooves. An army detachment camped on the side to prevent a potential repeated poaching offense. "We took care of it as if it was a kid ... we're all very sad", concluded the president of the residents' committee in the Mrigna Kunja buffer zone around Chitwan National Park.⁷¹

September 5, 2016

Kanchanpur District, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal

Arrest. Rana was on the run. He was sentenced in absentia to 10 years of prison for a repeated rhinoceros poaching and horn smuggling offense.⁷²



VIET NAM

July 31, 2016

Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

The 42-year-old Vietnamese man had carefully piled up the sections of the 4 horns in cans of powdered milk. His flight came in from Doha. The original country of departure was not stated. On the black market, the seizure is worth \$ 200,000 US.⁷³



Momo is a brand of powdered milk sold in Africa.

Rhinos and elephants

ASIA

CHINA

July 7, 2016

Beijing, China

6 men appeared in Court for the purchase, sale, and trafficking of 9 rhinoceros horns, 3 horn sections, 883 g of crushed horn, 500 kg of ivory, ivory bracelets, 35 bear paws, red coral, narwhal tusks, and a few pangolin scales which are worth a total of 16 million yuan, or \$ 2.4 million US. The Teng gang leader was officially specialized in the sale of beeswax and Tibetan religious art (Thangka).¹

Beginning of August 2016

Chang'an District, Shaanxi Province, China

A man was sentenced to 6 years and 3 months of prison, and 10,000 yuan (\$ 1,500 US) in fines for the sale and purchase of ivory items and fragments of rhinoceros horn, estimated to be worth 189,168 yuan (\$ 28,330 US).²



August 4, 2016

Xuchang, Henan province and Tianjin, China

The network was led by a former farmer turned taxi driver, and by someone named Zhang who was on the road to ruin because of blue curtains. On the ecommerce site, the carved ivory and raw tusks were always presented on a table covered with a black tablecloth, in a room shut off from the outside by blue curtains with flowers. After several months of investigation, follow-up, bids, and wiretapping, the investigators tightened the noose and identified a number of suspicious buildings. At the end of December 2015, a team armed with binoculars located the famous blue curtains, on the 14th floor of one of these buildings. In this apartment, they found 26,258 kg of ivory goods, worth 1.9 million yuan (\$ 163,300 US).

In August 2016, after 6 months of transversal investigation in 12 provinces, 21 suspects were caught. Eight of them are in prison for the illegal purchase, transport, and sale of protected animal species. The others were released on bail. The lead of the trafficking was in Tianjin.³

RATHKEALE ROVERS: see page 97

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, *Elephas maximus*, is listed in Appendix I.

EASTERN AFRICA

ETHIOPIA

Mid July, 2016

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

The traveler from Rwanda was heading to Benin. She was arrested and sentenced 3 weeks after to serve one-year prison without remission. She said she was unaware that she was transporting ivory. Those who entrusted the suitcases to her supposedly claimed they were full of pieces of one wood highly valued in West Africa.¹



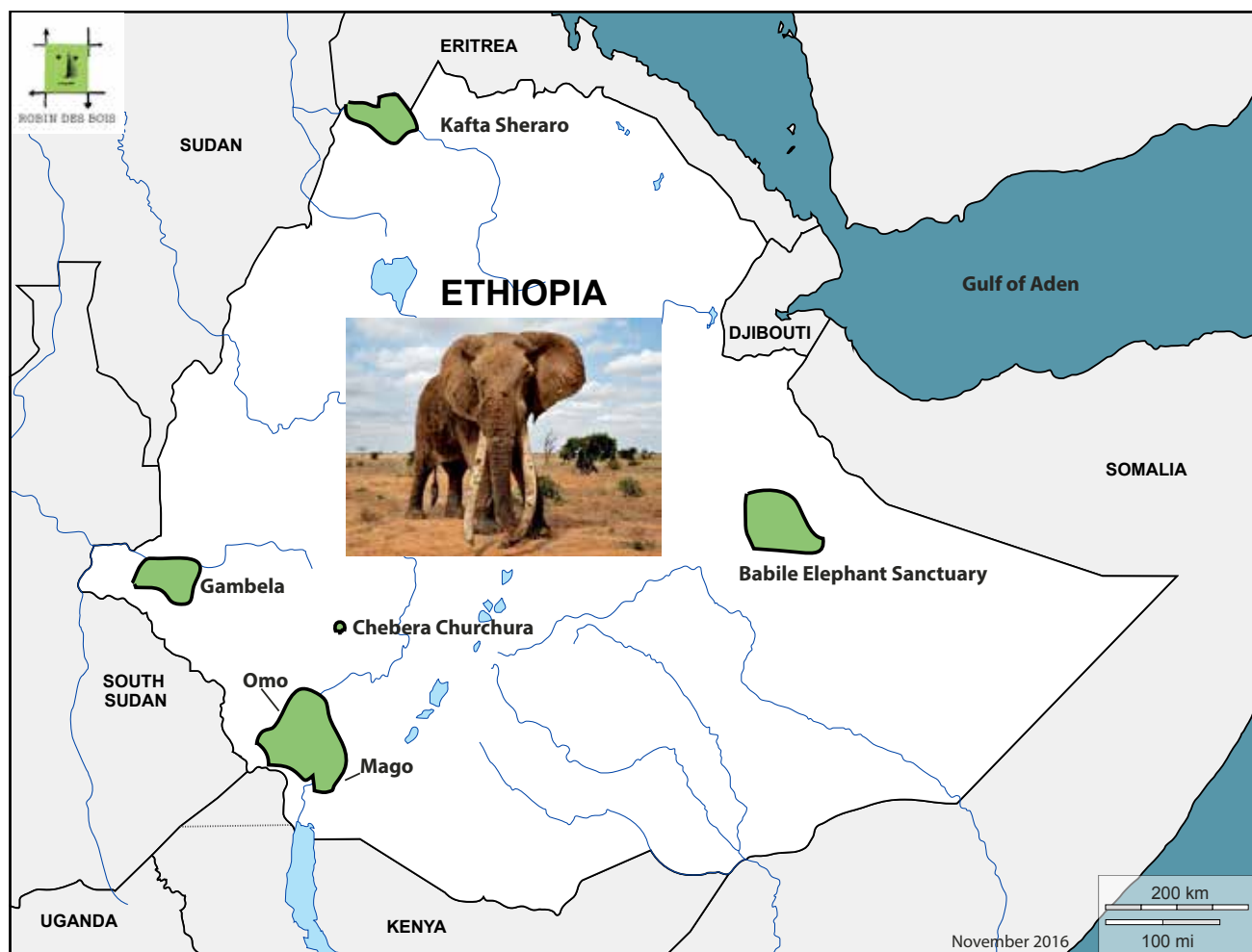
August 2016

Ethiopia

Bad news for the elephants of Ethiopia. In one year, at least 29 elephants are said to have been killed by firearms in Kafta Sheraro, Gambela, Omo, Babile, and Chebera Churchura National Parks. This dismal record could worsen when the Mago Park figures come out.²

On the Trail" n°14 Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Réf.
Africa	Kenya	373	6
	Uganda	249	19
	Zimbabwe	500	43
Asia	India	1490	104
		997	112
	Malaysia	2460	117
		2100	118
	Viet Nam	895	126



KENYA

July 6, 2016

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Makireti is a former orphan that the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust took care of for a long time, before releasing her back into the savanna. She seems to have been hit 24 hours beforehand. She took the initiative to go toward the Ithumba orphanage to receive the best care.³



It was difficult to remove the arrow due to the barbs. She doubled over as she touched a rib.

July 22, 2016

Tsavo East National Park buffer zone, Kenya

Rescue of a young elephant wounded by a poisoned arrow.⁴

July 22 – August 12, 2016

Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya

- Conviction of Feisal Mohamed Ali (cf. "On the Trail" n° 8 p. 79, n°10 p. 59, n°12 p. 78), 20 years of prison and 20 million shillings (\$ 195,183 US) in fines.

- He is appealing the sentence. His lawyer considers that he was sacrificed for public opinion. The Tudor affair is not over. Four other suspects have been acquitted: Abdul Halim Sadiq, Ghalib Sadiq Kara, Praverz Mohamed, and Abdulmajeed Ibrahim.⁵



August 16, 2016

Mlolongo, Machakos County, Kenya

David Onger, a professional policeman (DCI, Director of Criminal Investigations) was arrested in the company of Evelyn Kisese and Perpetual Mueke, as he was transporting 8 kg of illegal ivory.⁶

August 16, 2016

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

Her trunk was caught in a dirty trap. She was successfully put to sleep, operated, cared for, and set free. The prognosis is positive.⁷



September 2, 2016

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Meru County, Kenya

The male elephant calf had been carrying the arrow for several days in its front left leg. A group of visitors noticed he was limping. After an operation, the arrow was removed. The animal was under anesthesia. Antibiotics were administered. He trotted back to his family.⁸

September 23, 2016

Mutomo, Eastern Province, Kenya

Seizure of 7 tusks. Local Value: \$ 34,157 US. Police officers showed as potential buyers. Expertise is underway to verify the authenticity of ivory.⁹

MALAWI

July to August 11, 2016

Malawi

African Parks has started a public-private partnership with the government of Malawi to manage and run Nkhosakota Wildlife Reserve, which covers 16,000 ha. The "surplus" elephants in Liwonde National Park are in the process of being transferred. The operation requires the injection of a sedative (M99 or Carfentanil), craning, and caging each elephant on a truck platform, medically assisted awakening, and monitoring over the 400 km journey. According to the first witness accounts, none of the elephants were wounded or had an immediate pathology. Beyond the risks involved in capture and transport, biologists are concerned about families being dismantled, difficulty in adapting to a mountain ecosystem, and a change in food resources ("On the Trail" n°12 p.78, n°13 p.83).

The plan is to displace 500 elephants in all. On August 11, at the end of the first phase, 261 elephants were transferred from Majete Wildlife Reserve and Liwonde National Park. Conservation Solutions, a company based in South Africa, supervised the translocation. The goal of its director was to keep tightly knit elephant families together. "The first thing that a darted mother elephant does on recovering is look for her calf."



© Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi / AP

This mass translocation produced perverse effects quickly. On August 13, 2016, elephants killed 3 inhabitants from the villages of Dowa and Ntchisi. It seems that the throngs of people curious about the elephants that had left Nkhotakota Reserve surprised the pachyderms and drew their ire. One of the elephants was killed to end the unrest.¹⁰

July 12, 2016

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

A member of the police force and 2 civilians were arrested near the central police station. They were in possession of illegal ivory. According to a source who would like to remain anonymous, the trio was fomenting a smuggling operation. "The civilians were the suppliers, and the man in uniform was helping them."¹¹

Mid September, 2016

Malawi

Very little of the victim remained.¹²



© Wildlife Action Group Malawi

MOZAMBIQUE

September 29, 2016

Zinave National Park, Inhambane Province, Mozambique

Things got off to a bad start. The plan is to "destock" 5,000 wild animals in South Africa in 5 years, and introduce them to national parks in Mozambique. Eight elephants traveled 1,500 km by truck. They were then put to sleep, craned, and waken up with an antidote. Upon arrival, only 7 of them were alive.¹³



© PeacePark

UGANDA

Under the Elephant Steps



© animalfair

When you weigh several tons and you run, you leave deep footprints in the ground. Each elephant footprint is a small pond teeming with tadpoles, mites, mayflies, backswimmers, leeches, and gastropods. The older the footprints are, the richer the microsystems are, due to the plant waste that lands there. The first clues on the usefulness of elephant movements were collected in Ugandan forests by the University of Koblenz and Landau in Germany. Understanding the usefulness of elephants in forming and maintaining large natural areas is a field of ongoing exploration. Reptiles and amphibians may be the first to benefit from this elephant fertility factor.

The rapid colonization shows that the water-filled footprints are essential habitats for scattering macro-invertebrates over large distances, and that they are places of refuge during the dry season. An average footprint digs 30 cm deep into the ground and has a circumference of 30 cm.

The study took place in Kibale National Park, which covers 766 km² in southwestern Uganda, at an average altitude of 1,300 m. Kibale has prairies, tropical rain forests, marshes, and degraded grassland in the process of being regenerated.

August 6, 2016

Entebbe International Airport, Uganda

October 2013: Almost the perfect crime. However, as The Observer, the national Ugandan newspaper said, customs "smelt a rat" in the container. The ivory was inside. It was supposedly full of plastic bottles to recycle (cf. "On the Trail" n°3 p. 59, n°4 p. 80). Ogane, the sender, even almost recovered the ivory. His lawyers asserted that the false declaration was meant to prevent the theft of the precious merchandise. According to the lawyers, the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo authorized the export. Judge Wilson Masalu Musene gave in to the argument. The judge issued an order for the ivory to be restored to the applicant, and for the ivory to be protected from further impounding or seizure by any other organ or institution in Uganda, including the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

The Supreme Court quashed this decision that was soft on the swindler, and the 5 tons of ivory at the end of the proceedings remained in good hands - at least we hope so! - in Uganda. Three years after his smuggling attempt, Ogane was caught at Entebbe Airport. He was coming from Rwanda. He was coming to Uganda to launder more shady business. Perhaps it was an umpteenth attempt to recover "his" ivory, or at least part of it. For the moment, his request for an interim release on bail has been rejected.¹⁴

August 7 and 9, 2016

Kampala and Amudat District, Northern Region, Uganda



Two suspects were in custody at the Kinaroad police station. Swaibu Egel has a solid reputation as an ivory trafficker. The Kampala police arrested him after 3 months of investigation. He was interrogated and gave the name of his accomplice, a man named Epharim Kator, alias Abraham. Apparently, for several years, the 2 men

had been in direct contact with the Pokot people, an ethnic group in western Kenya and eastern Uganda. The tusks are from adult elephants. At the beginning of September, Swaibu Egel was sentenced to one year and 5 months of prison.¹⁵

August 9, 2016

West of Uganda

Two poachers!
Two elephants!¹⁶



© EAGLE Uganda

August 14, 2016

Arua District and Nebbi District, West Nile sub-region, Northern Region, Uganda (near the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo)

Seizures of 46 kg of ivory:

- 36 kg in the hands of Mande Adriga, Ferdinand Guma, and Robert Ebuma.
- 10 kg in the hands of Charles Limbake and Romano Adesh.

The 5 traffickers were targeted thanks to precise accounts of residents concerned about the misfortune that elephants are subjected to. The last inventory counted 5,000 elephants in the 3 main reserves of the country.¹⁷



© EAGLE Uganda

REPEATED OFFENSE

September 1, 2016

Zombo, Northern Region, Uganda

Custody in the Zombo central police station. Three kilos of ivory on 3 men aged 30, 34, and 46. Very experienced in wildlife trafficking, according to the police. Their first arrest was a failure. They had vanished on the other side of the border, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.¹⁸

September 15, 2016

Kampala, Kampala District, Uganda

Seizure of 250 kg of ivory, estimated to be worth 212 million Sh (\$ 62,346 US), or \$ 249 US/kg. They had a meeting with a Chinese purchaser. They had the ivory stock in their Toyota. Their haggling was interrupted near the Cuban Embassy and the Kololo landing strip. The 2 men, aged 23 and 24, were tailed for nearly a month already. In all, they apparently had, or had the means to obtain, 600 kg of white gold. Despite their young age, they had good connections, a driver's license from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and a few hundred US dollars. At the police station, Ibrahim Onzima and Muhammad Kulubale kept their lips sealed.¹⁹



© Eagle Uganda

September 27, 2016
Kampala, Central Region, Uganda



The man on the left is a pastor. Churchmen do not always have mercy on elephants. The 5 were arrested in Kampala with 29 kg of ivory. They had been observed for a week by police and Natural Resource Conservation Network led by Vincent Opyene, a former magistrate.²⁰

RWANDA

End of August 2016
Rwanda

The 6 Rwandans and 4 Guineans were heading to Asia. Each of them was transporting his share of semi-processed ivory. Eight kilos for each 'mule'. 80 kg in all. Official sources claim that the country of origin is Tanzania. However, the smugglers say that the ivory is from the Republic of Congo. Five months ago, 3 Guineans and one Rwandan smuggling 88 kg of ivory were sentenced to 6 months of prison.²¹

TANZANIA

July 4, 2016
Manyoni District, Singida Region, Tanzania

The deal is simple, and perhaps impossible. You either pay a total fine of \$ 350,000 US, or are sentenced to 20 years of prison. Due to a lack of money, the 2nd sentence will be applied to the 2 first-time offenders. They were caught in the act, in the possession of weapons and illegal tusks in the villages of Kiwele and Kambi Katoto. Cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p.85. The incriminating evidence and the statements of the 4 witnesses were irrefutable.²²



July 14, 2016
Kisutu, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

Court appearance of 10 suspects for the purchase, concealment, transport, and possession of trophies belonging to the government. The 666 sections of 280 tusks (from 140 elephants) weigh a total of 1,300 or 1,400 kg, depending on which source is used. The entire jigsaw puzzle is worth \$ 2 million US. It was discovered in the classy neighborhood of Kimara, in the basement of a villa. The ivory was awaiting transfer to Viet Nam or China. Elifisa Ngowi, the head of the NTSCIU (National and Transnational Serious Crimes Investigation Unit), believes that most of the ivory is from Selous Game Reserve.²³

Mid July 2016
Kisutu, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

The South African mechanical engineer was working abroad to improve the yield of the sugar industry in the country. He avoided a maximum prison sentence of 5 years. He was sentenced to pay a fine of 65 million Sh, or \$ 30,100 US. For the leather bracelet with elephant hair that was in his luggage, that's quite expensive.²⁴



End of July 2016
Karatu District, Arusha Region, Tanzania

1-The facts go back to December 23, 2012, when the conservationist of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and his assistants found a dead elephant without its tusks by Lake Manyara. A few hours afterwards, they took a man in for questioning in Karatu District. Gidamis Giyamu, alias Hami, was carrying a heavy 70 kg bag. Two tusks weighing 35 kg were inside.



2- The facts go back to January 11, 2013, when a patrol around Lake Manyara caught sight of 4 prowlers with a heavy bag. They fled, running away ... except for the one carrying 2 tusks weighing 17 kg each - Pero Kilo, alias Kinangai.

The 2 poachers received the same sentence, 20 years of prison or the payment of a fine of 600 million shillings, or \$ 272,625 US. As they were unable to pay this amount and to make an arrangement with the legal authority, both of them are in prison.²⁵

Mid August 2016
Mpanda, Katavi Region, Tanzania

A pastor of a Moravian Protestant church was sentenced to 20 years of prison on his first hearing. On May 5, 2016, the police found 4 tusks weighing a total of 20 kg in his office inside the church. In his defense, Godwel Siame said that he did not know how the ivory got there.²⁶



Mid August 2016

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Court of Appeal confirmed the decision in the 1st instance: 15 years in prison. The home of Hassan Kitunga had been searched in September 2012. 30 kg of elephant meat were found in his home. Kitunga then led the police officers to the very location where he had shot the elephant, and cut up the carcass with an accomplice. No news on the ivory.²⁷



August 13, 2016

Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania

Creation of Tanzania Journalists for Conservation. The TJC strives to broaden environmental subjects in the national press, in all forms of media. Poaching, deforestation, overgrazing, abuse of pesticides, and pollution are areas that the TJC investigates. The Serengeti Preservation Foundation provides financial support to the collective.

August 22, 2016

Tanzania

He had been sentenced to 21 years of prison and a fine of 80 million Sh (\$ 36,674 US) for the possession and transport of 10 tusks or sections of tusks. The Court of Appeal ordered a new process due to a technicality. The Court considered that the Inringa District Court was not competent, and that the proceedings against Gaitan Susuta were flawed. When he was arrested in August 2013, in addition to the tusks, he was also carrying ammunition and a weighing machine.²⁸



End of August 2016

Village outside the Ruaha National Park, Tanzania

The Malian shepherd and springer spaniel put up to 4 tusks wrapped in a plastic bag under the car chassis. Tanapa (Tanzanian National Parks) says that as the size of the tusks was modest, they were from elephants that had not even reached middle age.³⁰



End of August 2016

Arusha, Arusha Region, Tanzania

A man was sentenced to 20 years of prison for the fraudulent possession of 13 tusks worth \$ 114,000 US, or the payment of a fine 10 times more than this amount. The man has started to serve his sentence as he could not pay or obtain agreement on a payment schedule.²⁹



September 2, 2016

Arusha, Arusha Region, Tanzania

2 men were sentenced to 20 years of prison each or to pay a total fine of 970 million shillings (\$ 440,745 US) for the possession without a license of 5 pieces of tusk weighing a total of 25.2 kg. The arrests go back to January 15, 2016.³¹



September 16, 2016

Mpanda District, Katavi Region, Tanzania

2 people were sentenced to 20 years of prison for possessing trophies belonging to the government. The offense had been reported on May 20, 2014. The 4 tusks are worth approximately \$ 22,000 US.³²



September 26, 2016

Kisutu, Ilala District, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

Appearance of Joachim Nicolaus alias Joachim Minde alias Kennedy Kimaro (55), Tanzanian Treasury agent, and Kassim Hassan Said alias Bedui (50), a businessman based in Arusha, for trafficking 3,500 kg of ivory to Hong Kong and Thailand (Seizures of ivory in Dar es Salaam, see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 54, n°3, p. 60-61, n°12, p. 80-81).³³

ZAMBIA

July 14, 2016

Nakonde, Northern Province, Zambia

2 men were sentenced to 5 years of prison for illegally carrying 2 tusks weighing 17 kg in all.³⁴



August 29, 2016

Lundazi, Eastern Province, Zambia



Two 5-year prison sentences for illegal possession of a government trophy (8 kg of ivory) and several kilos of meat from an animal protected under law, a roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*).³⁵



End of August 2016

Kafue National Park, Southern Province, Zambia

Their mission was to raise the alert if they saw something unusual in the Park. In a way, they were the binoculars and ears of the rangers. They did the contrary. They took AK47s from the ranger warehouse and poached an elephant. They did not succeed in extracting the tusks from the dead body.³⁶

September 6, 2016

Lower Zambezi National Park, Lusaka Province, Zambia

The 7 bastards in the poaching operation had their exit from the Park all planned. One car on land and an inflatable rubber dinghy on Zambezi River. A nautical brigade of the DNPW (Department of National Parks and Wildlife) recovered them. There were 2 tusks and 2 firearms for very big game on board the small boat. An employee had "borrowed" the boat from the Breezers Lodge in Chirundu. The same day, the Ministry of Tourism and Arts announced that the Department of National Parks and Wildlife staff whose salaries were delayed had been paid.³⁷



September 28, 2016

Luangwa, Province of Lusaka, Zambia

The female baby elephant was found wandering near the river. She was taken back to the elementary school in Feira alias Luangwa. Her mother would have been killed a few days earlier, maybe in Mozambique, maybe in Zambia. Feira is at the border between the 2 countries. The little survivor was turned over to the Lilayi orphanage (Province of Lusaka). After weaning, she could be transferred to the Kafu National Park.³⁸

ZIMBABWE

July 11, 2016

Charara Safari Area, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

The KCP, Kamba Conservation Programme, reported that an adult elephant had been poached. The poachers used the usual method. They first shot the elephant. To make sure that it would not put up a fight, they then axed it, cutting into its spinal cord. They then tore off its head, along with the tusks.³⁹



Mid July 2016

Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

He was on the run for 2 and a half months because he had slaughtered an elephant and attempted to murder a ranger.⁴⁰



REPEATED OFFENSE

July 17, 2016

Msambakaruma, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Lawrence Nhunduma, Trick Maurikira, and Matandira Gomweso were each sentenced to 9 years of prison. They had been arrested on July 17, on the edge of Matusadona National Park, holding 2 tusks. Gomweso was wanted since April 2011. In the Land Rover he was driving at the time, there were 8 tusks.⁴¹



July 23, 2016

Beitbridge, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe



Rescue of a baby elephant. The 3-month-old elephant was running on 3 legs. A trap surrounded its 4th one. Ten days after the first alert, it was successfully put to sleep. With the X-rays, back leg freed, treatment, and antibiotics, everything is better. It will always be disabled, but its blood circulation was not cut off. Its 4th leg should recover some of its capacity with time. From now on, it scampers about in its herd.⁴²

End of July 2016

Zimbabwe

Commotion and disbelief in Zimbabwe. Politicians would like the country to leave CITES, to be able to sell ivory freely, as they say.

The finance minister claims there is enough ivory in stock to reimburse all the country's international creditors. An official assessment was closer to the truth, mentioning 70 tons of ivory in stock, worth \$ 35 million US, or \$ 500 US per kilo.

Gift Chimankire, who is close to former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, flared up regarding the recommendation to destroy ivory stockpiles: "We have to burn what we have simply because we want to satisfy those colonial powers. Are we forgetting that they are imperialists?"⁴³

Beginning of August 2016
Panda Masuie Area, Zambezi National Park border, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Contact between rangers and 5 poachers supposedly of Zambian origin who fled via the Zambezi River, dropping the 8 tusks that were carefully wrapped in blankets - which were actually shoulder pads.⁴⁴



August 2016
Zimbabwe

Zimparks is transferring elephants from Hwange National Park, where there is a drought and a lack of natural waterholes, to Chizarira National Park, where water is abundant and the elephant population is declining due to poaching. The first phase involves 100 elephants. The 2 parks are 200 km apart. The estimated cost of an elephant transfer is \$ 2,000 US. Unfortunately, water is rare in Hwange Park. The water may also be contaminated from the consequences of the cyanide poisoning of elephants and of other wildlife species (cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 2, n°3 p. 56, n°10 p. 61, n° 11 p. 72).⁴⁵

August 17, 2016

Silongwe village, Tsholotsho, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

The 43-year-old man has a double life. He is an elementary school principal and ivory dealer. He was arrested with a 22-year-old accomplice. Fake purchasers for the 2 tusks lured in the 2 men. They were real policemen.⁴⁶

August 22, 2016

Kariba, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

After he was caught in the act, the Kariba Court sentenced him to 9 years of prison. He confessed to killing the elephant in Zambezi Valley, by Chundu and Marongora.⁴⁷



September 4, 2016

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Eight shots. Two elephants wounded. Eight suspects arrested. They were aged 27 to 34. The elephants were located in the savanna by trailing their blood-soaked footprints. In the Mitsubishi Pajero of one of the poachers, there was a knife, an ax, a large caliber rifle and a dried elephant tail.⁴⁸



September 10, 2016
Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

A waterhole, birds, and 4 dead elephants. Cyanide was at it again.

The police nearly ambushed 4 suspects. During the manhunt, friendly fire killed one of the police officers. Between 2011 and 2014, the elephant population of Zimbabwe lost an estimated 6,000 individuals.⁴⁹



September 14, 2016
Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe⁵⁰

After 4 days of tailing, the man who was trying to sell the tusk was cornered.

September 14, 2016

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

The charges against the critical journalists have been suspended. In the national newspaper The Sunday Mail, Brian Chitemba and Tinashe Farawo (cf. "On the Trail" n°11 p.72) published an article on elephant cyanide poisoning in Hwange Park (cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p.2). The article mentioned the involvement of at least one government official. The journalists were immediately accused of spreading false information and tainting the image of Zimbabwe. They were placed in preventive detention, and then freed on bail. The constitutional Court agreed that it was not proven that the incriminated article had led to a financial loss for the country, and that the relevant ministries have not yet provided proof that civil servants were not involved in the poisoning. The Court thus suspended the charges against the 2 journalists and the chief editor of the Sunday Mail.⁵¹

September 25, 2016

Bulilima District, Southern District of Matabeleland and Tsholotsho, Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe

The 4 elephants were already tuskless when they were discovered. Three were lying near the river. The bodies were discovered by a professional hunter. Death could date back to 4 days. According to the preliminary investigation, they were poisoned by cyanide. The ivory was cut with a chainsaw. These 4 add to the 9 deaths also attributed to cyanide that have recently been deplored in the Gwaii Forest.⁵²



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

INTER-PROVINCIAL RHINO OPERATION

From July 7 to 10, 2016

KwaZulu-Natal /Mpumalanga/Limpopo, South Africa

Seizures of 2 tusks, .458 rifles, a .22 long rifle, a silencer, 9 mm pistols, 4 axes, blood-stained clothes, and dagga. Seven arrests.⁵³

September 23, 2016

Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Two suspects were tried. Ramurafhi was fined 40,000 rand (\$ 2,800 US), or in case of non payment to 2 years in prison. The duo was arrested with tusks worth 44,640 rand (\$ 3,100 US).⁵⁴



BOTSWANA

End of August 2016

Linyanti, Chobe National Park, North-West District, Botswana

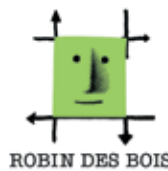
26 elephants were poached. The vultures encircled them and settled onto the carcasses. Fortunately for them, the elephants were not killed by cyanide. The murderers in the area prefer AK47s. (cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p. 83).⁵⁵



August 27, 2016

Makalamabedi, North-West District, Botswana

There were 6 tusks in a hidden compartment of the Toyota - clearly the preferred brand of traffickers. The 3 men, 2 from Zambia, and one for Botswana, were arrested. Their trial is scheduled for the fall.⁵⁶



CITES

**17th Conference of the Parties
Johannesburg – South Africa**

Press release n°6

October 4, 2016

Viva Botswana and Boo to the European Union, Chant the Elephants

At least 26 elephants were beheaded end of August in the Chobe National Park in north Botswana and at the heart of an immense territory where 150,000 no border elephants are roaming. Botswana didn't wait for this massacre to understand that a new situation- the advent of elephant poaching in countries of southern Africa- calls on a new stance. Robin des Bois, no matter what will come out of following events and other positions Botswana may have, admires this courageous and contagious standpoint. In supporting the listing in Appendix I of the elephants who season after season are crisscrossing its territory, Botswana shows also concern for the elephants of Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

The European Union is still stuck in the year 2000 when southern African countries saw themselves as fortresses for the elephants. The EU got behind Zimbabwe and voted against Appendix I. It's too busy bargaining its colonial ivory with its Chinese clients- light gains make a heavy purse- and auctioning off some 30 kg tusks, souvenirs of the good old days. Now the tusks that flood the black market are not elephants' tusks, they are virgins' tusks. More and more they are no heavier than 3 kg. Despite France's pleas, the European Union has not yet banned raw ivory trade in all the member States and therefore enables shamefully legal ivory to hide shamefully dirty ivory.

At the next Conference of the Parties in Colombo in Sri Lanka in 2019, Appendix I will seem obvious. But until then, 100,000 elephants will be killed and hundreds or maybe thousands of families of rangers and poachers will be torn apart.

NAMIBIA

July 23, 2016

Onamatanga, Omusati Region, Namibia

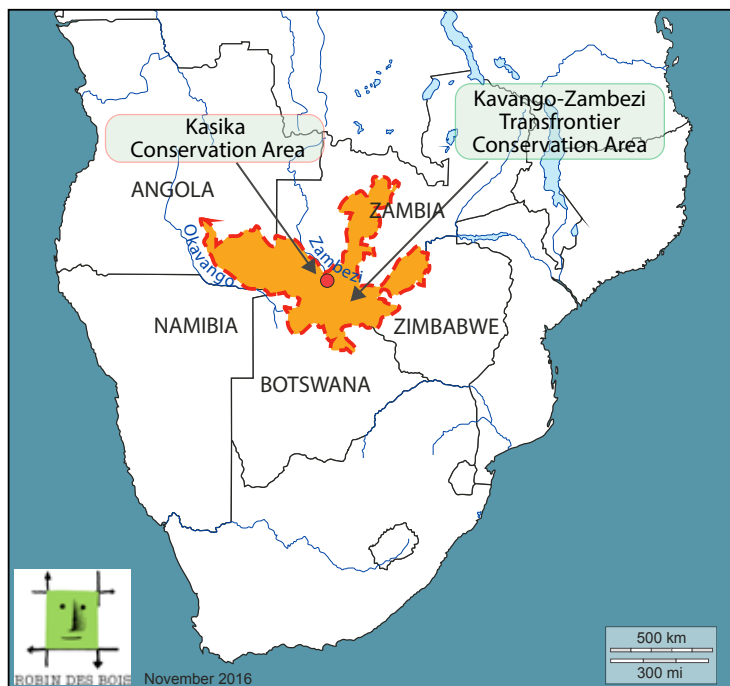
Since the beginning of the year, 67 elephant tusks were seized across the country, 10 times more than the total for 2016. Two suspected elephant poachers have just been arrested. They are now releasable on bail for 1000 Namibian dollars or \$ 70 each. One of them is already wanted for poaching.⁵⁷

September 8, 2016

Kavango Zambezi cross-border zone

Two females and 2 males were killed in the red circle. The killers are said to be Zambian.

By implementing the KAZA (The Kavango Zambezi, cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p. 82), this cross-border zone hopes to achieve peace and sustainable development. In reality, it is a no-go zone and unsafe area for the shared heritage of southern Africa. The inhabitants of the region asked that the Namibian Defense Force be deployed to support the anti-poaching forces. In the lodges on the banks of Zambezi River, it is more common to hear the rattling of submachine guns than the trumpeting of elephants. For the moment, the government does not intend to give in to popular pressure. However, in 2014, the Minister of Environment and Tourism obtained the right to use the army to protect elephants and rhinoceroses from poaching assaults.⁵⁸



WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

July 4 and 27, 2016

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin



Seizure of ivory combs, necklaces, and bracelets weighing 10 kg in all. Three arrests, three-month suspended prison sentences, and 20,000 CFA francs (\$ 34 US) in fine for each.⁵⁹

July 26, 2016

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin



Three-month prison sentence, 500,000 CFA francs (\$ 850 US) in fines, and 500,000 CFA francs in damages (cf. "On the Trail" n° 13 p. 88). "We can also hope that this decision of the Cotonou Court shows the way for other Beninese courts, and for the Porto Novo Court in this case", said Eagle Bénin in its press release (cf. "On the Trail" n°10 p. 70).⁶⁰

GUINEA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 19, 2016

Kaloum, Conakry, Conakry Region, Guinea



The Sidimé family is influential and has agile hands, as it had 999 small worked ivories in its home, seized in May 2012. The 4 defendants received a 6-month suspended prison sentence and a symbolic fine of \$ 10 US. Bonus: The \$ 33,000 US that was seized during the search must



be returned to the family. The public prosecutor and the plaintiffs intend to lodge an appeal.⁶¹

**September 27, 2016
Macenta, Nzérékoré Region,
Guinea**



Pokpa Soropogui was sentenced to one year of prison without remission and a fine of 150,000 Guinean francs (\$ 16 US). His 2 accomplices were sentenced in absentia to 5 years of prison without remission. Charlotte Houpline, the founder of the Wara Conservation Project, is pleased with the severity of the sentence. However, she is not sure that the prison sentence will truly be served.



In Court, Soropogui lamented the death of his uncle during the pillaging in the primal forest of Ziam. He was a big admirer of his uncle. He then accused important people and elected officials in Zebela of asking him to "take care" of elephants that were becoming overfamiliar. Three of the people called into question have completely rejected Soropogui's version.⁶²

NIGERIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

July 15-30, 2016

Yankari Game Reserve, Gombe State, Nigeria

In the middle of the savanna, the rangers arrested 4 solitary poachers, who were repeat offenders or who have been wanted for a long time.⁶³



Dayabu Adamu



Adamu Danjuma



Danladi Garba and Umaru Buba

**August 12, 2016
Yankari Game Reserve, Gombe
State, Nigeria**



They were sentenced to 6 months of prison without remission. Just prior to their arrest, they had killed a hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*). They admitted that they were actually looking for elephants.⁶⁴

SENEGAL

**July 27 and August 5, 2016
Keur Massar and Dakar, Dakar
Region, Senegal**



Arrests and sentences of 3 months of prison without remission for Malick Bama Madou Diop and Momar Gaye, for possessing, transporting and offering to sell 136 bracelets and other ivory amulets. Does this decision of the Dakar Court of First Instance mean that the Senegalese justice system understands how serious wildlife misdemeanors are? It's too early to say. For the same misdemeanors, concerning over 1,000 items this time (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p.103), a shopkeeper in Zinguichor in Casamance has just received a 99-day suspended prison sentence. Transactions are still taking place, and 3 traffickers who were sentenced to 6 months of prison without remission during 2015 and at the beginning of this year were pardoned after one month.⁶⁵



There are bracelets and bracelets

TOGO

July 29, 2016

Blitta, Centrale Region, Togo



© taiff-enforcement



Two months of prison without remission and \$ 507 US in fines. The elephant was 3-4 years old.⁶⁶

August 9, 2016

Dapaong, Savanes Region, Togo

The sanctions of the Togolese justice are weak. For the illegal import, possession, and attempt to sell 30 tusks, the 4 people in Court received prison sentences of 6 to 12 months, 5 to 10 months of which are suspended, and were sentenced to pay \$ 340, \$ 510, and \$ 850 US in fines. The 5th accomplice on the run was sentenced in absentia to 12 months of prison without remission and the equivalent of \$ 1,700 US.⁶⁷



August 10 and September 14, 2016

Sokodé, Centrale Region, Togo

At 8:10, 2 traffickers were arrested with a small tusk in their hands. The main defendant was sentenced to 6 months of prison - of which 5 months are suspended, and a symbolic fine of one French CFA for the regional environmental department. The second suspect was acquitted.⁶⁸



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MIDDLE AFRICA

ANGOLA

July 23, 2016

Luiana National Park, Cuando Cubango Province, Angola

A new poaching incident on the border between Namibia and Angola. This elephant affair comes after the hippopotamus affair (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 67). From the southern banks of the Okavango River in Namibia, the witnesses saw at least 7 men burst in with automatic rifles. The peaceful and idyllic scene of about 40 elephants in the wet meadows of the river at nightfall immediately turned into a row and into a crime scene. At least 3 elephants were caught up in this. The poachers returned to the location some time afterwards to cut off the heads and take the tusks. The next day, the investigation on the Angolan side slowly started up, with the support of a few Namibian witnesses who wanted to stay anonymous to avoid retaliation.

No comment from the press and Angolan departments. Luiana National Park rangers and villagers apparently are accustomed to sharing the meat after these massacres. This is a far cry from the harmony between inhabitants and the prestigious wildlife that the Angolan Environment Minister recently called for.⁶⁹



CAMEROON

August 2016

Cameroon

29 pieces of sculpted ivory were seized. A trafficker was arrested. He was running an "art store" in Yaoundé. Most of his clientele is Chinese.⁷⁰

OPERATION SPIDER

August 27 and September 6, 2016

Gribi and Yokadouma, Boumba-et-Ngoko Department, East Region, Cameroon



All the passengers were thoroughly searched - the passengers on the Gribi-Bertoua bus with continuation to Yaoundé or Daouala. In other words, this is a story of how ivory taken from the Democratic Republic of Congo can circulate up through a port of export. Wild bananas and 25 tusks were in the middle of the bags of 37-year-old Jova Yaweh Christian, a Nigerian passport holder, and his accomplice Ibrahim Adamou, a Cameroonian passport holder. Ten days after they were interrogated, the 2 ivory smugglers were sentenced to 13 months without remission.

In southern Cameroon, ivory corruption is rife. In May 2016, the commander of the Libongo gendarmerie station was transporting 2 tusks weighing 18 kg each. His peers are running an investigation on him, an investigation full of twists and turns that could ultimately bog down in quagmire.⁷¹



September 29, 2016

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 109 trifles made of ivory. The man aged 29 is yet a veteran in trafficking. His headquarter is in the flower market.⁷²

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

July 6, 2016

Makoua and Owando, Cuvette Department, Republic of the Congo



Seizure of 13 kg of ivory. The 4 poached elephants were babies. Two arrests and sentences of 3 years of prison without remission, and 500,000 CFA francs, or \$ 488 US, and 1.5 million CFA francs, or \$ 1,464 US of damages for each of them. The traffickers spent very little time in prevention detention. Article 113 of the 2008 law on wildlife protection provides for up to 5 years of prison. Elephant protectors consider that the verdict is fair.⁷³



REPEATED OFFENSE

July 27, 2016

Sembé, Sangha Region, Republic of the Congo

Three of Abbo Hamadou's accomplices told the Court their version of the facts. They introduced Hamadou as being the orchestrator. "You kill all the elephants", "You leave the tusks and weapons at such-and-such a place", "You'll recover everything on this date and in this location", "You'll find a gunman for the next expedition".⁷⁴

From July 28 to August 2, 2016
Republic of the Congo

2 Congolese people working in the maritime sector were arrested. They seem to be connected to a Chinese orderer and involved in several smuggling attempts (cf. "On the Trail" n° 5 p. 100). The Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF) coordinated the investigation.⁷⁵

September 30, 2016

Ouessou, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Hand in hand, the 2 citizens from Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo, were carrying 35 kg of ivory. They could also be the killers of the 5 very young elephants.⁷⁶

GABON

July 7, 2016

Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Emmanuel Allonguifor was sentenced to 2 years in prison for possession and transport of 34 kg of tusks. He was arrested at 4 am, on his way to Cameroon (cf. "On the Trail" n° 13 p. 91).⁷⁷



July 9 and August 2016

Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

The modern jewelry shop did not just sell cheap items. At the end of Saturday afternoon, the judicial police officers burst into the shop. At exactly the same time, Mr. Gbadamassi and his apprentice Mr. Barou Baraïma were trying to sell the 18.5 kg of ivory - 2 pairs of tusks and 4 elephant tails. The jeweler was sentenced to 6 months of prison and a fine equivalent to \$ 1,700 US.⁷⁸



July 14, 2016

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

For the possession of 2 ivory tips (34 kg), a trafficker was sentenced to 6 months of prison, of which 3 months are suspended, and to pay a fine of 300,000 CFA francs (\$ 510 US) and 500,000 CFA francs (\$ 850 US) in damages.⁷⁹



August 12, 2016

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

The artisanal jeweler 'La Croix du Sud' used products from the jungle, which his Asian clientele particularly valued. In his office, the judicial police and men from the Water and Forests Department seized 2 tusks weighing 7 kg each, 3 tails, 50 bracelets made of elephant hair, and 24 leopard teeth. Conservation Justice participated in the legal follow-up of this operation. Sylla is in custody. His statements and the incriminating evidence seized in his jewelry shop could be used to identify his suppliers.⁸⁰



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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

REPEATED OFFENSE

July 13, 2016

Kole, Kasai-Oriental Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Arrested in the village of Loto. Sentenced to 20 years of prison in Kole. According to the WWF, Didier Konga Bodjoko, alias Mopao, was transferred to Ndolo Prison in Kinshasa. Mopao hunted for ivory in Salonga National Park. On May 16, he fled from Park rangers who were encircling him. The clash left one poacher dead.⁸¹

September 16, 2016

Kinshasa, Province of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

The arrest of Kapayi Kikumbi Jean and Onakoy Oleko, 2 senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Trade and Industrialization, and 2 ACREP Transit managers, Tekatala Bazingu and Kalembu Kamwita Emery Patrice. Each of these suspects participated in the transport of 4 tons of dried beans to Laos. Nothing serious . . . except these beans were actually ivory (cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p. 77).⁸²

AMERICA

CANADA

July 2016

Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Seizure of 50 million doses (1 kg) of carfentanil, an elephant tranquilizer from China. Between May and July, the border police intercepted 3 postal packages containing carfentanil. A consignee was arrested in Calgary. His package was declared as a photocopier cartridge. Carfentanil is a synthetic opioid meant to kill or put elephants and rhinoceroses to sleep. Veterinarians also use it to treat other wild animals, but not members of the equidae and felines, which can never tolerate it.



© Royal Canadian Mounted Police

- Just 10 mg can kill a 6-ton elephant.
 - This same dose can kill 500 people.

Carfentanil is 10,000 times more powerful than morphine. Its use is going out of control all over the North American continent. Carfentanil is chemical ammunition. The United States, Russia, India, Israel, Eastern European countries, and the United Kingdom have examined the option of using a mixture of it with other substances in territorial defense systems and law enforcement. According to a Russian survivor of the neutralization of a Chechen commando who took several hundreds of spectators hostage in Dubrovka Theater in Moscow in 2002, the people who were not dead could be picked up like dolls by the rescuers. The United States of America ran carfentanil spray experiments on captive monkeys in the 1980s.

Carfentanil is now mainly used in blends with other medicinal substances and sold on drug markets.⁸³



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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 28, 2016

Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

The prestigious billiard cue maker continued to use ivory for his decorative finishings. The respectable 75-year-old Cesar Ernesto Gutierrez did not conform to federal and international regulations. He was already selling billiard cues to Frank Sinatra. Two of his recent clients, Huang Ching - the so-called "Liu" - and Wen Shou Wei were captured at the Los Angeles Airport with 40 sections of ivory, or articles with ivory inlays. This is really luxury for Taiwanese connoisseurs! At the beginning of the year, a website that Liu helped to run was offering a billiard cue with ivory and silver inlays, with the option of a sheath made of elephant ear leather. The 2 Taiwanese citizens pleaded guilty and are awaiting the decision. Mr. Gutierrez also pleaded guilty. He was released on \$ 10,000 US bail.⁸



The "Rat Pack" playing billiards : Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Peter Lawford and Sammy Davis Jr.

August 18, 2016

San Francisco, State of California, United States of America

Theft of over 60 ivory statuettes and sculpted tusks in an art gallery. The theft is worth 210,000 dollars. A 26-year-old suspect, Cameron Ybarra, was identified. He is in prison for another affair. The ivory was not found.⁸⁵



© San Francisco Police Department

August 30, 2016

Madison County, State of Illinois, United States of America

Elizabeth Alton, a former biology professor, pleaded guilty to the fraudulent export of a sculpted ivory cricket that was labeled as a decorative plastic object.⁸⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Mid September 2016

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



Metropolitan Fine Arts & Antiques (MFAA), run by the Moranos in Manhattan, on 10 West 57th Street. Since at least 2007, ivory was part of their trendy business. Since 2014, the State of New York has prohibited the sale of ivory objects, unless the DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) issues a special exemption. At the end of November 2015, undercover agents bought an ivory sculpture for \$ 2,000 US from Victor Zilberman, one of the MFAA sellers. It was presented as being made of mammoth ivory. Analysis subsequently revealed that the mammoth was actually an elephant. A search of MFAA led to the seizure of 126 pieces of sculpted ivory and 2 pairs of long 2.20 m and 1.50 m tusks, sold for between 150,000 and 200,000 dollars. The search was conducted under the control

of Cyrus Vance, a district attorney who is known in France for reasons other than ivory trafficking. Genetic and visual analysis showed that at least one pair, the smaller one, was from an elephant from the African savanna. The sales value of all the ivory in the MFAA reserves and shelves was over \$ 4.5 million US. This is the largest ivory seizure ever in the State of New York. For World Elephant Day, all the objects will be crushed in August 2017. Environmental alert number for the city and State of New York: 1-844-DEC-ECOS.



In the State of New York, a license to sell ivory can be granted only if:

- The ivory will be used for scientific or educational purposes.
- The ivory is part of an antique that is at least 100 years old and the ivory is less than 20% by volume of that antique.
- The ivory is sold as part of a trust or an estate.
- The ivory is part of a musical instrument manufactured before 1975.

Like elephant ivory, the sale of mammoth ivory has been illegal under New York law since June 2016.⁸⁷

ASIA

CAMBODIA

July 24, 2016

Keo Seyma District, Mondulkiri Province, Cambodia

We don't know how long it stayed in the trap. It died the day after it was freed by the police and by veterinarians, whom villagers had alerted. Trapping is a universal plague. It doesn't discriminate amongst its prey. It is said that there are 400 elephants in Cambodia - most of them in Keo Seima Sanctuary, in the eastern part of the country, near the Vietnamese border. We don't know what became of its little tusks.⁸⁸



August 5, 2016

Sihanoukville Autonomous Port, Sihanoukville Province, Cambodia

The container had been in the port since January 2014. The receiver, BTM Trade and Construction Company, had been contacted in vain several times. At 8:30 in the morning, the container was finally opened in the presence of customs and the provincial prosecutor. In the middle of the corn kernels, there were 613 kg of tusks. It turns out that BTM Trade hasn't existed for 2 years already. The container was coming from Mozambique (cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p. 87, n°5 p. 99, n°12 p. 91).⁸⁹



CHINA

July 1, 2016

Wenshan County, Yunnan Province, China

In a jewelry shop, seizure of 39 statuettes made of Asian elephant ivory and articles made of fake ivory and sea turtle shell, with a total value of 62,125 yuan (9,330 US\$). The suspect purchased his supplies on the internet, and resold the articles "retail" to various stores in the city and to a tearoom. After his Court appearance, he was released on bail.⁹⁰

July 22 and 27 2016

Langfang, Hebei Province, China

Seizure of 1,639 pieces of carved ivory weighing a total of 100 kg, and 3,090 pieces of sculpted fake ivory. More proof of the ivory flows between Japan and China. The items were purchased in Japan on a website.



They were sent to China via international postal package with payment on delivery. The amount requested was much higher than the declared content. This irregularity attracted the attention of customs. The counterfeit ivory was made of very skillfully crafted bone and resin that could be mixed with authentic ivory and deceive non-specialists. Two people were arrested.⁹¹

July 27, 2016

Hong Kong, China

8 kg of sculpted ivory was seized from a 36-year-old passenger returning from Lagos, Nigeria via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.⁹²



Beginning of August 2016

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

276 pieces of carved ivory, including cigarette cases, were seized in the luggage of a woman living in Hong Kong. "A suspicious shadow was spotted at the bottom of her bag", said the customs officers at Luohu Port. They inspect 30% of the passenger traffic between Hong Kong and mainland China. Between January and July 2016, 51 attempts to smuggle species protected by CITES were foiled, twice as much as during the first 7 months of 2015. Bear bile, ivory, and coral are the most common prohibited products.⁹³



Mid August 2016

Pei County, Jiangsu Province, China

A jade sculpture seller was sentenced to a one-month suspended prison term and to pay a fine of 3,000 yuan (\$ 450 US) for the illegal purchase and sale of 2 ivory pendants of Buddhist deities.⁹⁴



Mid August 2016

Autonomous Region of Tianjin, China

He ran his small business on a street corner. 44 rings and pendants were seized. He was sentenced to a suspended 8-month prison term and to pay a fine of 4,000 CFA francs (\$ 600 US).⁹⁵



August 2016

Autonomous Region of Tianjin and Huludao, Liaoning Province, China

Two arrests. The seizure goes back to 2 years ago, when the postal customs had searched a package coming from Japan via the EMS courier service. Within the vases that were the declared objects of the shipment, there were 56 ivory disks (3,076 g).⁹⁶

September 13, 2016

Dali, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 71 ivory objects in a store for tourists. The total weight of the objects was 2,902.43 g, and its estimated value was 120,936 yuan (\$ 18,130 US).⁹⁷



September 27, 2016

Beijing, China

Sentence to 5 years in prison and 100,000 yuan fine (\$ 15,000 US) for 2 Chinese tourists. They had bought in Bujumbura, Burundi, 20 kg of worked ivory toothpicks, necklaces, bracelets. On the sellers advice, they hid all this in milk and coffee cans and crisps bags. The swindle was discovered on their arrival in Beijing on their flight from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.⁹⁸



INDIA



Four years after its construction, the 2 km long wall must be demolished, based on the decision of the National Green Tribunal, which is specialized in environmental offenses. A wall divides the natural corridor of the Assam elephants. The oil company Numaligarh Refinery Limited established a buffer safety zone, in disregard to the Kaziranga Park buffer biodiversity zone. This public sector company has also been sentenced to pay 2,500,000 rupees (\$ 40,000 US). The National Green Tribunal has asked the Assam government to declare the area as a reserve forest and a No-Development Zone without delay.



Mid July 2016

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

The young elephant had crossed the large river. The postmortem examination revealed that its abdomen was wounded. It sought refuge in the Bhomoraguri Reserve Forest. A coordinated operation was able to remove it from a marsh where it was sinking. It was then injected with sedatives to put it to sleep, and put on truck a heading for Kaziranga. It died on the road. NGOs suspect that it was overdosed with sedatives, but this has not been confirmed.⁹⁹

July 8 – July 12 2016

Buxa Tiger Reserve, State of West Bengal, India

The decapitated body of the elephant floated down the river. The Raidak River is a tributary of the Kaljani River near the border. The crime may have taken place in Bhutan. At the beginning that's what the investigators believe. Four days afterwards, the SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal - Armed Border Force) arrested a poacher in Buxa Reserve (cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p. 29-30, n° 4 p. 88, n°8 p. 88, n°10 p. 64) and seized a leopard pelt in his home. He seems to also be responsible for the poaching and mutilation of the adult elephant. The tusks have not been found yet. "If it is confirmed that the elephant was killed in Buxa, it would really be bad luck", worries the operational director of the Reserve.¹⁰⁰

West Bengal and Elephants

The government employs 156 elephants. The legal retirement age is set at 70 years. However, 70 elephants that are over 70 years old continue to work. As the forest administration fears it could be taken to Court for cruelty, it will hire and domesticate elephants less than 8 years old. The first step is to capture them in their natural environment. "In general, we prefer to target elephants that live away from their original families." Animal defenders in India welcomed this decision.



July 10, 2016

Chennai Port, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Pillaging of plants, animals, and archaeological works. The 2 containers were about to be loaded onto a container-ship heading for the United Arab Emirates. According to the investigators, the final destination was China. The containers were coming from Andhra Pradesh. The containers had red sandalwood logs (*Pterocarpus*

santalinus, Appendix II), ancient stone idols, ivory statuettes, wood sculptures, snake bone walking sticks - "cultural and historic objects", as the DRI (Director of Revenue Intelligence) highlights. On this occasion, it used the expertise of the ASI (Archaeological Survey of India). The containers were initially full of sewer plates before they were diverted between the container park and the port of Chennai. "The containers were emptied of their original cargo and filled with art objects and wood."

In the gang's warehouse between Vanagaram and Ambattur, law enforcement officers found cutting, drilling, and welding tools, as well as carts to handle the containers. The gang members had their routine in this base. They had vanished before the authorities raided it.

The investigators listened to several people, but no one was immediately arrested.

The 2 cargoes that were seized were worth the equivalent of \$ 1,237,000 US. Indian archaeologists have been tasked with dating the antiquities and checking if some of them are counterfeits.



Note that 3 weeks beforehand, in the neighboring State of Kerala, a 45-year-old craftsman was caught in his workshop, sculpting religious idols in sandalwood 15 cm tall. The region of Muttatara Chakka is said to have several of these kinds of workshops, specialized in fake ivory and sandalwood antiquities.¹⁰¹

July 21, 2016

Pratapgarh District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

A 55-year-old elephant was released. 20 forest wardens were mobilized. The mahout hideout was difficult to access. Despite the open wounds and scars on his body and ears, and its wounded feet, the old elephant was treated “properly”, according to his exploiters.

Mohan is his slave name. He begged on the streets and near temples, blessing passersby, tapping them lightly on the head with his trunk. He fell into the hands of men at a very tender age. It appears that he was sold to his last owners 15 years ago, at the Sonapur Cattle Fair. Mohan is the brother in hardship of Raju, another beggar elephant who was freed from his chains 2 years ago.¹⁰²

End of July 2016

Corbett Tiger Reserve, State of Uttarakhand, India

Elephants to protect tigers. The Corbett Tiger Reserve has been thinking about this for several years. Elephant-mounted patrols are more effective than motorized patrols in monsoon season, when paths and roads are impassable - and when poaching is in full swing. The other advantage is that those on the lookout can see further. Twelve domestic elephants will cover 2,500 km, probably in a truck. However, the logistics option has not been settled on yet. For the moment, the elephants are in Karnataka, in the Bannerghatta, Mathigodu, and Kaveridhama Camps, and in Rajiv Gandhi Park. Bad news. A female elephant who was meant to travel far has just died of intestinal problems.

Furthermore, in accordance with a judicial decision and the opinion of the National Green Tribunal, the government of Uttarakhand plans to displace 1,000 people who illegally settled down after the 1970 construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Ramganga River. The presence of this human encroachment prevented wild elephants and other animals from the Corbett Tiger Reserve from drinking there.¹⁰³

July 26, 2016

Manas National Park, State of Assam, India

Seizure of a section of a one-kilo tusk whose estimated value is 100,000 rupees (\$ 1,490 US) and 2 arrests.¹⁰⁴

July 26 and 30, 2016

Veliyambam, State of Kerala, India

The elephant was about 20 years old. The killers were 34, 39, 48, and 49 years old. The cadaver was in a coffee plantation. They said that an elephant took them by them surprise at a bend, “while they were poaching some small game”. Cartridges, a headlamp, and knives were found. They had a rickshaw to transport the material and the victims or their parts.¹⁰⁵



July 29, 2016

Phulbari, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

In India, her name was Pema Choki Lama. In Bhutan, her name was Pema Choki Sherpa. The one and the same big traveler with 2 passports, often targeted by the Thai, Indonesian, and Malaysian customs. On National Highway 31D 100 km from Bhutan, forest wardens intercepted her. The car contained one kilo of ivory and 200,000 rupees (\$ 2,980 US). The wildlife businesswoman lives on the border between India and Bhutan, in Alipurduar District. She has an associate in Thimpu, 300 km away. The fauna trafficking towards Tibet and China is taking down the Indian corridor between Nepal and Bangladesh. Snake venom, sandalwood, feline pelts, and rhinoceros horns are regularly taken from there.¹⁰⁶

July 29, 2016

Ponnuthu, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Farmers slipped homemade bombs into fruits to get rid of the wild boars. One of the decoys caught an elephant calf. It fled into the legs of its mother. They sought refuge in a brickyard near the city of Thudiyalur. To remove the mother from the baby, the veterinarian and the forest wardens used smoke firecrackers and brought in a domesticated elephant. Unfortunately, it was too late to save the victim. Its mouth and trunk had been hit. His body was cremated.¹⁰⁷



August 2, 2016

Rupabalia Reserve Forest, State of Odisha, India

An autopsy is underway. According to the official version, he died after a fight with another male elephant. The villagers have another version. They say there was a poaching incident. A man was arrested a few days beforehand in the forest. He was armed. It seems that the elephant fled after it had been targeted. The elephant was about 15 years old.¹⁰⁸

August 25, 2016

Dudhwa National Park, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

A female elephant died, due to unknown reasons. A poaching camp was found 8 km from the border with Nepal. Many human-animal conflicts happen in the Park buffer zone. A tiger killed 2 men on August 18 and 19. The villagers enter into to the Park with their herds.¹⁰⁹

August 26, 2016

Bankura, State of West Bengal, India

The express train ran into 3 elephants. Traffic was interrupted for several hours. The herd of about 50 elephants were very persistent about staying close to the remains of the female elephants and the 2 elephant calves. A few hours before the collision, the police interrupted traffic on National Highway 60 to let the herd go through. The Indian railways deny responsibility for this. They claim that they were not informed of the displacement underway. The Forest Department said that the train was going too fast. The Federal Minister of the Environment would like the 2 entities to exchange information in real time on train and elephant traffic.¹¹⁰

August 29, 2016

Ammatti, Kodagu district, State of Karnataka, India

An elephant on a coffee plantation was shot dead with a firearm. The poachers supposedly confused the 20-year-old victim with a wild boar. No info on the tusks and other parts that could be sold on the black market.¹¹¹

Beginning of September 2016

Thane district, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a 30 cm tusk weighing 3 kg, whose estimated value is 200,000 rupees (\$ 2,991 US). One arrest.¹¹²

State of Emergency in Odisha State

Between April 2015 and March 2016, out of 76 elephant deaths that plunged the State into mourning, 20 of them died of anthrax and foot-and-mouth disease. It seems that the elephants caught the deadly viruses from forced proximity with livestock. Agriculture has invaded their migration corridors. The other major cause of the elephant deaths is accidental and voluntary electrocution. Poaching is in 3rd place. However, the distinction between electrocution and poaching is not clear. It is common to divert power lines for poaching. The development and anthropization of territories shortens the circles of life of elephants. They become easily angry. Angul's circle is becoming industrialized. There are more and more roads and risks for wildlife. Due to the construction of the dam, Rangali's circle has almost become an island. Elephants want to get out of it at all costs. The tension with the general public is increasing. Two male elephants that are said to have caused about 20 deaths have narrowly escaped being called 'problem elephants' and being slaughtered. Their tusks will be cut off, in hopes of bringing down the energy and hyperactivity of dominant males. The 2 jumbos will also be equipped with a geolocation collar that can raise the alarm if there are movements that can cause conflict.¹¹³

September 24, 2016

Prabhasuni Reserve, State of Odisha, India

At least 5 elephants killed since June 9. Latest autopsies confirm poaching. Three females died from electrocution and a male from an 7 inches arrow across the skull near the eye. At the time of the discovery of the be dying elephant, he was still carrying his tusks.¹¹⁴

INDONESIA

August 26, 2016

Bandar Lampung, Province of Lampung, Indonesia

Pipe trafficking. A network run by a retired civil servant was dismantled in a gas station by 2 police officers who pretended they were interested. 36 pipes 10, 12, and 19 cm long were seized in the pockets of one of the sellers. On June 6, 2016, the average price of a pipe was \$ 120 US. The first Court trials have just taken place. The prosecuting attorney considers that no price can be put on the damages, as "elephants are the link in the natural ecosystem".¹¹⁵

September 20, 2016

Pekanbaru District, Province of Riau, Indonesia

The origin of the 2 tusks measuring 1.70 to 2 m long remains mysterious at the end of the trial. The 5 men aged 41 to 63 were sentenced to prison terms between 18 and 24 months and fines worth Rs 10 million (\$ 770 US). If these are not paid, the prison sentences will be prolonged by 4 to 6 months (see "On the Trail" n°13 p. 95).¹¹⁶



MALAYSIA

July 21, 2016

Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia

The 60 tusks weighing a total of 1,001 kg, worth \$ 2,463,459 US, or \$ 2,460 US/kg, were in the holds of the Turkish Airlines cargo plane coming from Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo. The cargo was heading to 2 separate addresses, in Johor and Selangor. Once the police arrived on the scene, they found 2 empty homes. The tusks were called "clay" and "wood samples".

Other seizures coming from Africa: On July 14, 35 kg of khat coming from Ethiopia. On July 22, 530 g of amphetamines coming from Nigeria.¹¹⁷



August 8, 2016

Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia

Seizure of 111 kg of ivory estimated to be worth 946,000 ringgit (\$ 233,000 US), or \$ 2,100 US / kg. From Uganda via Istanbul. The 6 packages were declared as containing "cereal grains". They were being sent to a fake address in Salak Tinggi, 50 km south of Kuala Lumpur. Some bags had grains, while other ones had raw tusks cut into sections.¹¹⁸



MYANMAR

July 6, 2016

Bhamo Creek, Irrawaddy Division, Myanmar

After following every step of the 4 poachers in the mountain for 3 days, the small special force - composed of a ranger, a sub-lieutenant city police officer, Kyaw Zin Aung, a sub-lieutenant forestry police officer, Hein Zaw Tun - decided to attack in the middle of the night. That was when the ivory hunters started to sleep, after they had cooked some elephant meat. Three of the hunters managed to escape. The 4th one was encircled. He was duly arrested. Two rifles, powder, poison, and fragments of elephant hide and elephant meat were also seized. The 4 murderers are from Ngaphe, a cursed city for elephants ("On the Trail" n°12 p. 91).¹¹⁹

July 29, 2016

Kyauktaga, Bago Division, Myanmar

"They did not have time to continue with their plans for the dead elephant." The long 40 cm tusks are still there. A poisoned arrow was driven into its neck. 15 policemen are after the killer(s). Global New Light, a government-owned newspaper, is concerned about the rapid rise in ivory hunting. At least 30 poaching incidents in the first 5 months of the year, as opposed to an average of 13 in the entire preceding years. The central administration is considering closing down the Mong La market. Part of the raw and processed ivory that is taken from Asian elephants transits through Mong La. Chinese traffickers are in a hurry to get there (cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p. 86).¹²⁰

SRI LANKA

July 21, 2016

Kataragama, Uva Province, Sri Lanka

It was 6 years old. The famous and smiling Ali Roshan captured it in the jungle (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11 p. 85). It will be taken to the Pinnawala Orphanage under order of the Colombo Court. It was seized after the annual Kataragama devotion procession.¹²¹



August 17, 2016

Cheddikulam, Vavuniya District, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The new railroad line goes through the jungle in the northern part of the country, 260 km from Colombo. Four elephants died in a collision. No one on the train was wounded.¹²²



THAILAND

September 23, 2016

Ra-ngae District, Narathiwat Province, southern Thailand

An elephant died from bullet wounds.¹²³



Nothing could be done. The soldiers took the veterinarians to the place where the female elephant was in her death throes. The veterinarians failed to save the elephant, which several bullets had hit in the head and rear left leg. It is said that she came down the mountain with a male and an elephant calf, and went toward an orchard.

VIET NAM

July 2, 2016

Thuong Tin District, Hanoi, Viet Nam



The main cargo flow is from Viet Nam to China. This cargo took the opposite path, from Mong Cai to the Chinese-Vietnamese border. The taxi was heading toward Hanoi. The back trunk had 3 boxes full of bracelets, necklaces, and go game pieces. The driver had been "rented" to escort the goods to the My Dinh bus station.¹²⁴



Mid July 2016

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

The 8 circular gift packets in the package that the courier service sent had sections of the adult tusk, as the postal customs of Ho Chi Minh City airport suspected. The consignee lives in the Mekong Delta and does not have any kind of authorization to import the ivory. He had a hearing in Court. The "gifts" came from Prague. This Czech/Vietnamese ivory business is still booming (cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p. 4, n°5 p. 103, p.104, n°6 p. 96).¹²⁵



July 17, 2016

Hanoi, Viet Nam

35-year-old Kien was known as the wildlife meat supplier for Hanoi restaurants. The revelation was that he also indulged in ivory trafficking. Almost 200 kg of pieces of tusk were found in his home a Sunday afternoon. He purchased African ivory for \$ 358 US / kg and resold it for up to \$ 895 US. A few days after his arrest, some of these clients were identified and interrogated. In their homes, they had 15 kg of ivory that they had bought from Kien. It remains to be seen who Kien's supplier was. The National Anti-Smuggling Police Agency is continuing its investigation.¹²⁶



September 29, 2016

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure of 310 kg of tusks likely from elephants coming from Lagos, Nigeria. The package was addressed to a local company. It was declared as "toughened glass". The Etihad Airways from the United Arab Emirates served as a carrier.¹²⁷



Surging European Union Pre-CITES Convention* Ivory Exports to Hong Kong A Cause for Concern

South Africa, 27 September 2016 – As delegates from all around the world deliberate on the future of wildlife, including elephants, at the CITES CoP17 wildlife trade conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, recently obtained data from the Hong Kong government show significant imports of ivory from the European Union to Hong Kong SAR of the People's Republic of China with a total tonnage of over 7 tonnes. Moreover, the number of worked ivory pieces entering Hong Kong shot up by a dramatic 685%. In 2014, the total number of worked ivory pieces entering Hong Kong from the European Union was 1,572 pieces, but this leapt dramatically to 10,761 worked ivory pieces in 2015.

"The new data from Hong Kong show that the EU continues to be a significant exporter of ivory, the source of which is not always clear. As EU exports seem to be shifting from raw to worked ivory the EU needs to end all exports and close its own domestic market once and for all", said Daniela Freyer from Pro Wildlife, Germany.

Recent record seizures of illegal ivory in France and Germany, destined for Asian markets, and an illegal ivory carving workshop found in Germany highlight the EU as a transit route for illegal ivory.

"The EU is also a supermarket for traffickers and seizures of ivory bought in Europe are regularly made in Asia," added Charlotte Nithart from Robin des Bois, France.

Key points to note

France & Belgium

Pre-Convention ivory exports from France were down from 3,078 kilos in 2014 to just 170 kilos in 2015. However, before celebrating this news it must be recognized that Pre-Convention ivory exports from France's neighbor, Belgium, during the same period, skyrocketed from 318 kilos to 1,439 kilos, and the number of carved pieces went from just one piece in 2014 to 218 pieces in 2015. An investigation by Robin des Bois showed that French ivory is being driven across the border for export from other member States, like Belgium, that do not have Pre-Convention raw ivory export bans.

Italy

Conservationists note with concern that despite the Italian Government's pledge to combat wildlife trafficking, including its destruction of seized ivory in March 2016, the amount of Pre-Convention ivory exported to Hong Kong from Italy rose from just 13 kilos in 2014 to 211 kilos in 2015, and the number of worked ivory pieces rose from just 74 pieces in 2014 to a massive 7,639 pieces in 2015. It is possible that the practice of moving Pre-Convention ivory items around the EU to find countries that facilitate ivory exports is potentially widespread.

Andrea Crosta, Executive Director, Elephant Action League, Italy, said "Last year over 7,000 pieces of ivory have been legally exported to Hong Kong from Italy. This is how Italy fuels the demand and the international ivory trade. We ask the government of Italy to ban ivory and stop these shameful exports to Asia."

United Kingdom

Six EU countries (UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, Austria, and Sweden) announced in March 2015 that they had stopped issuing export permits for raw ivory. The Czech Republic and Slovakia have since implemented the same measure. In February 2016 the EU published an Action Plan aiming inter alia at banning exports of raw ivory. However, worked ivory is not included in the plan and no EU wide ban has been implemented at this point in time. "Creating exemptions for Pre-Convention ivory offers an ongoing opportunity for ivory laundering and sustaining demand. This undoubtedly means more elephants will die a bloody, brutal and unnecessary death," stated Will Travers, OBE, President of The Born Free Foundation, UK.

A recent investigation in the UK, by campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, demonstrated that 6 out of 9 ivory pieces he selected and bought online and in market stalls were illegal.

"The implications of these results are enormous", said Fearnley-Whittingstall. "My investigation has proven that the law in Britain on ivory sales is being broken. This is important because we know significant amounts of ivory sold here is then being smuggled to Asia, where it helps fuel the very market which is killing Africa's elephants."

In 2014, the United Kingdom exported 1141 pieces of carved ivory to Hong Kong and 2524 in 2015.

At the ongoing CITES meeting, a coalition of 29 African countries and the US are proposing to close all domestic ivory markets. However, as yet the EU has not agreed to this important measure and is advocating to exempt Pre-Convention ivory. Robin des Bois, Pro Wildlife, WildAid and The Born Free Foundation are calling on the European Union to ban all Pre-Convention ivory exports without delay, in order to curb a destructive trade which has been documented as providing a laundering mechanism for an illegal trade in freshly-poached ivory from recently killed elephants in Africa.

Alex Hafford, Wildlife Campaigner, WildAid, Hong Kong, said "We commend the Hong Kong government's pledge in January 2016 to phase-out its domestic ivory trade, including a halt to further Pre-Convention ivory imports into Hong Kong, and we urge its speedy implementation. The day Hong Kong bans Pre-Convention ivory imports will be a great day. It will set an example for the EU as a whole to follow and for each and every EU Member State to replicate by enacting their own domestic Pre-Convention ivory export bans."

* Prior to 1975 for Asian elephant ivory and 1976 for African elephant ivory.

GERMANY

August 25, 2016

Koblenz, State of Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany

A development in the seizure of 625 kg of ivory in the Berlin international airport (cf. "On the Trail" n° 13 p. 96). The investigation ended up in a workshop in the former industrial zone in the massif of Hunsrück, near Coblenz. Two Vietnamese craftsmen were busy carving, polishing, and cutting up raw ivory tusks. 570 kg in all. "Many points still need to be cleared up", said the Cottbus public prosecutor.¹²⁸



FRANCE

RATHKEALE ROVERS

July 29, 2016

Rennes, Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, France

They're back again! They're at home in France and well loved. The justice system refuses to extradite them to the United States (cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p. 69, n°10 p. 49).

September 2015. The Rathkeale Rovers swindle people with adulterated asphalt, rob museums of rhinoceros horns, and are shady antique ivory appraisers. They were arrested on a road near Poitiers. They had 4 tusks weighing 10 kg each in their vehicle, with valid but intriguing certificates. One of the certificates stated that the owner was a French-Vietnamese director of an export-import company dealing with antiques and cosmetics, based in the Seine Saint Denis geographical department, north of Paris.

May 2016, the merchant's warehouse was searched. Among the various goods, 14 tusks were unearthed (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 97). No certificate of origin was available. However, the investigators got a hold on 23 certificates related to tusks that were not on the premises. The businessman was indicted for the organized import, possession, transport, and export of endangered species. He was placed in preventive detention in western France.

July 29, 2016. He was denied release on probation. The public prosecutor considered that the cosmetics trade between France and Viet Nam was the perfect cover for trafficking. "Detention is called for, so that he does not flee before the indictment and the consultation with other parties involved." A press article in "Le Télégramme de Brest" revealed that the trafficker met a Rathkeale Rover at the Lille flea market. He denies having close ties with the gang.¹²⁹

ITALY

REPEATED OFFENSE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 30, 2016

Padua, Region of Veneto, Italy

The Fiat 500 of the father and son was full of antique books, porcelains, and paintings. There were also 4 ancient worked ivory of Arctic and African origin. The father had already been mixed up in pillaging cultural heritage. Both of them were arrested. According to the initial examination, the cargo is worth at least € 50,000.¹³⁰

POLAND

August 2016

A luxury car interior designer based in Poland, Carlex Design, offers seat options and other accessories covered with elephant skin that has been imported from southern African countries, where the elephants are only registered in CITES Appendix II. This leaves the door open to the international trade.¹³¹



UNITED KINGDOM

Beginning of September 2016 London, England, United Kingdom

The developments in the Christie's affair (cf. "On the Trail" n° 13 p. 97). This auction house founded in 1776 accepted to sell an elephant tusk from the Indian subcontinent that was submitted to it for appraisal by Mr. Collins, an antique dealer from Middlesex. Mr. Collins said he recovered the object of the dispute in an attic after the death of his mother, and that he requested advice from Christie's. As it was noted that the prestigious auction house had, in a way, misled him, he got out of paying a fine. However, he still had to pay the costs of the proceedings, £ 620 (\$ 807 US). His lawyer pointed out that in the same case Christie's was sentenced to pay a fine of only £ 3,250 (\$ 4,233 US), "an absolute drop in the ocean" for such a company - and claims that if there would be a fine, it should be proportional to the modest means of the Middlesex antique dealer. The tusk was seized and entrusted to the Wildlife Unit of the Metropolitan Police, which will use it as a documentary item for its investigations. "We want it to be put to good use and we are satisfied that the police will do that and we are confident that the police will let Mr. Collins see it if he ever wants to", concluded Judge John Scott.¹³²



September 13, 2016

Carlisle, County of Cumbria, England, United Kingdom

He sold "cow-bone carvings" on eBay. They were clearly made of ivory (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p.114). This was a fake label to outsmart the eBay filters, which prohibit the sale of ivory on its site, since 2009.

In the United Kingdom, the sale of elephant ivory is prohibited, with the exception of ivory that was worked prior to 1947. The 'worked ivory' label applies to ivory whose raw state - the tusk or tusk section - has been modified to make jewelry, art, decorations, or musical instruments. The seller made up a story: a grandmother who returned from Africa before 1947 had loads of worked ivory in her trunks. The carbon-14 dating that the Court ordered proved that the objects came from elephants that were alive in the 1970s. 27-year-old Shane David Ball, who says he suffers from mental disorder, received a suspended sentence of 7 months of prison, with a preliminary probationary period of 18 months. He must also reimburse £ 1,134 (€ 1,316), for the cost of the carbon-14 dating. Shane refused to provide additional information on the origin of the sculptures and statuettes, which he sold for £ 100 (€ 116) on average.¹³³



SWEDEN

August 2016

Göteborg Landvetter Airport, Sweden

3 pieces of sculpted ivory were seized.¹³⁴

Donkey Pelt Accounts

- July 2016. Tanghin Dassouri, Centre Region, Burkina Faso

In the beginning of July, inhabitants furious about the odor and water and soil pollution destroyed some facilities of the slaughterhouse managed by Chinese and French businessmen. The slaughterhouse management said that it had gone through all the required steps, that it had installed a -40°C flash-frozen passageway and an automated chain for cutting up donkeys, and that it had created 170 direct jobs at the same time. The company confirmed that it exported meat and salted donkey hides to Asia for meat consumption, medicine, and candy (see "Donkey too !" in "On the Trail" n°12, p.97). "We are aware of the threat that the donkey species is facing, and our goal is also to financially contribute to breeding facilities that provide jobs and revenue for people, so that we can benefit from them later", management added. This statement goes against the recent decree prohibiting the export of donkeys, horses, and camels and their products. The Ministry of Animal Resources of Burkina Faso reported that there was relatively little donkey skin exported at the beginning of 2015, and that its export exponentially increased at the end of 2015, with the influx of Chinese pharmacists - rising from 1,000 pelts in the 1st quarter to 18,000 in the 4th quarter. During the 1st quarter of 2016, the veterinary services inspected 65,000 donkey skins for export. The public health director considers that at the current donkey slaughter rate, the last one will be gone within the next 5 years.¹

- July 26, 2016. Niger. Niger now also prohibits the export of donkey skin and meat, via an order that 4 ministers signed. Niger has between 1,500,000 and 2 million donkeys. Between April 2015 and April 2016, 80,000 donkey pelts were exported to China. Donkey hides are lining up in Hong Kong. The time bomb is racing out of control. There was the internet bubble on the stock markets; now there is the donkey bubble on the animal goods market. Donkeys are traded in entire herds. Young women in the countryside use to wish a donkey as a dowry in their marital home. With all the marketing, they'll soon be wishing for a tractor, a 4x4, a lawnmower, and a gas pump.²

- August 21, 2016. Bamako, Bamako District, Mali. The deal was underway in the SOMAPIL traffic circle in the industrial area. 36 donkey pelts were stuffed into the blood-stained bags. Two Chinese people caught in the act.

- September 7, 2016. Nara, Koulikoro Region, Mali. Two national guard squad units neutralized an illegal donkey slaughterhouse, at least for a while. 28 pelts were seized and burned.³



Painted Wolves

**August 2016****Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

The African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) population, also called 'painted wolves', suffered a huge loss with the death of one of its packs in Kruger National Park in South Africa. These 13 African wild dogs lived in the southern part of the Park, in the Lower Sabie / Nkomazi section. They all died of a particularly severe strain of canine distemper. Canine distemper

can affect African wild dogs, other dogs, lions, hyenas, jackals, foxes, and other small carnivores. However, it is rare for the death rate to be high. Canine distemper is a contagious virus disease that is a relative of the human measles and the cattle plague. It is not always deadly. This is the 2nd pack in 6 months that has died in South Africa. The first pack was in Tswalu Desert, in Northern Cape Province. The virus was probably caught via a pet dog that came from outside the Park. It is very unlikely that the virus has spread to other packs. It is rare for different packs of African wild dogs to be in contact with one other. However, the pet dog continues to roam around in the Park. SANParks, which is responsible for managing Kruger Park, is trying to eliminate or vaccinate the dog before there is a new loss. It is very difficult to vaccinate the adult African wild dogs. Posters have been put up within Kruger Park for visitors to report the presence of African wild dogs exhibiting unusual behavior. The ill dogs are grouped together. They have trouble breathing and moving.⁴

The dead pack was the most well-known pack in Kruger. It lived in the Park zone that is most popular with tourists. 19 packs remain in the National Park, or around 180 to 200 painted wolves. They represent half of the country's painted wolf population.

Up until recently, the African wild dog was considered as a cruel and ruthless animal pest. It has been exterminated in several African countries (Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Ethiopia, for example). They have been poisoned by farmers, shot down by breeders, and have even been slaughtered by rangers. African wild dogs have been accused of jeopardizing the biological equilibrium of the parks. It is a species that is becoming extinct. There were around 300,000 to 500,000 African wild dogs at the beginning of the 20th century. There are less than 3,000 of them left today. The average pack size has also declined. It has gone from approximately a hundred to less than thirty individuals. In the 1980s, canine distemper killed so many African wild dogs in Tanzania that they almost became extinct. A few specimens would be caught to be decorative pet.

17th CITES Conference of the Parties: Range States of African wild dog are encouraged to take measures to prevent illegal trade in African wild dog, and to consider including the species in Appendix III. Parties are encouraged to share information with Burkina Faso about trade in the species.

KENYA

Mid July 2016

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Rescue of a female plains zebra (*Equus quagga*). Around her neck, she was carrying a steel snare from a trap.⁵



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

July 5, 2016

Trelew, Province of Chubut, Argentina

Seizure of 7 bags containing 300 kg of llama meat (*Lama glama*, Appendix II) in a Toyota Hilux. The meat was meant for the black market of the butcheries in the city. Meat eaters consider guanaco meat as their 2nd choice. Vicuña meat sells for more. Chubut Province is on the border with Chile.⁶



BRAZIL

July 15, 2016

Coari, Amazonas State, Brazil

Seizure of spotted pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III) and dead armadillos in a local market. They were to be sold for 50 real (\$ 15 US). Two interrogations.⁷



PERU

July 4-6, 2016

Chumbivilcas Province, Cusco Region, Peru

Vicuña breeders (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I) and inhabitants of the Laullos community were held hostage for 2 days by 10 traffickers. At gunpoint, the victims saw the offenders kill, cut up, and skin the hides of 50 vicuñas. The police believe that the gang has held sway in the region for several months already. They are said to have killed over 100 vicuñas.⁸



ASIA

CAMBODIA

July 5, 2016

Steung Prat station, Cardamom Mountains, Cambodia

Seizure of Asian palm civet meat (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), sambar meat (*Rusa unicolor*), and lesser mouse-deer meat (*Tragulus kanchil*). This little hoofed and twilight animal feeds on fruits and leaves. The man stored a large quantity of game meat. He was just about finished with loading the meat onto his motorcycle

when the patrol caught him in the act. During the chase through a sugarcane plantation, the trafficker threw the meat overboard. He then managed to escape by accelerating on the express lane that leads to the border with Viet Nam. Trafficking in these small mammals starves the large carnivores and jeopardizes the reintroduction of tigers in Cambodia (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 39).⁹



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INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 27, 2016

Aska, State of Odisha, India

With a trap, a bamboo pick, and a dagger, 22-year-old Simanchal and 40-year-old Bishnu Behera killed the 'krushnasara murga', the blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal). 65-year-old Bijuli sold the meat.¹⁰



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August 9, 2016

Gudiyatham, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 5.5 kg of mongoose hair. Four arrests. It appears that 275 mongooses were killed and shaved. See the "Mongoose" file in "On the Trail" n°3 p. 78.¹¹

August 21, 2016

Pondicherry, Territory of Pondicherry, India

The 2 Narikurava tribe members were selling 6 mongooses in a public thoroughfare. The animals were seized and the sellers were taken to the police station.¹²

MALAYSIA

September 27, 2016

State of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Seizure of 2 Sumatran serow heads (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I), 12 legs, a partial skin and 2 jugs of oil presumably extracted from the bovine. The regional department of Perhilitan believes that all these forest animal parts and by products are intended for Asian traditional medicine practices. One retired civil servant arrested.¹³

NEPAL

July 30, 2016

Bhatbhateni, Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of a red panda pelt (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I). The 48-year-old suspect could face one to 10 years in prison or a fine of 40,000 to 75,000 rupees (\$ 375 to \$ 700 US).¹⁴



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August 10, 2016

Kapan, Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of 9 red panda pelts (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I). Four arrests. Depending on the quality, the size, and the clients, a pelt can sell for between 200,000 and 600,000 rupees, or \$ 1,800 to \$ 5,600 US. In 4 years, the police of the metropolis of Kathmandu have seized 70 red panda pelts and prosecuted 180 suspects. The *Ailurus fulgens* are captured in mountains, at an altitude of between 2,200 and 4,800 m.¹⁵

September 2, 2016

Tribhuvan International airport of Kathmandu, Nepal

Three stag antlers were seized. Two Turkish nationals were arrested before their Turkish Airlines flight took off.¹⁶



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VIET NAM

August 6, août 2016

Uong Bi, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam



The convoy of 2 big cars was transporting 63 large Indian civets (*Viverra zibetha*, Appendix III in India). The large civet lives in dense forests, prairies, and bushy zones. It lives in burrows that other animals have

dug. It is a carnivore, and likes eating toads, reptiles, birds, fish, and mice. Deforestation is a major threat to its survival. It is hunted for its meat.¹⁷

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Beginning of July 2016

International Airport Irkutsk, Siberian Federal District, Russia

Seizure of 4.2 kg of foreskin glands of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferu*, Appendix II).¹⁹

OCEANIA

FRANCE

August 4, 2016

Nouméa, South Province, New Caledonia, France



Sentenced to pay a fine of 50,000 CFP francs (\$ 465 US) for poaching a fruit bat (*Pteropus* spp, Appendix I or II). The offense took place at night, on Wednesday, March 23, 2016. The poacher got it all wrong. Hunting is only authorized in April, from sunrise to sunset, and only on weekends. The father of Felix the poacher justified his son's act, even as he regretted it. "We have the new yam festival in March, and we eat fresh fruit bats and turtles with yams."²⁰



Wolves



September 2 and 16, 2016

Norway

- The government has added wolves to the whales. The Norwegian parliament has decided to authorize the culling of 70% of the wolves split between 7 packs. 47 wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) are to be shot to death of hardly 70 wolves that have been counted in the country. 25 other individuals have been counted in areas on the border with Sweden. Wolves in Norway (cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p. 92), like in the European Union, are classified as critically endangered.

- The Supreme Court has increased the sentences of a man who had planned a wolf battue with 2 accomplices in the winter of 2014. They have been definitively sentenced to one year, 6 months, and 5 months of prison without remission.



France

Between August 19 and September 26, 2016

13 wolves and wolf cubs were killed by authorized hunters or sharpshooters from the National Hunting and Wildlife Agency ('ONFCFS') via exemptions. The Ministry of Ecology is considering extending the exemptions to the northeastern quarter of France. Some of the public opinion and national media are concerned about the fact that the "wolves are getting closer to Paris". Last year, 4 million sheep and lambs were killed in slaughterhouses, and wolves are said to have attacked

3,300 of them. The president of the region of Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur predicts that "the wolves will end up chasing away the inhabitants of the Alps".¹⁸

Multi-Species

AFRICA

CAMEROON

July 5, 2016

Bafoussam, West Region, Cameroon

On board a Butsis Voyage bus, the 46-year-old housewife was transporting a live pangolin, olive baboon meat (*Papio anubis*, Appendix II), civet meat (Viverrinae family), porcupine meat (*Atherurus* genre), and duiker meat (Cephalophinae subfamily). The meat that was seized was not burned. It was sold at an auction. Precautions for the Ebola fever vanished into thin air. The meat came from Adamaoua. The bus was heading to Kimbé, 590 km from there. Mispa Ngoh Mbone claimed she did not have experience in this trade. She had bought the meat from local hunters.¹



Papio anubis

September 20, 2016

Department of Faro, North Region and department of Mefou et Akono, Centre Region, Cameroon

Five agents from the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife ('MINFOF') suspected of complicity in poaching and illegal logging. The minister says that enough evidence has been gathered to take measures of conservation. 84 agents from this ministry have already been suspended for the same reasons. We do not know how many of them were able to resume work at the end of the investigation.²

KENYA

September 16, 2016

Narok County, Kenya

Seizure of a 4.5 kg tusk and a 500 g leopard skin. Parsime Ole Musompe was arrested and released on a bail of 800,000 Sh (\$ 7,871 US).³



MALAWI

September 30, 2016

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

Condemnation of 3 Zambian citizens including an army captain to 3 years and 4 months in prison for smuggling of elephant tusks and skins of leopard and lion. Their arrest dates back to September 2, 2016 in the border town of Mchinji.⁴



UGANDA

July 8, 2016

Kamwenge District, Western Region, Uganda

Seizure of 25 kg of hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II), or 52 teeth stolen from at least 15 specimens, 4 kg of pangolin scales, and 2 python pelts (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II). Arrest of 3 traffickers, yet again hawkers selling all kinds of cut up and sellable wildlife products.⁵



September 28, 2016

Pakwach, Northern Region, Uganda

Seizure of 11 kg of hippo ivory and a leopard skin. A women accomplice was released because she had a nursing baby.⁶

GUINEA

July 8, 2016

Kaloum, Conakry Region, Guinea

Ansoumane Doumbouya was sentenced to 18 months in prison without remission and a fine of 500,000 Guinean francs (around \$ 56 US) for using forgery and usurpation of title and function. Thierno Barry was sentenced to one year of prison and a fine of 250,000 GNF (\$ 28 US), and Balla Doumbouya was sentenced to 6 months of prison and a fine of 250,000 GNF for the capture, possession, circulation, sale, import, and export of fully protected animal species. Cf. "On the Trail" n° 13 p.102. Abdoul Salam Sidibé and Abdourahamane Sidibé were sentenced in absentia to 5 years of prison and 500,000 GNF in fines.

It is regrettable that Ansoumane Doumbouya, the former manager of the CITES management body in Guinea and what he probably cherished the most - his money and bank accounts - did not take



a hit. \$ 56 US in fines for abusing his prestigious and strategic position- the amount is ridiculous. Due to the failure of Ansoumane Doumbouya and due to his actions, CITES issued a recommendation to suspend all international trade in protected species to or from Guinea in May 2013. We can also regret that the CITES Secretary-General did not claim damages for the diversion of the logo that it manages. The prisoners must pay one symbolic franc to the Guinean government for damages. This goes to show the value that the judge of the Kaloum Court of first instance places on the wildlife of his country.⁷

AMERICA

BOLIVIA

July 14, 2016

Pisiga, Province of Atahualpa, Bolivia. Border with Chile

Seizure of one green-winged macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), one blue-throated macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*, Appendix I), Magdalena River turtles (*Podocnemis lewyana*, Appendix II), white-throated capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II), and parrots. The Santa Cruz Zoo has quarantined the animals.⁸



August 9, 2016

Fernández Alonso, Obispo Santistevan Province, Santa Cruz Department, Bolivia

Seizure of southern mealy amazons (*Amazona farinosa*, Appendix II) and 200 kg of forest meat. Lowland tapirs (*Tapirus terrestris*, Appendix II), capybaras, owls, and armadillos were cut up.⁹



August 17, 2016

Quillacollo, Cochabamba Department, Bolivia

During the 'Fiesta de la Virgen de Urcupiña', seizure of 377 stuffed animal parts, including 5 wild cat noses (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II), 57 armadillo bodies and legs, 174 vizcacha bodies and paws, one ferret, 24 fox bodies and legs, and 81 lizards. The Festival of the Virgin of Urcupiña is a Catholic celebration that lasts 4 days. Vizcachas are rodents related to chinchillas.¹⁰



BRAZIL

July 6, 2016

Prado, State of Bahia, Brazil

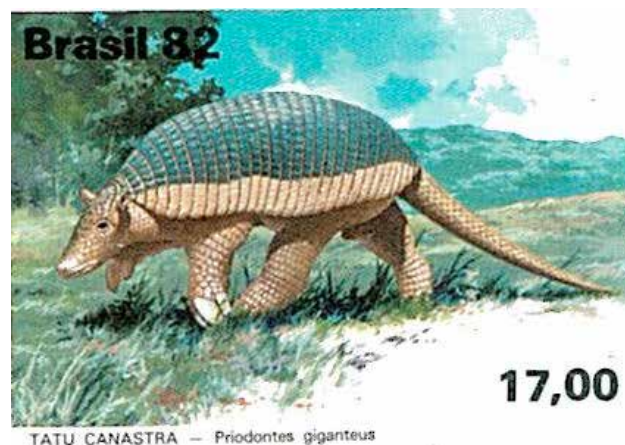
In a house, seizure of 2 South American yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II), one robust capuchin monkey (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II), 6 tortoises of various species, and unspecified birds.¹¹



August 10, 2016

Arinos, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of 4 armadillos, 5 kg of fish, and 5 kg of birds in a cardboard box and fishing tools in a car. The inspection took place at night. The birds were released, but the 3 vehicle occupants will have to answer to justice for a 'crime against nature'.¹²



COLOMBIA

July 7, 2016

Meta, Cundinamarca and Tolima Departments, Colombia

The police dismantled an international trafficking network. 83 animals in all were seized. These animals included macaws, parrots, toucans, Maguari storks, snakes, gulls, capybaras, and tortoises meant for cross-border markets. Mexico and Ecuador are the main destination countries. The feathers of some birds were dyed in vivid colors to attract more purchasers. Eight of the gang members stood trial. Since the beginning of 2016, the police have seized over 8,300 wild animals and issued 1,553 tickets for 'crimes against nature'.¹³

July 20, 2016

Huila Department, Colombia

Various interventions : seizures of 2 blue and yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), one scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), one robust capuchin monkey (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II), one white-fronted capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*, Appendix II), 4 South American yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II), one red-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II), and 2 Humboldt's woolly monkeys (*Lagothrix lagotricha*, Appendix II) - a young one and an adult one.¹⁴



Lagothrix lagotricha

ECUATOR

July, 20 juillet 2016

Guayaquil, Guayas Province, Ecuador

Seizure of 30 parrots, one golden-mantled saddleback tamarin (*Saguinus tripartitus*, Appendix II), one yellow-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II), and 20 Amazonian fish. They were on sale in 3 pet shops. It is unlikely that they will be returned to the wild.¹⁵

MEXICO

August 11, 2016

Mexico, State of Mexico, Mexico

Seizures of one royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), one Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II), and one American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix II). The royal python lives in Africa. It is an exotic animal in Mexico.¹⁶



September 16, 2016

Cancun, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Road inspection. The Ford driver did not have his seatbelt on. In cages in the vehicle, the law enforcement officers found a ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I), a keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II), and a common iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II). The driver and the 2 passengers were interrogated.¹⁷



September 30, 2016

Iztapalapa, Fédéral District of Mexico, Mexico

21 exotic animals were seized on the farm in Cuitlahuac Park: 2 dromedary camels (*Camelus dromedarius*), 2 plains zebras (*Equus burchelli*), 11 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), and 6 llamas (*Lama glama*). The Park has not been certified by SEMARNAT (Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources). It is said that an association donated the animals to the Park, but SEMARNAT is not aware of this organization either. A fine of \$ 26,000, and closing until further notice. The animals have been transferred to the zoo in Queretaro.¹⁸



PARAGUAY

September 12, 2016

Chaco'i, Presidente Hayes Department, Paraguay

In the freezers: cattle meat and whole wild animals, alligators (*Alligator spp.*, Appendix I or II), armadillos, capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and wild pigs. Two men were arrested. They could face 10 years in prison.¹⁹

ASIA

CAMBODIA

August 6, 2016

Mondulkiri Province, Cambodia

In the car, there were 117 kg of live animals, 2 suspects aged 23 and 25, and a 15-year-old minor. The animals included tortoises, lizards, snakes, a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), and a palm civet. The local police chief said that everyone was released.²⁰

CHINA

July 27, 2016

Tung Wan, Cheung Chau Island, Hong Kong, China



A new chase. This time it was a helicopter going after the speedboat. On the boat that the crew abandoned on a beach, 83 fur packages and 6 swallow nests were seized. Total value: \$ 5 million HK, or \$ 645,000 US.

The "swallow" nests were made of the edible saliva of swiftlets. The nests of edible-nest swiftlets (*Aerodramus fuciphagus*), black-nest swiftlets (*Aerodramus maximus*), and glossy swiftlets (*Collocalia esculenta*) are particularly prized. According to popular belief, eating them is good for libido and prevents aging.²¹



July 2016

Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 254 red-bellied squirrel pelts (*Callosciurus erythraeus*), 16 leopard cat pelts (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I or II), one pangolin section with its scales (*Manis* spp. Appendix II), porcupine quills, one Lady Amherst pheasant (*Chrysolophus amherstiae*), and a stock of ammunition.²²



July 27, 2016

Saybagh District, Xinjiang Autonomous Region, China



A Vietnamese woman was sentenced to 7 years of prison for illegally bringing tiger, pelts, ivory, rhinoceros horn, and other parts of species that are protected under national law and CITES. The total value was 95 million yuan (\$ 14,268,398 US). Prison sentences from 18 months to 7 years were inflicted for the other gang members who were tasked with selling the prohibited products on social networks in China.²³

Mid september 2016

Hunan Province, China

Seizure of 114 carcasses of black muntjacs, badgers, civets, and tufted deer (*Elaphodus cephalophus*).²⁴

INDIA

July 4, 2016

Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

A typical example of a little trafficker who is discreet and hardworking, going past the northern Indian border easily, with various products. With a Himalayan black bear gall bladder (*Ursus thibetanus laniger*, Appendix I) and his elephant tusk (1 kg) from Bhutan, he had an appointment in Kalimpong, on the border between West Bengal and Sikkim. The bladder and the tusk would have gone on to China if the police had not done the painstaking work and gotten a hold of Ambal Gaurang.²⁵



July 24, 2016

Villianur, Territory of Pondicherry, India

Seizure of jungle cat meat (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II), a monitor lizard pelt (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), and carcasses of black-crowned night heron



carcasses (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*), egrets (*Ardeidae* fam-
il), pigeons, and ducks. Narikuravas are at work and sell the forest meat to local elites. Cf. "On the Trail" n°7 p.41, p.97, n°10 p.29, n°12 p.24, n°13 p.110.²⁶

Felis chaus

September 23, 2016

Theni, Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure in a farming school of a tiger skin (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a sambar deer skin (*Cervus unicolor*) and a stuffed pangolin (*Manis* spp. Appendix II). The 3 trophies were exposed. These remains would have been offered to high school in 1957 by a teacher but the school administration did not report this wildlife heritage to the competent authorities.²⁷

September 25, 2016

Jalpaiguri, West Bengal State, India

Seizure of an 800 g elephant tusk, an Himalayan bear skull (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), a revolver and 2 cars. Five arrests including an official of the department of State irrigation and an employee of a tea plantation in the Darjeeling region. The suspects were planning to introduce their booty in Bhutan.²⁸

INDONESIA

July 27, 2016

Bandung, West Java Province, Indonesia

This time, it was in Sukahaji market, near the Depok Baru train station, that the NGO Scorpion exposed the sale of protected animals. Leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), Black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*), and Burmese mountain tortoises (*Manouria emys*) were offered for sale.²⁹

August 15, 2016

Makassar Port, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia

On board *KM Madani Nusantara*, seizure of 3 black eagles (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*, Appendix II), 6 nocturnal birds of prey, 2 otters (*Lutrinae* spp., Appendix I), and 2 felines of an unspecified species. They were huddled up in boxes on which there was neither an address nor sender. Two people who came to pick up the packages were caught. The ship was coming from Balikpapan, a province in East Kalimantan. It had covered 500 km.³⁰



September 17, 2016

Singkawang, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

The souvenir shop owner was sentenced to 9 months and 10 days of prison, and to pay a fine of 50 million rupees (\$ 3,795 US) for selling parts of protected animal species, including orangutan skulls (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I). The investigation was successfully completed with the help of the NGO Scorpion (cf. "On the Trail" n°12, p. 110 et n°13, p. 110). The man had several suppliers in the province.³¹



IRAN

Being a Ranger in Iran

Iran has seas, deserts, mountains, and marshes and covers 1,648,195 km². The sturgeon, leopard, bear, urial, sea turtle, and seal are still part of its bestiary today. The Asiatic lion and the Caspian tiger are part of the bestiary of the past. The first wildlife protection laws date back to 1956. Since 1971, 6 national parks and 41 priority protection zones have been set up. Since 1976, rangers officially have the right to be armed to protect themselves from poachers assaults and to protect the wildlife. Rangers are isolated and vulnerable. When reinforcements are needed, they take a long time to arrive.

Since 1979 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic and implementation of Sharia law, it has been actually complicated for those who are defending the under the law strictly protected wildlife to defend themselves. Sharia allows families of victims to set the terms of compensation. Depending on the situation, the compensation can be anything from death to acquittal to major compensation and prison sentences. The courts sometimes consider the rangers as killers, neglecting their legitimate defense when they are faced with poachers who are organized and ready to take all risks. Two rangers were released last March. One ranger had been in prison since 2007 for killing a poacher. The victim's family forgave him after 9 years of prison. The other ranger had been in prison since 2010 for killing a poacher who attacked him with a knife. He was released after paying a debt that the victim's family set - 12 billion rials, or \$ 400,000 US. Considering that the average monthly salary of an Iranian ranger is 7 million rials, or \$ 225 US, this amount is impossible to gather. Fortunately for Gholam Hossein Khaledi and his wife, friends, the family circle, non-governmental organizations, and celebrities managed to gather the money for this blood debt. The new Department of Environment has stated several times that the law would be changed. However, for the moment, nothing has been done. The



Gholam Hossein Khaledi
after his release

president of the Islamic Republic can consider that the rangers shot dead by poachers are martyrs (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 58), but for these rangers and their families, the use of legitimate defense can mean a death sentence, lifetime imprisonment, and bankruptcy.

MALAYSIA

August 22, 2016

Padang Besar, Perlis State, Malaysia

In a train coming from Bangkok, seizure of 248 exotic animals that were all alive, including 10 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), 29 spiny-tailed lizards (*Uromastix* spp., Appendix II), 2 iguanas (Iguanidae family), 10 squirrel gliders (*Petaurus norfolcensis*), 6 sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), 181 sea snakes, and 11 rabbits. Two bags were in the freight car, and 2 other bags were in the bathroom.³²

OPERATION CHAMELEON REPEATED OFFENSE

End of August 2016

Selangor State and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Sungai Buloh, Selangor State, Malaysia

Rawang, Selangor, Malaysia

Taman Prima Puchong, Selangor, Malaysia

Jalan Puchong, Selangor, Malaysia

Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 58 elephant tusks in a house.

Two arrests.

- 53 tusks in a warehouse, arrest of 2 Chinese 54-year-old citizens.

- Seizure of a pangolin skin, bones, and a skull that is assumed to have come from a tiger, a hornbill helmet, 45 beaks assumed to have come from hornbills. No arrests.

- Seizure of tiger fangs, 2 bear pelts, and bear claws. Arrests of 7 Vietnamese citizens.

- Seizure of 14 bear gall bladders, an ivory pendant, a bear claw, and a tiger fang.

In all, 561 kg of ivory were seized. One of the Chinese people interrogated is a repeat offender. In 2013, he was caught in the act of exporting elephant tusks, and sentenced to pay 200,000 Malay ringgit, or \$ 48,500 US. Operation Chameleon was jointly led by Perhilitan, the wildlife and national parks management body, and by the Dutch NGO Wildlife Justice Commission, whose main mission is to assist government in law enforcement.³³



PAKISTAN

August 20, 2016

**Karakorum Road, Abbottabad,
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province,
Pakistan**

In a circus, seizure and release of one buzzard (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 monkeys (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 jackals (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India), one fox (Appendix III in India), one porcupine, and one wildcat (unspecified species). Sentence of 15,000 Pakistani rupees (\$ 143 US). The animals were first put into observation on a bird farm. They were then released in a place that was selected because each species was already present.³⁴



THAILAND

August 17, 2016

Bangkok, Bangkok Province, Thailand

Seizure of 2 hornbills (Bucerotidae family), 2 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 barred eagle owls (*Bubo sumatranus*, Appendix II), 3 spotted owlets (*Athene brama*, Appendix II), 2 eagles (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II), one otter (*Lutrinae* spp., Appendix I or II), 3 water monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), one softshell turtle (Trionychidae family), and several snake specimens. Charan Chamornmarn, the owner of the place, said that she had been bringing up this entire caged brood for 10 years or so, for her pure pleasure. The police didn't believe her. She said she had all her papers in order. She wasn't able to show them. For the moment, she has been indicted for illegal possession of wildlife.³⁵



VIET NAM

Beginning of September 2016

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

A flying squad seized one stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II), 2 Chinese cobras (*Naja atra*, Appendix II), 8 bamboo rats (Rhizomyinae subfamily), 2 water monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), one common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), and one brush-tailed porcupine (*Atherurus macrourus*). The animals were part of an illegal transfer.³⁶



September 12, 2016

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), an Assamese macaque (*Macaca assamensis*, Appendix II), and a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) that were imprisoned in the offices of the city hall!³⁷



September 22, 2016

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

It is Phan Huynh Anh Khoa's turn (see "On the Trail" n°11 p. 95, n°13 p. 113), the "Internet bastard" as local press calls him, to be caged : he had engaged in the sale of doucs (*Pygathrix* spp., Appendix I), pangolins, otters and lorises. Initially sentenced to 5 years in prison, he remained free pending the judgment of the Court of Appeal. The sentence was confirmed.³⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

September 24, 2016

Sant Lluís, Island of Menorca, Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands, Spain

The police reveals that earlier in the month 18 animals including a winged macaw (*Ara chloroptera*, Appendix II), a conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) and corals were seized in a private home.³⁹

ITALY

August 8, 2016

Novara, Région of Piedmont, Italy

After an advertisement was published in a specialized newspaper, seizure of one stuffed Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II), one monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 python skins measuring approximately 4 m (*Pythonidae* spp. Appendix I or II), one stuffed loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I), 14 carved walrus teeth (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III), antique weapons, and archaeological works.⁴⁰

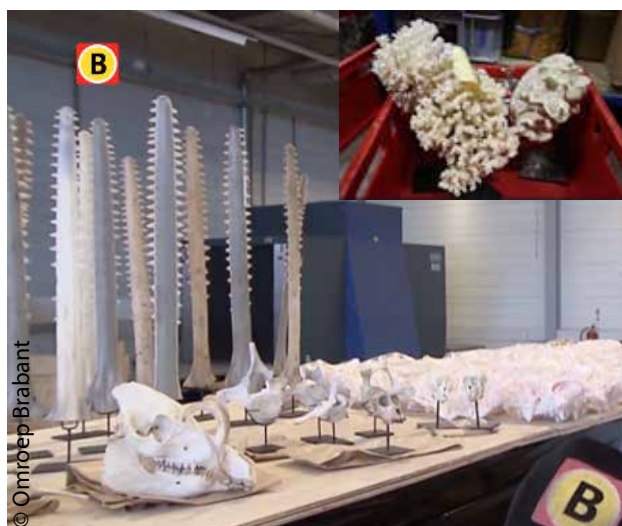
THE NETHERLANDS

End of August 2016

Oss, North Brabant Province, Netherlands

Impressive and full of lessons to learn. People are always talking about the Africa-China or Africa-Europe traffic. There is also proof of China-Europe traffic.

After the 345 kg of coral in a container arriving from China was seized in the port of Rotterdam, the police raid of the importer's warehouse revealed 2 tons of ivory, snake skins, monkey skulls, turtles, crocodiles, sawfish rostrums, and stuffed monitor lizards. This warehouse is in an ideal location with easy access to the highway system, offering a lot for Asian communities and European fans of ivory and gruesome objects.⁴¹



UNITED KINGDOM

July 22, 2016

Cumbria County, England, United Kingdom

Court hearing for unlawful possession and sale of ivory and a leopard skin (see "On the Trail" n° 13, p. 114). The suspects pleaded not guilty. He's been released under bail. Trial will be held 16 January 2017.⁴²



RUSSIA

End of July, 2016

Khabarovsk, Far Eastern Federal District, Russia

The Russian citizen would use the Amur River for smuggling minerals and wild animals between Khabarovsk and Tongjiang. First the border patrol uncovered on board thousands of mink skins (*Mustela sibirica*, Appendix III), stuffed in stacks of bags covered with writing in Chinese. Next, the FSB found at the trafficker's home 525 Asian black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) for a total weight of 500 kg. Elena Popova, spokeswoman for local custom services, confirms that the piece mammoth tusk is part of national Russian heritage and must be submitted to a license for export. Value of the bear paws is estimated equivalent to 500,000 US\$, value of the mink skins estimated at 150,000 US\$, the jade at 470 US\$. Total value of the seizure is 41 million Rubles, i.e. 700,000 US\$.⁴³

OCEANIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 2016

Honolulu, State of Hawaii, United States of America

Hawaiian Accessories developments (cf. "On the Trail" n° 9 p. 103, n° 12 p. 11, n° 13 p. 114).

Kauioakaala Chung was sentenced to 2 years of probation, 6 years of house arrest, and \$1,000 of fines for participating in smuggling and the sale of black coral jewelry; ivory, bone and coral sculpture; and parts of whales, walruses, and other protected species. Mrs. Chung's sentence closes the investigation that the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) opened in 2014. The company president was sentenced to 6 months of prison without remission, and returned \$ 10,000 of goods to the government corresponding to illegal revenue.

His daughter acted as the director. She was sentenced to 2 years of probation and 6 months of house arrest. Two Hawaiian Accessories employees who are brothers and the export-import director in the Philippines were sentenced to 2 years of probation and to 4 to 6 months of house arrest.⁴⁴



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Sources are available on request by email to contact@robindesbois.org indicating the "On the Trail" issue number, section and reference of the event. For instance, for the last event of "On the Trail" n°14 (July 2016, Honolulu, State of Hawaii, United States of America): "On the Trail" n°14, chapter Multi-Species, reference 44.

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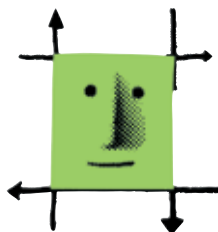
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