

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling

n°16 / Events from the 1st January to the 31 of March 2017

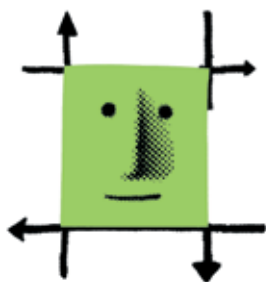
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Original version in French

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Carried out by Robin des Bois (Robin Hood)
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Furcifer pardalis © McBeul
cf. page 22

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. 182 Member States.



January 12, 2017
Ottawa, Province of Ontario, Canada

Hello, I'm here! Kill me!
The use of different electronic devices to track movements of mammals, sharks, fishes, turtles, birds, and everything that moves and interests the scientific community has been incriminated. The corruption, along with numerous possibilities of pillaging or interception of collected data on the trajectory and concentrations of protected species, mean that this useful or crucial information can fall into the hands, screens, and ears of reactive poaching and smuggling rings. Cyber-poaching is at our doors. It has without a doubt entered Noah's Ark. The credit for this alert goes to Steven J. Cook, a scientist at the University of Carleton. He is a specialist on fish ecology.¹

Seahorses

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

EUROPE

SPAIN

March 10, 2017

Puerto de Santa María, Province of Cadix, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

The Chinese manager of a grocery store was selling dried seahorses, which are liked for their fake aphrodisiacal powers. 900 other cure-alls labelled in Chinese and said to be aphrodisiacs were seized.¹

Corals

ASIA

INDIA

February 20, 2017

Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, India
Seizure of 114 kg of organ-pipe coral (*Tubipora*



© Lesley Clements

musica, Appendix II) in the luggage of an Afghani citizen coming from Kabul.

The organ-pipe coral is one of 15 coral species most sold on the black market. Its range reaches from the south of Japan to the Red Sea. In ideal conditions, it can grow to 3 to 4 cm in 20 years.²

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.

AFRICA

FRANCE

February 25, 2017

Juan de Nova Exclusive Economic Zone, Scattered Islands, Austral and Antarctic French Territories (TAAF), France

The *Malin*, a French naval patrol boat, hails 3 fishing boats, the *Tif Tif*, the *Jeremira*, and the *Shawiri*, that are being used for sea cucumber fishing.



Seizure of 90 kg and 9 canoes. The intervention was tumultuous. There were more fisher-pillagers, who had nearly settled down on Juan de Nova, than there were crewmembers aboard the *Malin*.¹



AMERICA

MEXICO

Between Chicxulub Puerto and Dzilam de Bravo, State of Yucatan, Mexico

- **February 10, 2017.** A 45-year-old woman didn't stop at the sign. The police pulled her over and inspected the pick-up. In the back, they found 3 blue containers. She assured enforcement officers that they were holding fish. Upon opening, they found sea cucumbers in 2 of them.²



- **February 21, 2017.** Seizure of 400 kg of fresh sea cucumbers, 7 firearms, 2 dinghies, and scuba tanks. Seven were arrested.

Throughout February. 12 sea cucumber poachers have been arrested and 1.5 tonnes of sea cucumbers have been seized.³

February 22, 2017

Mulegé, State of Baja California Sur, Mexico

Seizure of 200 sea cucumbers in a Resa Bajapac delivery service truck heading for Ensenada, 800 km north in the State of Baja California.⁴

ASIA

CHINA

March 28, 2017

Hong Kong, China

Seizure of 1989 kg of dried sea cucumbers, estimated to be worth \$850,000 HK or \$109,364 US (\$55 US/kg). The container came from Egypt.⁵

INDIA

Sunday, January 8, 2017

Vedhalai, Tamil Nadu State, India

Seizure of 30 bags containing 471 kg of fresh and 36 kg of dried sea cucumbers, processing equipment and the "vallam", rustic small boat, belonging to Tholkach, local fisherman aged 46. The arrest and seizing were delayed by a small riot of about 50 people, police had to call for backup.⁶



February 2, 2017

Pamban, Ramanathapuram, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Discovery of 100 kilograms of live sea cucumbers on the shore. The person responsible most likely fled the scene at the sight of police forces. The sea cucumbers were returned to the water with the help of fishermen.⁷

February 8, 2017

Threspuram, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 20 sea cucumbers (about 8 kg). Arrest of S. Rajendran, 46, who had transported them in a drum on his bike.⁸

March 26, 2017

Thoothukudi, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure at the crack of dawn of 50 kg of sea cucumbers. They were destroyed after being saved as evidence in a trial by the record office of the court. Two arrests.⁹

SRI LANKA

February 20, 2017

Nachchikuda, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 302 sea cucumbers, a small boat, and underwater fishing equipment. 14 people were taken into custody.¹⁰



EUROPE

SPAIN

March 12, 2017

Moaña, Pontevedra Province, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

Fever has overtaken the European Union. The environmental section of the Civil Guard heard talk in October 2016 that the trafficking of sea cucumbers was emerging in Galicia, in the northwest of Spain.

The investigation led to the seizure of 1200 kg of sea cucumbers; their suspected origin is Portugal. The main suspect is a Mexican man, who recently moved to Moaña. He had been working with local accomplices. There was a workshop for processing marine products and for preparing seafood. His project had been selling them to Asian communities in Spain and the neighboring countries, as well

as exporting them to the United States or China. He said he was inspired by the very active sea cucumbers trade in Mexico. Sea cucumbers can be fished for off the coast of Portugal and dropped off at the Morrazo County Port. While waiting on the typing of the species and precise information on their origin, the sea cucumbers remain in a cold room in Moaña.¹¹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

February 17, 2017

Saumarez Reef, Coral Sea, Australia

- Aerial tracking of 2 Vietnamese fishing boats by the Maritime Border Command (MBC).
- Two suspected boats searched. Finding of sea cucumbers aboard.
- The 2 fishing boats were diverted by the *Storm Bay* and the *Bathurst* to Gladstone in Queensland.
- Arrest of 29 members from the two crews.

February 28

First conviction of 14 fishermen to a sentence unspecified by the local press.



March 15

Conviction of a captain to 7 months suspended prison sentence and 3 years' probation. The 14 other fishermen were sentenced to 1 month suspended prison sentence and 3 years' probation. The two boats were seized and destroyed. Since July 2016, 12 foreign ships have been apprehended for illegal fishing in the waters of the Commonwealth.¹²



Sea cucumbers are making wave in the western Pacific Ocean

- **The Kingdom of Tonga** suspended sea cucumbers fishing.

- **The Republic of Vanuatu** suspended the fishing ban after Cyclone Pam in 2015 to allow the population to access local food resources. On the Asian markets, certain species of sea cucumbers can reach \$1500 to \$3000 US per kilo.

The blue boats – the generic name for the boats that come from Viet Nam and plunder the waters – exasperate the Federated States of Micronesia. They are suspected of wildlife trafficking, not just marine species, migrants, or weapons.

The General Director of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency is determined: “there’s no point in gathering proof of the poaching through satellite or aerial images because those images do not allow us to identify the owners and bring them to justice. We have to seize the boats, burn them, and turn out the crew.” “Detaining the blue boats in the ports is a problem. It’s very expensive to keep them under surveillance, and you have to interfere with the crews.”

- REPEATED OFFENSE

January 6 and 21, 2017. The Archipelago of Belep, North Province, New Caledonia, France.

New Caledonia has faced this problem directly. Two blue boats picked up by an aerial patrol were boarded and searched by naval forces. A third pirate, a repeat offender and supplier to the flotilla, was also detained in Noumea and is apparently being detained in a safe location. The French Republic’s High Commissioner in New Caledonia, as well as the authorities, were surprised at daybreak when they found 2 blue boats turned into boat’s people – there were at least 40 crewmembers on board – had fled during the night. The 3 commanders that had been placed in custody were sentenced to 8 and 10 months in prison. The only boat left in the quay was confiscated. Those who fled are being searched for by the few aerial means available.

- **January 26, 2017, Fiji Islands.** The government was ready to suspend sea cucumbers collection with scubas. Divers have to descend 50 meters deep. There were a number of decompression accidents. There would be each year dozens of deaths, not to mention those paralyzed. In the depths of the ocean, sea cucumbers are raked up. The government wants to protect the fishermen, but also the sea cucumbers, who are threatened and whose numbers are declining all around the Fiji Islands.



The Scuba Dive Fiji Association protested. They wanted the decision to be left to the communities. On the contrary, the gov-

ernment wanted to go farther and faster. If, at the end of the 6 months of prohibiting scuba diving, the predation does not weaken, they want to prohibit all modes of sea cucumbers fishing. Sea cucumbers are part of the archipelago’s food security. “Sea cucumber exportation yields \$20 million Australian (\$14.5 million US) to the country each year, but the temporary prohibition of fishing will allow future generations to continue to eat them, since they’re consumed every day by Fijians themselves.”

- **February 8, 2017. Chesterfield Reefs, 350 nautical miles northwest of Noumea, New Caledonia, France.**

“Seizure” of 19 barrels of sea cucumbers and 94 barrels of gas-oil on a blue boat. The skiff was in bad shape and sank while being towed back towards Noumea. It is worth noting that a shipwreck epidemic during towing has been plaguing diverted blue boats (cf. page 11). The 17 crewmembers were rescued and will be sent back to Viet Nam, but the gas-oil barrels drifted into the ocean. The captain was arrested. “This is a phenomenon we’ve been observing for about 9 months. Seventy boats have been identified, 55 fined, and 5 boarded and searched. On board, they fish 10-40 meters deep with “narguile tactics” explains the commanding officer of the New Caledonian EEZ. The Vietnamese putting their lives at risk use a plastic pipe connected to the small mother ship to breathe in.

- **March 22 to April 4, 2017. New Caledonia, Solomon Islands.** New actions coordinated between New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands have led to the seizure of 7 blue boats pillaging sea cucumbers. Their final destination was China, thanks to transshipments.¹³



Sea Urchins

AMERICA

FRANCE

January 23, 2017

Gosier Islet, Grande-Terre Island, Guadeloupe, France

Seizure of 500 white sea urchins (*Tripneustes ventricosus*). They were set back to sea. Caught red handed during a fishing ban period. The recreational fishermen were desirous to “guaranty their personal consumption”. In fact they were dealing in trade.¹



Fishes

AFRICA

LIBERIA

February 3, 7, and 18, March 13, 2017

Liberia

Sea Shepherd in service to Liberia

Ten national soldiers and 2 Israeli technical advisors embarked on Operation Sola Stella onboard the *Bob Barker*. They completed 4 boardings of ships actively taking part in Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUU):

- Hispasen 7

A trawler belonging to 2 Spanish shipowners, flying a Senegalese flag, transshipping 20 tonnes of shrimp in the waters of the Côte d'Ivoire and having 3 crewmen without identification papers. The 2 shipowners are fine \$1 million US.

- Shenghai 9

A Chinese trawler whose staff officers slept in air-conditioned cabins and whose other sailors, mostly from Sierra Leone, slept in cockroach-infested tents. The ship had young sharks in the holds.

- Lu Rong Yuan Yu 988

A fishing boat flying the Ghanaian flag. Their captain offered \$800 US to Liberian soldiers to cover it up.

- Star Shrimper XXV

The shrimper that had left from the Côte d'Ivoire, was fishing without a permit in Liberian waters. Giant tiger prawns (*Penaeus monodon*) are exported to the Netherlands through Primstar. The Atlantic Shrimpers Ltd. fleet which includes the *Star Shrimper XXV*, is currently registered in the Friend of the Sea catalogue thanks to its alleged fishing practices that conform to the sustainable exploitation of crustaceans. TED, the Turtle Excluder Device, whose usage on board Atlantic Shrimpers ships allows shrimp to be exported to the United States, was not activated at the time boarding. The TED is a tool that allows marine turtles to get free when they get caught in trawling nets.¹

AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 16, 2017

Gurupi, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Seizure of 62kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) at 6h30 in the morning from a pick-up truck. Questioning of the driver. He confessed to having fished the arapaima in the lakes of Dueré, 80 km north of Gurupi. He received a fine of 6240 Brazilian reals (\$1,900 US).

From November to February, the fishing of arapaima is completely banned even for personal consumption.²

January 21, 2017

Jacundá, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure of 3.5 tonnes of arapaima fish in two vehicles (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Jacundá is on the edge of the Tocantins River. The catch was given to charities.³

March 8, 2017

Porto Nacional, State of Tocantins, Brazil

A roadside inspection was taking place along the Rio Tocantins on the TO-050 that connects Palmas to Porto Nacional. The military police discovered 140 kg of fish in a vehicle, 22 kg of which was arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Two arrests.⁴



March 24, 2017

Ribeirão Preto, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Voluntary release of a 25-kg nurse shark (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*). He had been living in an aquarium just a little larger than him for 3 years. He has been transferred to the Ubatuba Argonaut Institute.⁵

CHILE

March 21, 2017

Off the coast of the Northern Atacama Region, Chile

An aerial patrol detected a fishing boat in Chilean waters. Its flag was foreign. A naval speedboat was sent out and blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) were nosing out. The practice of "finning", cutting off the fins, and exportation to Asia is suspected.⁶

COLOMBIA

January 2, 2017

Bogota, Capital District, Cundinamarca Department, Colombia

In the Atlantis Plaza shopping mall, seizure of about 40 fish from southeastern Asia: regal tang (*Paracanthurus hepatus*), clownfish (Pomacentridae family), mandarin fish (*Synchiropus splendidus*), royal gramma (*Gramma loreto*) and scaly dragon fish (*Stomias boa*). Skunk cleaner shrimps (*Lysemata amboinensis*), sea anemones (Actiniaria order), a starfish and 50 kg of dead corals were also seized.⁷



Mid-January, 2017

Tuluá, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Seizure in a pet shop of several fishes species among which one arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 4 rays (8 species of *Potamotrygon* in Appendix III in Colombia), one electric eel (*Electrophorus electricus*), 2 African knifefish (*Xenomystus nigri*) and 2 Senegal bichir (*Polypterus senegalus*). They were entrusted to the Cali Zoo and put in quarantine. A few days before, 40 fish seized in a mall in Bogota were killed (see previous page). The local authorities justified, "When a species is not native to a region, it represents a potential danger for the ecosystem because it can appropriate the space and the resources of food, thereby substituting the native species. The native species can also become the prey of the introduced species".⁸



The electric eel, also called the gymnotus or tremblador, is not actually a part of the eel family. It can grow to be 2.4 meters long and can live for 20 years. They are common in the freshwater and murky waters of Latin America. As an adult, they are capable of giving off charges of 550 volts that stun fish and frogs and injure fishermen. They navigate and track their prey through electro-localization using weak continued charges.

COSTA RICA

February 9, 2017

Puntarenas, Province of Puntarenas, Costa Rica

The event happened on October 4, 2011. The *Wang Jia Men 88*, flying the Belize flag, unloaded 652 shark fins in the Puntarenas harbor. Hue Ju Tseng Chang, who goes by Kathy Tseng, as the director of the fishing company, is known as the one responsible. She was recently sentenced to 6 months in prison and a fine of 3 million Costa Rican colons (\$5400 US). The Costa Rican channel of shark fin smuggling continues to make trouble (cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p.5, n°4 p. 6, n°7 p. 4-5, n°8 p. 4, n°14 p. 8).⁹



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 29, 2017

Key West, State of Florida, United States of America

Seizure of 30 to 40 pairs of shark fins on board a shrimp boat boarded at night by a US Fish and Wildlife Service patrol.¹⁰

MEXICO

Mid-January 2017

Mexicali, State of Baja California, Mexico

An derelict van was retrieved by the police on a back road that connects Mexicali to San Felipe. Inside, they found a bag with 14 totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I).¹²

March 5 and 21, 2017

"Estación Doctor" Military Post, State of Sonora, Mexico. Border with the United States of America

- In the Chevrolet reservoir on the road that connects Golfo de Santa Clara to San Luis Río Colorado, the police uncovered 24 bags. Inside, they found 17 kg of totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I). The retail price per kilo can reach \$60,000 US on the Chinese market. The driver and 3 passengers, 2 of whom were minors, were questioned.¹³

- Another! The car of a couple was searched. 9 packets containing swim bladders were found in a secret compartment. Yudith and Victor were questioned.¹⁴



Mexico has implemented a zero-tolerance operation for the fishing, trafficking, and sale of totoaba in the Gulf of California. The first 6 days of the operation led to the seizure of 4 small boats, 30 fishing gears, 34 whole totoabas, 24 swim bladders, 700 kg of *Sciaenidae* family fish, and the arrest of 2 individuals.

March 15, 2017

Reserva de la biosfera Alto Golfo de California y Delta del Río Colorado, State of Baja California, Mexico

The Sea Shepherd discovered a 250-meter long ghost net 16 km north of San Felipe with 66 totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) entangled. They were decomposing. They each measured about 1.3 meters long and weighed about 40 kg. PROFEPA "destroyed" them.¹⁵



PERU

March 2017

Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve, Loreto Region, Peru

A Facebook post showcased poaching in the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve. Crooks were fishing for arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) within unauthorized period. Valid quotas for the months of February through October are allocated to 3 fishing associations of Bretana – “the Jaguars”, “the Catalans”, and “the Lions”. Between December 19 and 23, 2016, forest rangers would have caught one of the “Jaguars” with 7 young arapaimas weighing a total of 200 kg. The fish would not have been seized and no sanctions would have been put on the fisherman or his association. The president of the “Jaguars”, Julio Sampaya Ruiz, is a close friend of the head of the Reserve. He also runs a fish store in Bretana, and would boast about being able to take as many arapaimas or silver arowanas (*Osteoglossum bicirrhosum*) as he wishes, as well as sauria or manatees.¹⁶

ASIA

CHINA

January-February 2017

Port of Hong Kong, China

Seizure in 4 separate instances of 1300 kg of shark fins from 8 different species of hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrnidae* family, 3 species are in Appendix II) and oceanic whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*, Appendix II). The 4 containers came from India, Egypt, Kenya, and Peru.¹⁷

PHILIPPINES

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 23, 2017

Baclayon, Region of Central Visayas, Philippines

Seizure of over 2 tonnes of manta ray (*Manta spp.*, Appendix II). The manta rays were cut into slices and were going to be weighed on a motorboat. A Coast Guard spotted the ring. Other pieces of rays were seen in a yellow jeep on the quay. The vehicle belonged to a couple, both fishmongers. The Valerosos lived on the neighboring island of Pamilacan. They said they bought the 2 tonnes from Tito Oclarit, a resident of Jagna, for 40,000 Filipino pesos, or \$800 US. They hoped to resell the dried meat for \$6-\$7 US per kilogram. Despite their profession, they said they didn't know that it is illegal to fish for and sell manta rays.

Pamilacan Island is a den for dolphin, Bryde whale, whale shark, and manta ray old hunters.

Manta rays, locally called “sanga”, are cooked in ceviche or stew with tomatoes and a spicy sauce, like “kinilaw” and “linabog”.

The analysis of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) confirmed that the chopped up meat was from the 2 species of Manta rays (*Manta alfredi* and *Manta birostris*).

The 2 tonnes of fish have been disposed of by burial under the authority of BFAR.¹⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

January 12, 2017

Lebrija, Canton du Bas Guadalquivir, Province of Seville, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Poaching of glass eels (*Anguilla Anguilla*, Appendix II). They were released into the water. Four arrests.¹⁹



FRANCE

5 January, 2017

Amiens, Department of Somme, France



Three professional fishermen were inspected on the night of 25 to 26 March 2016 after landing in Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme. They had caught 6.5 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). Their eel fishing logs were not completed. The glass eels were placed back into the water.

-The first was sentenced to a fine and payment of damages of €10,000 for having fished in a non-authorized area and to a €1500 fine and payment of damages for failure to declare. He also received 2 months of suspension of eel fishing.

-The second was sentenced to a €1000 fine and payment of damages for failure to declare.

-The third was only made the object of an administrative procedure.²⁰

Carnet de pêche de l'anguille  N°14358*01

Ministère chargé de la pêche en eau douce

Année :

Articles R. 436-54 et R. 436-45 du code de l'environnement, Arrêté du 22 octobre 2010 relatif aux obligations de déclaration des captures d'anguille européenne (*Anguilla anguilla*) par les pêcheurs en eau douce.

Identification du pêcheur

Nom et prénom :

Adhérent de l'association agréée (association agréée de pêche et de protection des milieux aquatiques, association agréée de pêcheurs amateurs aux engins et aux filets sur le domaine public, association agréée de pêcheurs professionnels en eau douce) :

N° Suivi National de la Pêche aux Engins / Suivi National de la Pêche aux Lignes :

Adresse postale : Numéro : Extension :

Nom de la voie :

Code postal : Localité :

Pays :

Tél :

Courriel :

Informations relatives au droit de pêche

N° de l'autorisation ⁽¹⁾ :

Captures d'anguille en eau douce (suite et fin)

Date	Lieu de capture	Type de ligne (2) ou d'engin (3)	Stade de l'anguille (4)	Nombre	Poids (5) Kg ou g à indiquer

Night of 16 to 17 January, 2017

Toll stop at Saugnacq-et-Muret, Department of Landes, France

Seizure of 520kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in a convoy arriving from Spain. It was heading towards the Paris-Roissy airport. The cargo was destined to Thailand. Estimated value of €600,000 (around €1154 per kilo).²¹

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 29, 2017

Mouth of the stream of Huchet, Department of Landes, France

Seizure and release back into the water of 1.2kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). Locally, they are sold for between €400 and €800 per kilo. Arrest of 2 repeat offenders. They should appear before the tribunal of Dax in April 2017.²²

February 3, 2017

Charles de Gaulle International Airport, Paris, France

Seizure of 140 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), or 420,000 glass eels, who were packed in plastic and styrofoam and spread in 22 boxes. The lot is estimated to have a value of about 200,000 €. The glass eels were sent to Thailand falsely identified as prawns. They were returned to the water in the Somme (51 kilos) and a Norman river (90 kilos). Only licensed professional fishermen, respecting the annual quota and during the fishing season – January 10 to May 25, 2017 – can fish them, but exportation out of the European Union is not allowed. In Asia, glass eels will sell for between 1000 and 2000 € per kilo.²³

February 23, 2017

Guérande, Loire-Atlantique Department, France

Two glass eels poachers were arrested at night in the swamps. The trial will be held June 16.²⁴

March 9, 2017

Le Pellerin, Loire-Atlantique Department, France

Seizure and return to the water of 3 kilograms of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). Their sale price in China is 2000€ per kilogram. In France, a poacher will sell them to middlemen for 50-200€ per kilogram.²⁵



GREECE

February 3, 2017

Athens, Greece

Spain, France, Portugal, and Italy, but also Greece, feed contraband eels into Asia. Greece is a stakeholder. Europol coordinated investigations. A warehouse belonging to the company El Venizelos was searched at 5 o'clock in the morning. An employee was taken red-handed. He was carrying 16 cases of eels. Nine associates were arrested. The organizer is a university professor.²⁶

Description of the Greek channel

Eels are poached in Portugal, Spain, and France between November and March. They are then gathered in northwest Spain by a contraband glass eel wholesaler who buys them from poachers up to 500€ per kilo and that keep them in basins for 48 hours. They're then repackaged into plastic pouches filled with cold water and lightly oxygenated and transported to Italy. They are taken to Greece by car ferries connecting Ancona, Italy and Igoumenitsa, Greece.

In the suburbs of Athens, the dead are thrown out and the survivors are repackaged before being flown to Hong Kong via Istanbul.

ITALY

January 4, 2017

Maglie, Region of Puglia, Italy

Seizure in a fish shop of an Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) fished out-of-quota. Edible, it was given to the charity of the Sacred Heart nuns congregation.²⁷



March 1, 2017

Burlamacca

Canal,

Viareggio,

Lucca, Italy

Seizure of fishing gear and glass eels. They were released back into the water.²⁸



UNITED KINGDOM

February 15, 2017

London Heathrow International Airport, England, United Kingdom

It's confirmed that Europe is a launching pad for the smuggling of eels to Asia, particularly to China. The 200 kilograms of eel, made up of 600,000 glass eel, came from Spain and were about to take off on a flight to Hong Kong. They were hidden under a bunch of frozen fish. The border police estimated the value of the seizure to be over a million British pounds (\$1,241,439 US). The sender of the package, a 64-year-old man whose identity has not been revealed, has been arrested and is released under bail.²⁹



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

March 17, 2017

175 nautical miles off the coast of Darwin, Australia

More than 300 kilometers off Darwin, an Indonesian boat was fishing when the air patrol of the Australian Border Force (ABF) spotted the crew hosting sharks onto the deck. The pirate ship was then approached, boarded and searched, and rerouted to Darwin. But in the night, it took in water and sank. The 8 crew members were saved by the Australian Navy. The press said that the sinking of the ship was because of bad conditions. The truth may be that it was sabotaged. In Darwin, the Indonesian boat was to be destroyed. The Australian justice system will never know what was in the hold of the sunken ship and it will be difficult to sentence the captain and his crew without evidence and without knowing the checklist of their violations.³⁰



Sea Birds

EUROPE

GERMANY

Saturday, February 11, 2017

Mannheim, State of Bade-Wurtemberg, Germany

Theft of a Humboldt penguin (*Spheniscus humboldti*, Appendix I) from the Luisenpark Zoo. He was found dead 5 days later in a parking lot. A Humboldt penguin sells for 3000 € in the legal market. He had a microchip, so therefore it was difficult to sell him on the black mar-



ket. The Humboldt penguin population is decreasing, particularly because of food shortage. They exclusively eat small fish, anchovies and sardines, and krill. They are native to the coastlines of Peru and Chili.

Many zoos in Germany have been subject to theft recently. In August 2015, 3 dwarf monkeys (*Cebulella pygmaea*, Appendix II) in Dortmund. In November 2015, a 70-cm long royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) from a zoo in Magdeburg. In December 2015, 2 hyacinth macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I) from the Krefeld Zoo, worth over 40,000 € on the black market, and 3 lion-tailed macaques (*Macaca silenus*, Appendix I). In September 2016, 13 lemurs from a zoo near Breme, 3 baby kangaroos from Brandenburg, and 1 flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*, Appendix II) from Bremerhaven.¹

FRANCE

End of January 2017

Saint Tropez, Department of Var, France

It's a party. Four African penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*, Appendix II) in a pool in Saint Tropez, in the middle of an abundance of alcohol, drugs, loud music, and projectors. This was in summer 2016. The National Office of Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS) and the customs investigate since January 2017. It should be rather simple to find those responsible for the scandal. The importers and possessors of African penguins must have a permit to accommodate them in regulated conditions. This party



without a doubt entails a connection between the event planner and a pet shop or a zoo.

The population of African penguins has diminished by 70% in the last 30 years. There are about 19,300 couples in South Africa and about 5,700 couples in Namibia.

Death from oil spills is significant and could occur more frequently with the shipping development near their colonies.

June 1994. Shipwreck of the *Apollo Sea* off the coast of Cape Town. The 36 crewmembers all went missing. 2,400 tonnes of heavy oil affected 10,000 African penguins. 4,787 died.

June 23, 2000. Shipwreck of the ore carrier *MV Treasure* between Robben and Dassen Islands, off the coast of Cape Town. About 1,000 tonnes of fuel affected 20,000 African penguins. 1,957 died.

African penguins are also victim to food shortages because of the displacement of sardine and anchovy banks and of competition with fishermen.

On land, they are prey to dogs, cats, mongooses, leopards, and caracals, as well as to the illegal collection of their eggs.²

Marine Mammals



Polar bears, see p. 59

AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

February 11, 2017

Assouindé, Comoé District, Côte d'Ivoire

A 12-meter long sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) was found beached in front of a restaurant. It was decapitated. It had a rope around its tailfin. It had been poached and mutilated in the ocean. Unknown fishermen pillaged its ivory teeth. The regularity of large cetacean beaching puzzles authorities. The carcass was buried on site thanks to an intervention by public works engine.¹



SENEGAL

January 3 to 4 night, 2017

Rufisque, Dakar Region, Senegal

Grounding and cutting of a whale on the beach. The traditional fishing community took over the "wreck". In the early morning, only the skeleton and the tail remained. The meat was shared among dozens of people.²

ASIA

CHINA

March 6, 2017

Shijiazhuang, Province of Hebei, China

A first for the Province. Transport of 7 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II) by cargo plane from Osaka. They were captured in the bay of Taiji, in the Wakayama prefecture, about 100 km from Osaka.³



March 2017

Wuxi, Province of Jiangsu, China

Construction on the biggest aquatic tourist complex in China is predicted to begin in July. It should be operational in 2019. Thousands of different species, including dolphins, orcas (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix II), belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II), pilot whales (*Globicephala* spp., Appendix II), polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II), and even Emperor penguins (*Aptenodytes forsteri*) are scheduled. The complex will cover 18 hectares. Both civil engineering and animals considered, the investment would be over \$400 million US.⁴

SOUTH KOREA

February 14, 2017

Ulsan Aquarium, South Korea

Death of a bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops* spp., Appendix II). It was one of 5 dolphins imported from Japan 5 days earlier. It died of a pulmonary hemorrhage. The NGO Hotpinkdolphins suspects brutal capture conditions, transport, and manipulation before the dolphin's introduction to the pool. In Korea, the importation of dolphins is managed by the Minister of the Environment in coordination with the Minister of Oceans and Fisheries. Currently, 41 dolphins – mainly coming from Japan – live in aquariums on Geoje Island, in Seoul and Ulsan, and

on Jeju Island. In 2013, 5 bottlenose dolphins had been released near Jeju Island.⁵



Crewmen are living the *Nisshin Maru* with some kg of whale meat in iceboxes so that they will at home keep on with scientific studies.

JAPAN

End of March 2017

Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Chūgoku Region, Japan

The Japanese whaling flotilla returned from its scientific campaign in Antarctica with the oil and meat from 333 minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I).⁶



Cetacean prisons in China

An NGO based in Beijing, the China Cetacean Alliance estimates, without claiming to be exhaustive, that in 2015, there were 279 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops* spp., Appendix II), 114 belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II), 38 finless black porpoises (*Neophocaena asiaorientalis*, Appendix I), 17 Pacific white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*, Appendix II), 16 pantropical spotted dolphins (*Stenella attenuata*, Appendix II), 10 Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*, Appendix II), 7 false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*, Appendix II), 7 orcas (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix II), 2 Pacific pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*, Appendix II), and an Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin held in captivity within the vast Chinese territory. The Nanning Zoo has the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, if it's still alive, who washed up on a beach in Beihai, in the Province of Guangxi.

Another source, Whale and Dolphin Conservation based in the United Kingdom, reports that 9 to 10 orcas live in captivity just in the Chimelong Ocean Kingdom park in Zhuhai and in the Polar Ocean World park in Shanghai. The orcas are captured in the Sea of Okhotsk by Russian sailors. The Pacific white-sided dolphins, the pantropical spotted dolphins, the Risso's dolphins, the false killer whales, and the Pacific pilot whales come from the Taiji Bay in Japan where, since 1969, between September and February, tuna fishers become dolphin hunters. The majority are killed and butchered on site, and their meat is subsequently boxed or sold at markets. Others are selected to be returned to foreign aquariums.

The Chinese cetacean industry is fully in expansion mode. 39 establishments are active. 14 are in construction. The number of visitors is somewhere in the tens of millions. They can, on payment, watch shows, be photographed in close contact with the prisoners, be "treated" by swimming with dolphins or go diving in their company, become a trainer for a day, and even get married with dolphins as witnesses.³



Location of establishments with cetaceans in captivity in China

More details on <http://www.awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/AWI-ML-CCA-2015Report-Web.pdf>

EUROPE

FRANCE

January 11, 2017

Pleudihen-sur-Rance, Department of Côtes-d'Armor, France

Beaching of a common dolphin carcass (*Delphinus delphis*, Appendix II). Five teeth had been removed and the vandals played at carving letters on the gutted and eviscerated corpse.⁷



RUSSIA

Mid March 2017

Vladivostok, Far Eastern Federal District, Russia

The director of the Pacific Scientific Research Fisheries Center in far eastern Russia is in disgrace, potentially even in prison. His offices were searched and elements linked to his involvement in the underground delivery of belugas and orcas to Chinese aquariums have been discovered. 10 belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II) that were captured by one of the Center's research ships in the Sea of Okhotsk or off would have yielded 42 million rubles (\$730,000 US) in 2014 and 2015. His assistant is also involved in the scheming. Dolphin meat sells badly, but live dolphins will sell for a high price.⁸

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*).

AFRICA

BENIN

January 25, 2017

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

Seizure of 16 shells. Two arrests. February 21, one of the traffickers was sentenced to 3 months in prison, a 200,000 FCFA (\$322 US) fine, and 1,000,000 FCFA (\$1614 US) in damages. His partner was released.¹



KENYA

January 25, 2017

Watamu, Kilifi County, Kenya

Several turtle remains found on the beaches. Harpoon traces are evident. The Watamu National marine Park spreads over 10 km². The Kenyan government created it in 1968. It is home to 600 fish species, 150 coral species and countless shrimp, shellfish, and invertebrates, whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II), manta rays (*Manta* spp., Appendix II), octopuses (family Octopodinae), barracudas (*Sphyrna barracuda*). The water temperature varies between 20°C from June to November and 30°C from December to May.²



TOGO

March 21, 2017

Togo

Seizure of 66 live baby turtles that were released back into the ocean and 3 adult shells. Two arrests.³



AMERICA

MEXICO

Sunday, January 22, 2017

Morro Ayuta Beach, Oaxaca, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

12 people were sighted at the beach lugging around large bags. Upon the arrival of the authorities, they fled and abandoned 22,000 olive Ridley sea turtle eggs.⁴

INDONESIA

Late February 2017

Enu Island, Archipelago of Moluccas, Indonesia

Seizure of 38 turtles, 6 of whom were dead. Enu Island should be a paradise for them. Its beaches, surrounded by mangroves, shelter 6 species in the Aru Nature Reserve. Five arrests.⁵



PAKISTAN

February 6, 2017

Karachi, Sind Province, Pakistan

Seizure and freeing of 40 baby green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I) and 9 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) in 2 aquarium shops. After having received a number of calls concerned about trafficking, WWF- Pakistan contacted the authorities.⁶

PHILIPPINES

Early March 2017

Turtle Islands, Tawi-Tawi Province, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines

A medical team on a health mission in the Turtle Islands returned with 5000 green turtle eggs while re-embarking on the Navy boat.

The head doctor of the delegation said that the cooked eggs were goodbye and thank you gifts. A witness said the eggs were bought, hidden, and divided in the luggage of all of the Department of Health employees. Specialists in green turtles of the Celebes Sea confirm that from July to September, the collection of eggs on the beaches and smuggling to Sandakan rise. Sandakan, on Borneo Island in the State of Sabah, is under the authority of Malaysia. The Turtle Islands are 25 kilometers from the coast of Sandakan and a thousand kilometers from Manila, the capital of the Philippines.

The Department of Health is limited to beg for "clemency and forgiveness" from the Department of the Environment. The archipelago of the Turtle Islands is composed of 5 islands. Baguan Island, 29 hectares, is uninhabited. On the beaches of Baguan, 14,220 green turtle nests were counted in 2011, compared to the 12,311 in 1995. Baguan is a "no take zone".

The sea of Suhu, between the Turtle Islands and the Malaysian Province of Sabah, is the object of all the trafficking and all the risks. The radical Islamist group Abu Sayyaf is attempting to secure control of the maritime trade and smuggling.⁸

SRI LANKA

Friday January 13, 2017

North Western Province, Sri Lanka

-Sinna Karukkapone. Seizure of 20kg of sea turtle meat. One arrest.

-Negombo. Eight local fishermen arrested for illegal fishing. Seizure of two fishing smacks and gear.⁹

February 5, 2017

Mandativu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 6 kg of turtle meat and 2.5 kg of eggs. Five arrests.¹⁰

THAILAND

March 21, 2017

Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

The turtle Om Sin ("piggy bank") died after swallowing too many coins. She lived in a public pond in Si Racha, Province of Chonburi, about 160 km from Bangkok. People throw coins at turtles hoping to live as long as them. She had 915 pieces in her stomach, as well as a nickel content 200 times higher than the average.¹¹



VIET NAM

March 16, 2017
Ho-Chi-Minh City,
Viet Nam



facebook

The aquarium fish seller sold an 8.1 kilogram green turtle on Facebook for the equivalent of \$200 US.¹²

EUROPE

ITALY

March 10, 2017
Bari, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of a loggerhead turtle shell (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I) in an antiquities shop. It was being sold as a lampshade.¹³

Various Marine Species

AMERICA

MEXICO

February 6, 2017
San Felipe, State of Baja California, Mexico

The *Cabo de Hornos III* was caught red-handed fishing in a protected totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) and vaquita area, the Gulf of California harbor porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*, Appendix I). The skipper pretended that the prey was shrimp. The fishing gear and the boat were seized.²



Less than 30 vaquitas are living the Gulf of California. The illegal fishing on totoaba and the international smuggling of swim bladders speed up the vaquita's extinction.

March 5, 2017

North of Lobos Island, Sonora State, Mexico

Discovery of nets set out by poachers to catch totoaba. 22 California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*) and 2 nurse sharks (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) were caught in the trap.³



Zalophus californianus

ASIA

SRI LANKA

January 6, 2017
Uchchamunai Island, Kalpitiya, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 694 kg of shark fin and 367 kg of dried sea cucumbers, one boat and a GPS. Two arrests.⁴



January 10, 2017

Negombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

-Seizure of 50kg of fish, one net and one boat. Arrests of 4 local fishermen.

- Seizure of 71kg of sea turtle meat, 100 eggs, some mobile phones and some butcher knives. Two arrests.⁵

March 7, 2017

Akkaraipattu, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 14 sea cucumbers, 62 conch shells, 2 motorboats, 20 scuba tanks, 4 pairs of flippers and 4 masks. Arrest of 6 fishermen.⁶



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

January 22, 2017

Sydney, State of New South Wales, Australia

It is forbidden to fish abalones in Australian waters or to sell them outside a strict networking of licenses, quotas and seasons. It is forbidden to trade or export shark fins in Australia and from Australia. 3300 abalones (Haliotidae family) and 40 kg of shark fin were seized in the South West suburb of Sydney at the home of a 59 year-old man who at present remains anonymous and at one of his client's who runs a seafood restaurant in Sydney. Value of the seized sea products is 57,000 A\$ (43,000 US\$).⁷



Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

AFRICA

GUINEA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 23, 2017

Conakry, Region of Conakry, Guinea

Matoto Market. Seizure of 40 hinged tortoises (*Kinixys* spp., Appendix II). Djibril Conté and his mother have been in the tortoise trafficking business for ages. The supplier is based in Mamou, 250 km away from Conakry.¹



MADAGASCAR

IN THE FAMILY

March 1, 2017

Ivato International Airport, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

Seizure of 8 angonoka tortoises (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I). Four Madagascan citizens, 2 men and 2 women, travelling to Bangkok via Reunion Island, were behaving suspiciously in the departure lounge. They were searched. One of the men was transporting 6 baby tortoises, 4 in his bag and 2 in his pockets. Two others were found in the carry-on luggage of the second man. They were placed in custody and the women were interrogated. The tortoises were all recently bought in Mahajanga, on the northwest coast of the island. An airport police officer was an accomplice. The traffickers had given him the tortoises in the parking lot. Evading all of the inspections thanks to his badge, he returned the tortoises to the 4 traffickers in the bathrooms of the departure lounge (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 15 and n°15 p. 18).²



AMERICA

BRAZIL

March 16, 2017

Guaratinguetá, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 7 baby red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), 15 baby black-bellied slider turtles (*Trachemys dorbigni*), and 2 green-winged saltator (*Saltator similis*). Fine of 12,000 reais (\$4,000 US). One arrest.³



COLOMBIA

January 15, 2017

Cucuta, Department Norte de Santander, Colombia. Border with Venezuela

Seizure of 8 South American yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II) in cardboard boxes. They were going to be sold 10,000 pesos (3 US \$) per unit. Arrest of a 53 year old man. The seized tortoises are under the responsibility of local authorities and should be released into the wild.⁴



February 7, 2017

Orocué, Department of Casanare, Colombia

During a patrol along the embankment of the Rio Meta, the police discovered 120 giant South American turtle eggs (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II) in an insulated styrofoam box in a restaurant area. The eggs were returned to the Palmarito Casanare Foundation, who has been charged with sorting out the eggs that were still viable from those that were not. After hatching, the baby turtles will be freed into the sea.⁵

March 21, 2017

Puerto Leguísimo, Department of Putumayo, Colombia

Seizure of 4837 yellow-spotted river turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) in a van. They were set free in a nearby river. Two arrests.⁶

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 13, 2017

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

Court appearance of a 46-year-old man for the trafficking of turtles in 2016. 42 turtles had been found in 5 packages sent to him. They had come from Hong Kong and were declared as delicacies. There were Chinese box turtles (*Cuora flavomarginata*, Appendix II), black-breasted leaf turtles (*Geoemyda spengleri*, Appendix II), and big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I) bound and shut in noodle and candy boxes. Collectors and traffickers benefit from the species that are capable of surviving a long time without food or water. However, many turtles did die during the journey and just after. During the search, the police found 135 other specimens. In return, Hsien Lin Hsu often sent turtles hidden in socks to Chinese collectors.⁷

UNITED KINGDOM

March 2017

The British Virgin Islands, United Kingdom

Dan Bilzerian, a poker player and public entertainer that has generated buzz on Instagram and local TV channels, couldn't find anything better to do on his salacious vacation in the tax haven that is the Virgin Islands than harass a Galapagos giant tortoise (*Chelonoidis niger*, Appendix I) into being ridden by one of his female conquests.⁸



ASIA

CHINA



**January 24, 2017
Dongxing Port, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China**

Seizure by customs officers of a live 1.5-kg tortoise. She was tied around the waist of the Vietnamese traveler.⁹

February 27, 2017

Gongbei, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of living leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 2.387 kg by customs officers. They were in the backpack of a Macao resident.¹⁰

INDIA

Sunday January 1st 2017

Memari, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 1625 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). Four arrests. On December 29, 2016, 1850 turtles of the same species were seized in the town of Bardhaman and 5 people were arrested (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 20)

In addition to the superstitions attributing a power of luck charm to the Indian flapshell turtles, they are also appreciated for their meat.¹¹

January 10, 2017

Gauri Ganj, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 6430 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) and soft-shelled tortoises (*Trionychidae* family) in large bags at a



private home. Total weight: more than 4 tonnes! Destination Kolkata, an important center for the distribution of turtles to other Asian countries. Arrest of Raj Bahadur Singh, leader of an organized and very active gang in the national and international trafficking of threatened species.

According to Feng Shui tradition, a turtle with 20 claws, 5 on each paw, brings luck to its owner.¹²

January 18, 2017

Uchawade, State of Karnataka, India

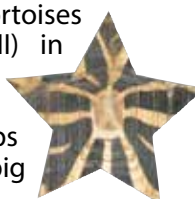
Seizure of a turtle and 2 bikes. The turtle might be a black softshell turtle (*Nilssonia nigricans*, Appendix I). They are very rare and were declared extinct in the wild by the IUCN in 2002. Two arrests.¹³



January 29, 2017

Chikkaballapura District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 280 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) in a crooked businessman's den. He would buy them from illegal catchers and sell them to pet shops and brokers with connections in big cities or even internationally.¹⁴



February 7, 2017

Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar, State of Odisha, India

A pet shop is being investigated. Two salesman are being questioned. No one knows where the 10 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) come from.¹⁵



February 26, 2017

Malda Station, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 1500 live Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). The railways security task force announced that the turtles were found in 35 different bags and were handed over to wildlife services, that 3 persons were arrested, and that the planned destination of the turtles when they were in the traffickers' hands is still unknown.¹⁶



Night of March 8, 2017

Chakdaha, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure in a van of 2000 tortoises hidden in 50 bags. Three arrests. The van was coming from Uttar Pradesh and was heading for Bongao, at the border of Bangladesh. Over 1000 km of travelling.¹⁷

March 22, 2017

Agra, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 23 red-crowned roofed turtles (*Batagur kachuga*, Appendix II). They're valued at 100,000 Rs (\$1540 US) on the Asian market. The two traffickers had been travelling by train from Agra in Uttar Pradesh in northern India to Gadar, 137 km from Chennai in Tamil Nadu in southern India. That's a long journey for freshwater turtles caught in the Chambal River. They paid 4,000 rupees to local fishermen for each catch and resold them for 30,000 rupees to a liaison agent. The turtles were then headed to Singapore, Thailand, and Hong Kong via Bangladesh. According to the NGO Turtle Survival Alliance, hardly 500 red-crowned roofed turtles still live in the Chambal River, which flows into the Yamuna, which flows into the Ganges. Police officers have been after Ajay Singh and his accomplice for 3 months after having discovered a turtles hiding place in the district of Amethi, State of Uttar Pradesh.¹⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 25, 2017

Chandpara, State of West Bengal, India

65 years old. He was part of a trio of turtle traffickers and specialized in the *Trionyx* genus. He profited from the fact that, in the regional market, Hindus, Muslims, and Bangladeshi immigrants like turtle meat. He was arrested.



*Trionyx*es sell for 60 to 100 rupees per kilo (\$1-\$1.55 US per kilo) in the Chambal river basin in Uttar Pradesh; in West Bengal, they sell for 400 to 500 rupees per kilo (\$6-\$8 US per kilo); and in Bangladesh, they sell for 700 to 800 rupees per kilo (\$11-\$12 US per kilo). The spokesperson of WCCB ((Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) says that the turtle network in West Bengal is hindered with the arrest of Khokon and Bhola Gosh. Another leader, his brother Tarok Gosh, is at large.¹⁹

MALAYSIA

Operation Mandarin

January 24, 2017

Bukit Bunga, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

Before the Chinese New Year, authorities in the surrounding countries are on the alert, such times favor various trafficking channels especially in wild and expensive animal species. In the bus running the line between Kuala Terengganu and Alor Setar, 5 Burmese starred tortoises (*Geochelone platynota*, Appendix I), a sign of abundance and good fortune for the coming year, were seized from a tangerine

crate. No license, or address, no one to claim care or ownership. On the regional black market, a Burmese tortoise could be sold for more than 11.000 US\$.²⁰ Burmese starred tortoises are endemic to arid zones in center Myanmar. They feed on grass and other plants, fruit, mushrooms and also snails and insects. The species has apparently almost disappeared in the wild because of ancestral predation for subsistence and recent one for the pet trade. A few breeding farms are referenced but no program aiming at reintroduction to the wild can be envisaged as long as poaching persists.

February 22, 2017

Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia

Seizure of 35 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I). Arrest of a 37-year-old Bangladeshi national.²¹

TAIWAN

March 13, 2017

Taiwan International Airport

Discovery of an angonaka tortoise (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I) and 14 saw-jawed turtles (*Batagur bomeoensis*, Appendix II) in a suitcase. They were all alive and hidden in shoes. The Fedex flight was coming from Malaysia.²²

Saw-jawed turtles come from the forests of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.



THAILAND

Mid-January 2017

Thailand

Voluntary handing over to the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT) of 2 African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), 20 years old. The owner says they were recuperated from a Chinese market in North-Eastern Thailand. They were young. Ever since, the couple has produced at least 2 offspring. The refuge for endangered wild fauna will accommodate them for a long while. The expected lifespan of the African spurred tortoise is 70 years. They are originally from the African Sahara and can measure up to 80cm in length.²³



TURKEY

February 15, 2017

Istanbul Ataturk Airport, Istanbul Province, Turkey

Customs officers found 3 suspicious suitcases during X-ray inspection. Inside, they held cardboard boxes labeled "Live animals. Only for exportation." containing 4000 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). Three men were apprehended, all having come from Lebanon. This species is not CITES listed. It is invasive.²⁴

EUROPE

GERMANY

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Late February 2017

Franz Josef Strauss International Airport in Munich, Free State of Bavaria, Germany

Seizure of 2 marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II) coming from Athens. They were bound and wrapped in plastic inside the suitcase of a couple who were heading for France. Apparently, they wanted to give them to their children and they had found them in a public park in Athens. That's unlikely, since the tortoises in consideration live where the vegetation is dense – in the brush and in forests.²⁵



Snakes

AMERICA

BRAZIL

March 13, 2017

Montes Claros, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of 3 boas (*Boa* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 pythons, and 3 salmon pink tarantulas (*Lasiodora parahybana*) in the home of a dancer. She explained using the snakes in her shows.¹



CANADA

January 5, 2017

Toronto, Province of Ontario, Canada

Seizure of 38 snakes: cobras (family *Elapidae*), rattlesnakes and vipers (family *Viperidae*), described as "extremely dangerous" by the authorities. 18 were frozen. A man in his forties is charged.²



Eastern diamondback rattlesnake

ASIA

CHINA

March 18, 2017

Gongbei Border, Zhuhai, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of 5 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II). The man wanted to illegally import them to Macao.³

INDIA

February 10, 2017

Tokawade, State of Maharashtra, India

That did not bring them luck! Seizure of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). Arrest of Ramdas Sable, 23, and Chandrakant Davkhar, 20, pulled over for riding a motorcycle without a license plate. They wanted to sell the snake for 5 million rupees (about \$75,000 US).⁴

March 21, 2017

Thane, State of Maharashtra, India

Two men, 21 and 47, entered the town near Bombay. The police were well-informed and waiting for them. In a bag, they had 2 Indian sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II), 80 cm and 1.10 m long, valued at 2.5 and 3 million rupees (\$37,500 and \$45,000 US) on the Indian market and much more outside of it. The two men were released on bail. The police want to know who the supplier and the client were. The boa scam is very popular in the country. Self-proclaimed miracle workers pretend that sand boas can find buried treasure under homes and in yards.⁵

Sunday, March 26, 2017

Islampur, State of Bihar, India

This is the third time in one month. Smuggling of the Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) is rampant between Bihar and Nepal. Sunday, the 47th Battalion uncovered one in a wooden box being carried by Mohammad Ali. The Hindustan Times reports that the sand boa can be used to make medicine to restore sexual virility and to treat heal paralysis and skin disease, and be used in cosmetics. It is also used in black magic, and with its skin are made wallets, bags, and jackets.⁶

EUROPE

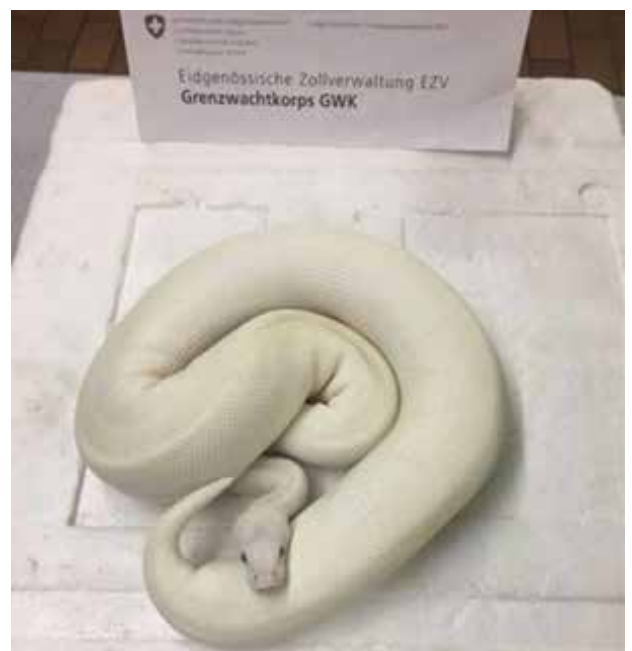
SWITZERLAND

Saturday, March 11, 2017

Diessenhofen, Canton of Thurgau, Switzerland

A 56-year-old German citizen wanted to bring 8 ball pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), among them one blue-eyed Leucistic ball python into Switzerland. He hid them in his car in styrofoam cases. They were seized and an investigation was opened.⁷

One can be sold for between 500 and \$ 1000 US.



Sauria

AMERICA

BRAZIL

February 28, 2017

Salvador, State of Bahia, Brazil



A tourist had been in town for the Carnaval. She spotted a baby iguana (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) at the foot of a street peddler and, fearing the worst for it, bought it for 30 reais (\$10 US\$) and brought it to the IBAMA. Their number for emergencies: (71) 3202-5312.¹

MEXICO

February 27, 2017

Guadalajara International Airport, State of Jalisco, Mexico

Airport security agents detected a suspicious package in the delivery service area. It had been sent by a man who lived in Monterrey, in the State of Nuevo León. Monterrey is 800 km from Guadalajara. They opened it and discovered 5 panther chameleons (*Furcifer pardalis*, Appendix II), 2 of which were "ankaramy", meaning they have a bright pink color.²



PANAMA

March 9, 2017

El Cacao, Tonosi District, Province of Los Santos, Panama

Seizure of 6 common iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II). Two arrests.³

ASIA

INDONESIA

March 15, 2017

Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta, Indonesia

Seizure of 2 mangrove monitors (*Varanus melinus*, Appendix II) and 2 *Varanus macraei* (Appendix II) heading for Hong Kong. They were hidden in a elbow assembly of pierced PVC pipes.⁴



PAKISTAN

January 20, 2017

Dera Ismail Khan, Province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Seizure of 48 live spiny-tailed lizards (*Saara* spp., Appendix II) and 15 others dead. For pillaging, the man was sentenced to a modest 94 US\$ in fine while on the black market a spiny-tailed lizard can be sold for several hundreds of US\$.⁵



Sunday, February 20, 2017

Lakki, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Seizure of 20 spiny-tailed lizards (*Saara* spp., Appendix II). One arrest. The man was selling them each week to conmen at a fair. From the fat of lizards they extract an oil that supposedly cures headaches, back, ear, muscular and renal pains.⁶

Crocodilians

AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 25, 2017

Eldorado, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. Border with Paraguay.

A pick-up truck refused to stop for a roadside check. After a lengthy car chase, the police caught it and performed an extensive search. They discovered crocodile meat (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II) in a cooler and 5 live specimens in a nylon bag. The driver had captured them in Ponta Pora (250 km further north). He wanted to use them to begin breeding at his home. He was sentenced to a fine of 3,500 reais and is liable to 6 months to one year in prison.¹



MEXICO

March 24, 2017

Acapetahua, State of Chiapas, Mexico. Border with Guatemala.

Seizure of 34 crocodiles (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II). Fourteen were still alive and were released back into their natural habitat. Twenty were dead. Their heads and tails had been mutilated. They had been bled. A rumor has spread that crocodile blood can cure cancer, diabetes, and AIDS. Acapetahua is at the edge of the Encrucijada Reserve.²



ASIA

CHINA

February 7, 2017

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

The Coast Guard stopped a boat at 3 o'clock in the morning that was transporting styrofoam crates. Inside were 1609 crocodile skins 1.4 m long and 506 kg of crocodile meat (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II). The shipowner was arrested.³

February 24, 2017

Tianjin Binhai International Airport, China

Seizure of a Chinese passenger's large suitcase coming from Beijing on an Okay Airlines flight carrying a stuffed Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I).⁴

THAILAND

February 6, 2017

Khlung Hat District, Province of Sa Kaeo, Thailand

The Honda tried to break through the police block after the Cambodian border. Police start a car chase. In the back of the car, inside 3 bags of fertilizer there were 51 crocodile skins (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II) 2 to 3 meters long. The 27-year-old man said he worked for a tannery in Samut Prakan in Thailand and that he bought the skins for 500 Baht a piece (14 US\$) on the Rong Kluea market place, in the Aranyaprathet District in Cambodia.⁵



Various Reptile Species

AFRICA

BENIN

January 24, 2017

Parakou, Borgou Department, Benin

Sentencing of a trafficker of 18 snake and varan skins (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 25) to 2 months in prison and 4 months suspended sentence and to a fine worth 300,000 FCFA (486 US\$).¹



SENEGAL

March 14 and 28, 2017

Dakar, Region of Dakar, Senegal

A sad record. Thanks to a joint action of the NGO WARA, the Urban Security, and the Director of Water and Forests, 558 reptile skins from Senegal and Mali were seized. WARA Conservation, which means "wild animal" in the Malinké dialect, is present in Guinea and in



Senegal and is a part of the EAGLE network. They fight for the protection of tropical biodiversity and against the poaching and trafficking of wildlife. The house that served as a secret tannery was searched, and dozens of skins soaking in the pans were found. 91 Nile crocodile skins (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I), 354 African rock python skins (*Python sebae*, Appendix II), 110 Nile monitor skins (*Varanus niloticus*, Appendix II), and 3 African civet skins (*Civettictis civetta*, Appendix III in Botswana). Five arrested, 2 of which were Senegalese and 2 Malian. All these skins made into bags, shoes, or belts have supplied leather shops of Dakar for years and are then sold as luxury goods in Europe and Asia.



On March 28, the court of Dakar sentenced Mbacke Thiam and Ibrahima Sacko to 4 months in prison and 2 million CFA (\$3227 US) in damages for the illegal capture, slaughter, possession, circulation, and sale of protected species. Khadim Dia was sentenced to 2 months in prison and a 200,000 CFA fine for having attempted to hinder the search by trying to stir a riot.



Already in Dakar in October 2013, 5 Nigerians were arrested with 2641 reptile skins of varying species.²

AMERICA

BRAZIL

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 5, 2017

Diadema, State of São Paulo, Brazil

In a family home, a caiman (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II) and a tegu (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II) were found. After being seized, they were transferred to the Tiete Ecological Park. The father and 17 year-old son were questioned.³



January 26, 2017

Aparecida de Goiânia, State of Goiás, Brazil

In the apartment, a man had set up a breeding farm. The military police seized 16 cobras (genus *Elapidae*), 9 tortoises of the genus *Chelonoidis* (Appendix II), 4 tarantulas and 4 iguanas. He was not at home at the time of the police raid.⁴

PORTO RICO

February 28, 2017

West Coast of Puerto Rico

Seizure of a rainbow boa (*Epicrates cenchria*, Appendix II) and a caiman for sale on Facebook for \$25 US and \$150 US, respectively. A week earlier, a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) was seized in the same region. He had been for sale for \$80 US.⁵

facebook

EUROPE

March 11, 2017

Vienna-Schwechat International Airport, Austria

Seizure of almost 80 reptiles. Seventeen black mambas (*Dendroaspis polylepis*), tortoises (*Testudinidae* spp., Appendix I or II), chameleons, some Setaro's dwarf chameleons (*Bradypodion setaroi*, Appendix II), and an armadillo spiny-tailed lizard (*Ouroborus cataphractus*, Appendix II) in the bags of a Czech citizen who was flying from South Africa with a stop over in Madrid. The animals were all alive, one of them venomous, and all enclosed in plastic boxes. The selection of reptiles shows that the man works for an occult network of sellers and collectors. Reno, a detection dog, as well as a veterinarian and specialists from the Schönbrunn Zoo, each at their level of expertise, contributed to the discovery of the smuggling and the identification of the species. Before their admission into the Forchtenstein Reptilian Zoo, feces samples are being analyzed to verify that the animals aren't carrying infectious diseases or parasites.⁶



Dendroaspis polylepis



Armadillo spiny-tailed lizard

Amphibians

EUROPE



Hyla arborea



Rana dalmatina



Rana temporaria



Rana esculenta



Rana ridibunda

FRANCE

Early February 2017 Jura Department, France



Sentencing of a man to a 3000€ fine and 5 months suspended prison sentence for the poaching and sale of 4000 common frogs (*Rana temporaria*). These frogs are coveted for their legs, particularly in restaurants in Jura and Doubs. The demand is very high, so importation is important, notably from Turkey. A live frog is estimated to be valued about 45 cents in €, while a prepared frog is sold between 50 and 55 cents.



Pelophylax perezi



Rana arvalis

The regulation of common frog catching has strengthened since January 1, 2017. It is "ruled" by a by-law. "Personal consumption" is limited to 1500 frogs per year, the maximum sanctions were raised from 15,000 to 150,000 € fines, and all catchers must submit a request for a quota to the regional administration. The date for submission has already passed for 2017. Nevertheless, exemptions can be obtained.²

The annual "collection" quota is limited to 2 million frogs in the Franche-Comté region, which includes Doubs, Jura, Haute-Saône, and the Territory of Belfort. The species present in the ponds there are, in addition to the common frog, the agile frog (*Rana dalmatina*), the edible frog (*Rana esculenta*), the marsh frog (*Rana ridibunda*), the Perez's frog (*Pelophylax perezi*), the European tree frog (*Hyla arborea*), and the moor frog (*Rana arvalis*).

March 2017

France

The big mess of frogs

The European Union imports between 4,000 and 5,000 tonnes of frog legs each year, which represent at least 100 to 150 million frogs. They are exported from Indonesia. They arrive frozen in Belgium and are irradiated by Sterigenics in Fleurus with a powerful cobalt-60 radioactive source. Irradiation, euphemistically called ionization, aims to delay the expiration date of the legs through elimination of many bacteria and microbes. Sterigenics is called to order by the Belgian Federal Agency of Nuclear Control (AFCN).

In France, frogs' legs are sold by 500 grams or by kilo in dismal plastic bags that have to, by regulation, name the species and the country of origin. If it is easy for naturalists to distinguish species by their color, figure, and their calls in their natural habitats, it's impossible to distinguish between them when they have been dissected and reduced to small, and ghostly muscles.

A recent extensive and indisputable study by 2 French scientists at the Natural History Museum has demonstrated that over 99% of frogs' legs sold in French supermarkets came in under false scientific names and are therefore illegal. Genetic analysis shows that of the 209 samples, only 3 were accurately identified. Almost all the frogs' legs sold in France are sold under the scientific name *Rana macrodon*. The flesh of this species is considered to be the most succulent by Indonesian and European consumers. In fact, the fake *Rana macrodon* that end up on the skewers of gourmet French diners are, with few exceptions, known as *Fejervarya cancrivora* scientifically and the crab-eating frog commonly.

Some see this misleading information as a marketing trick by exporters, importers, and distributors and as frauds relating to goods. Others are of the opinion that the false labeling is not intentional and that packagers do not have the capacity to differentiate among the legs of the two principal species captured in Indonesia. Yet, on the local markets in Southeast Asia, the *Rana macrodon* are correctly labeled and sold at higher prices.

In Indonesia, the *Rana macrodon* are in decline and potentially headed for extinction because of the predation they have been subject to for centuries, the deforestation of their habitats, the disappearance day after day of the wetlands, and the pollution in waterways. Their range in the islands of Java and Sumatra doesn't span more than 2000 square kilometers, eroded by human activities and raked by trappers who, under the effect of a sly semantic change, are classified as gatherers. Frogs are "gathered" like dead leaves or pebbles. They represent the classic cycle of an animal species in regression. Mature specimens that can reproduce are becoming more and more rare, and the survivors are becoming smaller and smaller. To make packages of 500 grams of legs, they have to poach and catch more and more frogs. The frog industry, therefore, is falling back in secrecy on a species less immediately threatened and more fertile than the *Rana macrodon*. The *Fejervarya cancrivora* is one all aquatic terrain species. She lives in mangroves, rice fields, and other more or less clear artificial basins. For now, the species seems to be bearing the shock, but scientists are beginning to question its resilience, particularly as the mangroves are suffering from exploitation and as the rice fields are infested with reprotoxic and contaminant pesticides.

Like the eels decimated by human consumption and chemical pollution, future generations of wild and edible frogs are, at the current rate of predation, sentenced to death.

Sandra Altherr from Pro Wildlife, one of the best specialists in the scope, has calculated, with the support of customs statistics, that in the decade 2000-2010, at least 50,000 tonnes of frogs were imported to Europe from Indonesia, which means the "gathering" of at least a billion frogs.³

Cf. n°3 p. 11, n°3 p. 32, n°4 p. 103, n°5 p. 32, n°6 p. 25 et p. 115, n°9 p. 21, n°10 p. 77, n°11 p. 96, n°12 p. 26, n°13 p. 113, n°15 p. 115.



Fejervarya cancrivora



Frozen frog legs to sale at Picard supermarkets, French specialist of frozen food. "Gathered in Indonesia. *Rana macrodon*. Treated by ionization in Belgium." 7.95 € the bag of 500g.

AMERICA

MEXICO

January 9, 2017

Mexico

"Biologia Plus" is a pedagogical kit for biology. It has been on the Mexican market for over 20 years. It is intended for children 10 years and older, although the instruction manual recommends it "for children from the age of 8". Only now the COFEPRIS, the Federal Commission for Protection against Health Hazards, has launched a survey on its safety. The kit indeed includes a dead frog preserved in formaldehyde. "Formalin ingestion, skin contact and inhalation of the gases emanating from this chemical poses a toxic risk to children in contact with it" according to a commission expert. The newspaper Animal Politico investigates. The Algara SA de CV company did not want to answer questions on the number and origin of the frogs used for 20 years.

It is for the experiment 28 that children are invited to dissect the frog. In conclusion, children are encouraged to go further : "If you can find another live frog or even another bigger animal like a pigeon or a rabbit, buy chloroform at the pharmacy (do not breathe it), soak a cotton, apply it to the respiratory holes and put the animal to sleep. Then you can dissect it"

An expert in social psychology explains that "this game teaches children that humans can play with other living species and that they have control over environment."

A video cited by Animal Politico shows 3 young miners filming the dissection of the frog contained in the kit. We see them dismembering the animal and we hear them laughing, commenting "Today we learn something interesting, we will know how to kill!" After 8 minutes, while they have torn the skin and tampered in the animal bowels, one of them continues: "Who wants to pull the eyes off?"¹

Insects and Arachnids

OCEANIA

ASIA

CHINA

February 22, 2017

Zhuhai, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of 17 butterflies in an EMS messaging package.¹

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 16, 2017

Bristol, England, United Kingdom

Phillip Cullen, 57, appeared in court for the capture and taxidermy of large blue butterflies (*Phengaris arion*). The species is strictly protected in the United Kingdom. Their eggs are exclusively laid on oregano or wild thyme. When they fall on the ground, the caterpillars produce a sort of honeydew and pheromones and are thus detected by ants. They are taken into an anthill in the winter and eat brood.

Cullen scaled the fences of the Somerset and Gloucestershire reserves and used his net to catch butterflies. Each time, he was red caught by a guard or witnesses. During the search of his home, police and entomologists also found heath fritillaries (*Melitaea athalia*), high brown fritillaries (*Fabriciana adippe*), and swallowtails (*Papilio machaon*). He had already been sentenced in 2010 for similar charges.²

Cf. "On the Trail n°12 p. 35.

Maculinea arion

AUSTRALIA

February 20 and March 17, 2017

Perth, State of Western Australia, Australia

A Czech trafficker wanted to fly away with full pockets.

4,226 insects and arachnids, of which included 27 spiders, 7 scorpions, 19 beetles, and butterflies. He turned out the man had travelled the world. He knew the entomologists networks that poached. He did not come to Australia by chance. The insects that cover the vast Australian continent are generally spared by pesticides. They are sought from around the world by museums and collectors.³



Birds



AFRICA

CAMEROON

March 24, 2017

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon

Seizure of approximately 300 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). Arrest of a Ghanaian.¹

SENEGAL

January 23, 2017

Léopold Sédar Senghor International Airport, Senegal

Seizure of 500 birds of 14 different species destined for Madrid with an estimated value of 14 million CFA francs (\$22,687 US). Over 300 were already dead from asphyxia in the 4 suitcases of the 2 Spanish traffickers'. They were arrested for the illegal capture and possession of protected birds, for mistreatment, and lack of exportation permits. The 200 birds were released back into the wild. The cooperation between Senegal and Spain is hoped for the judicial enquiry.²

TUNISIA

February 11, 2017

Tataouine Governorate, Tunisia

Arrest of houbara bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) poachers. Four all-terrain vehicles were intercepted after they raided a private military area. One vehicle was covered in blood and feathers. The dead birds were thrown from the cars during the chase. First, the vehicle was seized and the poachers arrested. Then the prosecutor of the Republic cancelled the seizure and ordered the release of the poachers. The ornithologist Abdelmajid Dabbar continues to denounce the bustard massacre (cf. "On the Trail" n°3 p. 22).³

On the Trail #16. Robin des Bois/Robin Hood

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

January 5, 2017

San Cosme, Province of Corrientes, Argentina

The tourists on the expressway n°12 which leads to the falls of Iguazu rub shoulders with wildlife traffickers. The trunk of the Ford Ecosport vehicle contained 85 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) hidden in cardboard boxes. The car and the birds were seized.⁴



© California Academy of Sciences

March 3, 2017

Mendoza, Province of Mendoza, Argentina

Writ of sequestration of a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), a toucan, 2 golden-billed saltators (*Saltator aurantirostris*), and a glossy-back thrush (*Turdus serranus*). They are in a house on national route 7.⁵



© Mendoza Opin

BRAZIL

January 16, 2017

Rio de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Seizure of a parrot chick (*Psittacidae* spp, Appendix I or II). When the law enforcement officer arrives, a man explains that his step-son, with the help of friends, has captured the chick in his nest. They are all under enquiry.

The State of Rio has set up a special telephone line for crimes against fauna and flora, Linha Verde (the green line): 0300 253 1177.⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENSE

January 18, 2017

Garanhuns, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

A father and his son were transporting an amazon (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), 19 red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*), 15 lined seedeaters (*Sporophila lineola*), 13 chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), 10 rufous-collared sparrows (*Zonotrichia capensis*), and 6 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) in their van. They were going to try to sell them in Lajedo (35 km). The father had already been arrested on similar charges in June 2016.⁷



Paroaria dominicana

January 25, 2017

Claro dos Poções, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

The military police entered the home of a 61-year-old woman. She would take up wildlife trafficking. The police found behind her home a parrot (*Psittacidae* family) in a cage and a pionus (*Pionus* spp., Appendix II) left to roam, with partly clipped wings to prevent it from flying. She explained that the animals did not belong to her and that she had been watching them for 2 months to do a favor for her neighbour who had to go away. She was taken by the police to be questioned.⁸

Sunday, January 29, 2017

Macapa, Amapa State, Brazil



Seizure of 15 animals, 2 of which were parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II). They were in the home of an 80-year-old woman, who showed signs of a mental handi-

cap. She had them in cages. They were starving and dehydrated. She was reported by the NGO Costelinha, who focuses on the rescue and rehabilitation of discarded and mistreated animals.⁹

January 30, 2017

Belem

Police descended on a residence in Belem. Law enforcement officers discovered a hawk-headed parrot (*Deropterus accipitrinus*, Appendix II) and 3 turtles (*Chelonoidis* spp., Appendix I or II).¹⁰



January 31, 2017

Cristália, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Questioning of a 42 year old man. At his home, in cages, one goldfinch (genus *Carduelis*), one ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), and one parrot (*Psittacidae*, spp., Appendix I ou II). The military police discovered as well, wrapped in newspaper, 26 dead birds : some

parakeets (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II), some hummingbirds (family Trochilidae), some passerines (genus *Turdus*), some shiny cowbirds (*Molothrus bonariensis*), and some green honeycreepers (*Chlorophanes spiza*). Two firearms and 4 nets were also seized.¹¹

February 8, 2017

Nossa Senhora do Socorro, State of Sergipe, Brazil

The police showed up on the scene after receiving information about the mistreatment of a parrot (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II). The mistreatment couldn't be proved but the parrot was without any legal paper. He was seized.¹²

February 13-15, 2017

Santo Antonio do Sudoeste, Parana State, Brazil

A stygian owl (*Asio stygius*, Appendix II) was found dying in a tree. Someone had shot him. Taken to the Dois Vizinhos Zoo, veterinarians decided to amputate the right wing riddled with bullets.

According to oiseaux.net, the name *stygius* comes from the Greek word Styx, the river connecting Earth and the Underworld in Greek mythology. In the Caribbean, the owl is considered a bad omen, capable of transforming into a sorcerer. To escape persecution, the stygian owl has an answer. He is keeping out of singing.¹³



Mid February 2017

São Paulo, State of São Paulo, Brazil

41 blue-fronted Amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and 19 orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II) that were seized in São Paulo State in February were returned to their home State of Tocantins, 1700 km away. 29 had already paved the way in January.¹⁴

February 17, 2017

Verdelândia, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of 9 birds – pionus parrots (*Pionus* spp., Appendix I or II) and a parrot (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) – 7 cages, and 2 homemade firearms in the home of a 46-year-old man. He was reported by his neighbours.¹⁵

February 18-22, 2017
Passo de Camaragibe, Maceió,
Arapiraca, São Miguel dos Milagres,
Porto Calvo, and Maragogi, State of
Alagoas, Brazil



A joint operation by IMA (the Institute of the Environment), IBAMA, and the Environmental Police Battalion (BPA) led to the seizure of 200 wild animals, among which included a blue fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 5 Illiger's macaws (*Primolius maracana*, Appendix I), and 2 turtles.¹⁶



Primolius maracana

February 25, 2017
Brasília, Federal District, Brazil

Under the name Fernando Lucas, a man offered online "Hyacinth macaw chicks captured in the Amazon. Chicks in good health. Feathers dewormed. To be picked up. They are gentle. I'll trade them for sex." He used a photo that had been taken from a website dedicated to the protection of animals to illustrate his ad. The investigation can't get anywhere. The police cannot confirm the information given in the ad and do not know the true identity of the seller.¹⁷

March 10, 2017
Santana da Ponte Pensa, Sao Paulo State, Brazil
 Seizure of a blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and drugs.¹⁸



Sunday, March 12, 2017
Miracema do Tocantins, State of Tocantins, Brazil
 Voluntary release of a blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). It was found in a yard, wings cut.¹⁹



Saturday, March 18, 2017
Almas, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Three blue and yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) were wandering around Almas. "They were behaving like chickens," said one of the residents. The police are looking for the "owners".²⁰



March 18, 2017
Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo State, Brazil

Seizure by the military police of a parrot (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II), 7 other birds, marijuana, and cocaine.²¹



March 30, 2017
Bela Vista, Maranhao State, Brazil

Cruelty calls for cruelty (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p. 1). A man shot at a dog in the street. In his home, police found a number of birds and a parrot (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) with mutilated wings being kept in cages.²²

CHILE

February 19, 2017
Andacollo, Elqui Province, Chile

Seizure of 2 Patagonian conures (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*, Appendix II), 2 blue and yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 2 chinchillas, and a toucan at a private residence.²³

COSTA RICA

March 1, 2017
Canton of Turrubares, Province of San José, Costa Rica

An anonymous tip led to the rescue of 2 parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) with ruined plumage and lesions on their legs and wings.²⁴

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Early January 2017

Anahuac, State of Texas, United States of America

Poaching of a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), the national emblem of the United States of America, taken in a family farm near Fort Anahuac Park. Gagged, beak almost torn off and head severely wounded by bullet, he had to be finished off. The event takes place during the duck and geese hunting season. It could be an error, but the murder is probably intentional. The bald eagle's outline is remarkable. A reward is promised for any information allowing the arrest of the culprit (see "On the Trail" n°10 pp.23-24, and n°15 p.37).²⁵



February 15, 2017

Nogales, Arizona State, United States of America

Charging of M. McPherron for illegal importation of bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), a crested caracara (*Caracara cheriway*, Appendix II), a greater roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*), a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), a toucan (*Ramphastidae* family), and a cockatoo (*Cacatuidae* sp., Appendix I or II). 220 feathers in all – that can cost him dearly. According to the penal code, he risks up to 2 years in prison and a \$10,000 US fine.²⁶

February 22, 2017

Harris County, Texas State, United States of America

Two bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) were taking care of their chick in a tree more than 30 meters from the ground. One of the parents suffered from a series of shots and died, and the other stayed in the nest to protect the eaglet. About 5 weeks old, this little one was saved and brought to a wildlife centre. A 17-year-old adolescent was charged.²⁷

March 20, 2017

Brookings, Oregon State, United States

Poaching of a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II). Its talons were cut off. The dismembered carcass was found at the mouth of Winchuck River. The State troopers are investigating.²⁸



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MEXICO

January 15, 2017

Puebla, State of Puebla, Mexico

Without any identification papers. Seizure of 2 white-fronted Amazons (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), a yellow-headed Amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), 5 red-lore Amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 7 white-crowned parrots (*Pionus senilis*, Appendix II), a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix II), 2 military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I), and 2 emerald toucanets (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*).²⁹

January 22, 2017

Santa Lucía del Camino y San Martín Mexicapan, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Seizure of 2 red-lore Amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and a grey fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) for sale on Facebook.³⁰

facebook



© Reinaldo Aguilar

January 21, 2017

Huimanguillo, State of Tabasco, Mexico

Seizure of 2 white-fronted Amazons (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II). When they spotted police, the street vendors fled, leaving the birds on the sidewalk.³¹



January 22, 2017

Tultepec, State of Mexico, Mexico

Writ of sequestration of 2 keel-billed toucans (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II), 11 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp.), an emerald toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*), and a common cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). They are in the restaurant "El Tío", enclosed in a small aviary.³²



© Profepa

February 26, 2017

Cahuacán, Mexico State, Mexico

Road inspection. In the backseat, in a bag covered by blankets, 5 yellow-naped amazons aged 8 weeks (*Amazona auropalliata*, Appendix I) were found. Yellow-naped amazons are sought after for their chatter. In the trunk, 4 white-throated magpie jays (*Calocitta Formosa*) were found in cages. The 40-year-old driver was arrested.

The PROFEPA strengthens these inspections during February and March, the hatching period for parrots. Poachers will steal from the nests and sell them sub rosa.³³



March 3, 2017

Tepic, State of Nayarit, Mexico

The federal police inspected a bus at the toll booth. They discovered 454 painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*), a blue bunting (*Cyanocompsa parellina*), 4 varied buntings (*Passerina versicolor*), 26 black-headed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), and 5 indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*). The owner did not have their papers. He was placed in custody and the birds were seized.

The painted bunting is protected by Mexican law. It is sought after as a pet both nationally and internationally.³⁴



Passerina ciris

Saturday, March 18, 2017

San Agustín Loxicha, District of Pochutla, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Arrest of Agustin M. M., 38, and José S. C., 28. In their Volkswagen Golf registered to the State of Puebla, they had over 300 parakeets (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) in cages, cardboard boxes, and bags.³⁵

March 26, 2017

Cancun International Airport, Quintana Roo State, Mexico

A Spanish immigrant wanted to board a flight to Germany. He wanted to go over with his suitcase full of 73 black-headed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) and 95 painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*). Sixteen were dead from asphyxia or crushing. He is being held in custody.³⁶

PARAGUAY

January 5, 2017

Asunción, Paraguay

New seizure at the Mercado 4 (cf "On the Trail" n°7, p. 23, n°13, p.106). The 4 young parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II) were transferred to the Botanical Garden of Asunción.³⁷

ASIA

Late January

A Saudi prince bought 80 plane tickets to transport his falcons. Several airlines allow falcons to be transported in the cabin or in the hold, like Etihad, Emirates, and Qatar Airways. "Animals are not permitted in the cabin of Emirates flights, with the exception of falcons between Dubai and certain destinations in Pakistan," indicates Emirates. The company Lufthansa has gone even further by proposing a special stand to rich passengers for their birds. The United Arab Emirates government has issued 28,000 CITES passports for falcons between 2002 and 2013.³⁸



"Falcon Master" Transport Tray

CAMBODIA

Mid January 2017

Koh Pao, Province of Koh Kong, Cambodia

Rangers removed 1400 traps from the forest and took down a bird net with a length of one kilometre. These nets made of synthetic material, called “walls of death” like those that are used in sea, take numerous collateral victims, such as bears, pangolins and civets. Already in 2016, the rangers had removed 5000 traps and took down 6 km of nets from the same area.³⁹



CHINA

GANG

Mid-February 2017

Xiamen and Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China



In the luggage of a Chinese passenger returning from abroad, customs officers found 72 eggs. For his defence, the suspect said that they were pigeon eggs. In fact, they were parrot eggs (*Psittacidae* spp.,

Appendix I or II) wrapped in cotton – they were macaw, eclectus parrot (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II) and amazon (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II) eggs. In quarantine, 13 of the 72 eggs did not hatch. Following the investigation, the police seized 89 parrots. Since May 2016, the gang has engaged in the smuggling of 300 eggs to raise exotic birds and sell them.⁴⁰

February 28, 2017

Guilin Liangjiang International Airport, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of 3 ostrich eggs (*Struthio camelus*) weighing 4.55 kg in a Chinese traveller's bag en route to Taiwan.

The ostrich populations of Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sudan are in Appendix I.⁴¹



OPERATION THUNDERBIRD

March 2, 2017

Sanmen Island, Guangdong Province, China

Operation Thunderbird in the hot spot of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Seizure by a naval patrol of 128 helmeted hornbills (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I), cell phones, and printers in two skiffs. The value of a non-worked hornbill casque fluctuates between \$1600 US and \$5000 US. The average weight of a casque is 300 g.⁴²



INDIA

January 9, 2017

Bangalore, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 8 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II). Arrest of Raghul Raj, engineer at a telecommunications company and son of Tamil Nadu, an employee at the Forestry Department. The price a pair was fixed at 4500 rupees (\$66 US). Raj was not a novice. He was suspected of having sold 12 other birds outside of the State.⁴³



REPEATED OFFENSE

January 13, 2017

Ayanavaram, Chennai, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 156 juvenile Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) in the early morning at the home of Mujeeb Hussain, 50 years old. They had been captured in the forests of Andhra Pradesh in



order to be sold for 2500 rupees (\$37 US) a piece in the pet stores of Chennai. Hussain is already known by authorities for similar actions. He was questioned.⁴⁴

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 19, 2017

Hyderabad, State of Telangana, India

Seizure of exotic birds, among which included blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and parrots (*Psittacidae*, spp., Appendix I or II), at the home of Mohammed Rafeeq, the owner of the pet shop "Furs N Feathers" in Banjara Hills. The police also suspect him of having smuggled 4 llamas (*Lama glama*, Appendix II) into one of his properties. In 2013, 12 peacocks were seized from his house. He also participated in another poaching attempt of 5 caracals and a leopard in Uttar Pradesh.⁴⁵

January 28, 2017

Mokarsagar Wetland Complex, Porbandar District, State of Gujarat, India

Its high season for the coastal swamps. They will harbor hundreds of thousands of migrating birds coming from the North to stay the winter. It's also high season for poachers (see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 37). At night, they set up their nets, their traps or their sticking wire. Luckily they also are caught. Eight poachers were arrested this Saturday in the area at daybreak. Traps, slingshots and a demoiselle crane (*Anthropoides virgo*, Appendix II) were seized.⁴⁶



February 8, 2017

Navi Mumbai, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

The 2 young people, 19 and 20, are students in first rank schools. To make ends meet or to live in the luxury, they sold birds on Internet. It's while delivering falcons near the Panvel station that one of them was caught by a joint wildlife team, the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and the NGO PAWS (Plant & Animal Welfare Society).⁴⁷

IRAN

January 19, 2017

Saveh (50 km from Teheran), Province of Markazi, Iran

Seizure of a shikra (*Accipiter badius*, Appendix II) and 55 other birds including finches (genus *Carduelis*) and thrush nightingales (*Luscinia luscinia*). They were in good shape and therefore were set free. The poachers were arrested. The cages and traps were seized.⁴⁸

THAILAND

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 11, 2017

Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Pichart Muangsri, a 45-year-old poacher, was stopped thanks to a joint operation between the services and the NGO Elephant Action League.



Bodies of helmeted hornbills (*Rhynoplax vigil*, Appendix I) and 400 other birds were seized. The "red ivory", coming from helmeted hornbills' beaks, is in high

demand in China. Muangsri has been active in trafficking for at least 15 years. He is already known for smuggling orangutans from Indonesia.

Elephant Action League created the site "Wild-Leaks" in 2014 on crimes against wildlife – flora and fauna.⁴⁹

VIET NAM

February 27, 2017

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Voluntary release of an oriental pied-hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II). It was in an outdoor cage. It is now in the Cu Chi refuge.⁵⁰



March 6, 2017

Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a 1.5-kg great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*, Appendix I). It was sold on Facebook for 20 million dongs (\$877 US). The responsible was apprehended thanks to a joint action between Education for Nature (ENV) and the local police.⁵¹

facebook



CYPRUS

March 2017

Cyprus

The Akrotiri and Dhekelia military bases are British Overseas Territories. They cover 254 square kilometers, about 3% of the island. They fill a strategic role of collection and transmission of military and paramilitary informations and signals in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Some of the population and the political party in power consider the British presence to be a colonial legacy. The Cyprus Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Birdlife published a new record of migratory passerine trappings, like the blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), the European robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), and the garden warbler (*Sylvia borin*). The British army lets poachers exploit non-priority plots. They planted Australian acacias that attract and trap the birds with the help of nets and electronic call-birds on their migratory paths. In this sad domain, Cyprus is worse than Malta (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p. 32, n°9 p. 28, n°11 p. 27, n°15 p. 39).



800,000 birds from 153 different species were captured last autumn just on the British military police base in Dhekelia. This organized crime continues in Cyprus thanks to the tolerance of the British army. To suspend the chopping down of acacias, the poachers hatched a demonstration and blocked access to the bases. The message was heard – the acacia forest is still there and the birds continue to supply the restaurants and tables of the island with "ambelopoulia", the island gastronomic specialty. The birds are a part of diplomacy. They contribute to the Cypriote population's acceptance



of the continued British presence on the island. The liberty to poach the birds and eat them is a sort of compensatory measure.⁵²

SPAIN

January 12, 2017

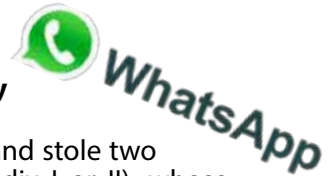
Solsona, Lérida Province, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

The Mossos, the Catalanian police, are investigating. Someone was trying to sell a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) online for 300 €. After 3 weeks, pretending to be a buyer, a Mosso succeeded in contacting the seller, a 44-year-old Spaniard. A trap was set. He was apprehended and the bird of prey was seized.⁵³

January 23, 2017

Torrelavega, Autonomous Community of Cantabria, Spain

Two individuals broke in and stole two macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), whose value together is about 3000 €. For several months, many exotic birds have been stolen in the region. The victims set up a group on the social media app WhatsApp, posting posters to find their birds.⁵⁴



FRANCE

January 25, 2017

Nanterre, Gennevilliers and La Courneuve, Hauts-de-Seine Department, Ile-de-France Region, France

The peri-urban mob targets also European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), European greenfinches (*Carduelis chloris*) and European serin (*Serinus serinus*). The Paris region park areas are sticky. Finches gather in the winter and are easy to catch with glue.

The finch trade brings in just less than the cannabis trade, but regarding the law, it is much less risky if one is found out. One can always claim that the attempted capture was motivated by love for songbirds. An average finch can be sold for 100 to 200 € a piece, that is 10 to 20 € per gram, on the Internet or the odious parisian bird market on Ile de la Cité.⁵⁵

Night of February 25, 2017

Clermont-Ferrand, Puy-de-Dôme Department, France

A Jardiland was attacked by a ramming car. A white cockatoo (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II), aged 6 months, was stolen. The species originally comes from Indonesia. The lifespan is 60-80 years. The value of one bird is estimated at 2500 €. Jardiland is a chain store selling garden-ing equipment and pets.⁵⁶



Late February 2017
Lot Department, France



A joint operation between the Central Office against infringements on environment and public health (OCLAESP) and the French National Hunting and Wildlife Agency (ONCFS) successfully seized hundreds of birds from multiple species: Eurasian sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), goldenfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), bluethroats (*Luscinia svecica*), golden orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*), hoopoes (*Upupa epops*), and red-billed leiothrixes (*Leiothrix lutea*). Nets, cages, traps, and false rings, as well as 18,000 € were also seized. Four individuals were indicted. The network has offshoots in Belgium.⁵⁷

ITALY

Early January 2017
Calabria Region, Italy

Seizure of more than 2,000 birds of protected species, including 91 dead ones. Charge of 13 persons for criminal association. The birds were released into the wild.⁵⁸

January 19, 2017
Cercola, Naples, Campania Region, Italy

An auto-proclaimed bird "fan" held inside an aviary tens of siskins (genus *Spinus*) and European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). He is charged with fencing and mistreatment towards animals.⁵⁹

Early February 2017
Ballaro Market, Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy
 Seizure of golden finches (genus *Carduelis*) and freeing in La Favorita Park -the largest green space in Palermo, 4 sq km- of those that survived capture, caging and carelessness. There were approximately 300 imprisoned. Two individuals, 25 and 42, were charged with poaching and mistreatment of animals.⁶⁰

Early March 2017
Ballaro Market, Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy
 Seizure of 20 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) by the police. They were let go again in Favorita Park. The seller was apprehended.⁶¹



Mid March 2017
Bari, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), shown off in a window display downtown.⁶²

March 19, 2017
Messine, Region of Sicily, Italy
 Seizure of 83 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) at the aptly named "mercato dei Cardellini" (Cardellini Market).⁶³

UNITED KINGDOM

March 8, 2017
Sheffield, England, United Kingdom
 Dwaine Tavernor is accused of having used the band of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), held in captivity to "whiten" a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) captured in the wild. He is also accused of domestic animal abuse.⁶⁴



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.

"On the Trail" n°16

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

Continent	Country	US\$/animal	Ref.
Africa	Cameroon	13 to 16	1
Asia	China	990	20
	India (Maharashtra)	750	25

"On the Trail" n°16

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	Thailand	1100	31, 32

AFRICA

CAMEROON

January 17, 2017

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 5 tonnes of scales, from 5000 to 15,000 pangolins. Arrests of two Chinese citizens, in charge of a carpentry workshop. They hid their smuggled goods in metallic boxes to hide bad smell. In the country, 30,000 to 40,000 pangolins would be killed each month. In Yaoundé, the price of pangolin is around 8000 to 10,000 FCFA (\$13-16 US).¹

February 17, 2017

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon

"The question is to put these fauna products out of reach of any kind of cupidity and to encourage the whole staff – all combined bodies – that allowed us to complete these seizures," declared the Minister of Forests and Wildlife.

3094,4 kg of pangolin scales were incinerated in the presence of members of the diplomatic corps. 8134.79 kg of scales were seized between 2013 and 2016. 5040 kg are still under seal in Douala. 700 kg were seized at the Yaoundé International Airport in December 2016 (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 40). This is a first for pangolin scales, after a strong signal was sent with the burning of ivory in April 2016.²



UGANDA

March 2, 2017

Northern Uganda

Seizure of a live pangolin and 3 skinned pangolins. Arrest of 3 traffickers. One of them was disguised as a military officer, uniform and decoration in all.³

Early January 2017

Kampala, Uganda

Arrest of a Malian national, Gakou Fodie, the boss of a network of traffickers, and seizure of 6 tonnes of pangolin scales coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nine Tanzanian accomplices were apprehended. The scales were transported in small quantities on bus service between Kampala and Dar es Salam via Mutukula. According to hearsay, they were at the beginning destined to Burundi.⁴

ZIMBABWE

January 11, 2017

Zimbabwe

Return to the wild for a female pangolin. She had been seized in March 2016. She was then breastfed and only weighed 2.1 kg. After a year of care, she currently weighs 7kg. A microchip tracks her movements.⁵



**January 24, 2017
Zimbabwe**

Seizure of one pangolin. 3.8 kg. The first refugee of the year for the Tikki Hywood Trust. So staggered that she would not leave the cover of the towel. A man is being prosecuted.⁶



© Tikki Hywood Trust

**January 29, 2017
Zimbabwe**



4.2 kg. Spontaneously delivered to Tikki Hywood Trust by a community head who had received her as a gift from one of his citizens.⁷

**March 15, 2017
Bulawayo, Province of Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe**

Seizure of a pangolin skin. The accused said he found a dead pangolin by accident in the bush. His first intention was to give the skin to the Natural History Museum. But after speaking with 2 accomplices, he decided to sell it to 3 men, who were police officers. Three arrests.⁸

ASIA

CAMBODGE

**January 19, 2017
Thma Bang District, Kaoh Kong Province, Cambodia**

Seizure at two separate times in two separate places of 4 pangolins. No arrests made.⁹

CHINA

REPEATED OFFENSE

**January 5, 2017
Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, China**

Conviction of a man - Fengmou Wen, 48, unemployed - to 8 years in prison and a 100,000 yuans (US \$ 14,377) fine for traffic of 1,495 kg scales worth US \$ 500,000 (see "On the Trail" n°13, p.37). He carried the scales aboard a pirate ship coming from Hong Kong and was intercepted by the naval brigade. His accomplice fled. He had already been sentenced to 11 years in prison in 2002 for smuggling.¹⁰



**January 6, 2017
Wuping County, Fujian Province, China**



Conviction of a man to an 8 months suspended sentence, a one-year probation period and a fine of 13,600 yuans (1955 US \$) for illegal purchase and transport of a pangolin. To justify his offense, he claims to suffer from a skin disease and stomach problems that classical medicine fails to heal. He therefore got hold of a pangolin as an alternative remedy. The medicinal animal was released into the wild.¹¹

**January 18, 2017
Menglian County, Yunnan Province, China**

Seizure in a van of 2 live pangolins weighing 2.6 kg and 4.6 kg. They were covered in a green blanket and shut in a plastic box. The driver was arrested.¹²



**February 6, 2017
Huanggang, Shenzhen District, Guangdong Province, China**

Seizure of 10 kg of scales that were transported by a woman in a black plastic bag.¹³

**February 6, 2017
Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China**



On Wechat, a businessman from Hong Kong shared 4 photos of a pangolin feast from July 15, 2015 in Nanning. Lee Ka-wo was on an official investors' mission. Among the organizers of the party was a civil servant of the Minister of Education of the Autonomous Region. The pictures went viral. The owner of the restaurant and his cook has been charged.¹⁴

**February 14, 2017
Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China**

Nicknamed "Princess of the pangolins", she posted pictures on Weibo of rice fried in pangolin blood and of pangolin soup. As any comment she said it was "a treat". She also treated to swan. The pictures are from 2011 and 2012. A bad omen! In the photos owls in cages can also be seen. She was arrested at her home in Shenzhen.¹⁵



转发 评论 赞

February 16, 2017

Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of live and frozen pangolins in a car and in a house. Two arrests.¹⁶

February 17, 2017

Anhui, Anhui Province, China

Seizure of 1500 kg of scales from a business whose name has not been disclosed. The person responsible said that he had obtained an importation license before the listing of pangolins in Appendix I of CITES. The origin of the scales is questionable.¹⁷

February 21, 2017

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Sentencing to 10 years in prison for Deng Mou, an inhabitant of Guangxi, for attempting to transport 25 live pangolins to Shenzhen. At the time of the arrest by a highway patrol, his accomplices escaped. A reward of 600 yuans (\$87 US) is offered for anyone who can facilitate their arrest.¹⁸



REPEATED OFFENSE

February 2017

Liancheng County, Fujian Province, China

Sentencing of a trafficker to 2 years and 3 months in prison, as well as a fine of 9000 yuans (\$1308 US) for possession in May 2015 of a paw and 4 frozen pangolins with a total estimated value of 8350 yuans (\$1214 US). He was already arrested in 2009 for the trafficking of protected wild animals.¹⁹



March 7, 2017

Foshan, Guangdong Province, China

Chen said he ordered a pangolin from Momu for 760 yuans per kilogram. The pangolin weighed about 9 kg. Chen thought that eating the pangolin would prevent cancer. Momu and Chen were stopped by the police just before the transaction.²⁰

March 14, 2017

Xian de Changting, Fujian Province, China

Sentencing to 10 years suspended prison sentence and a fine of 6000 yuans (\$873 US) for the purchase of 2 living pangolins, (and not one, cf. "On the Trail" n°15, p. 44) in the hope of healing his wife. The 2 pangolins were in good health and released back into the wild.²¹



March 22, 2017

Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 57.62 kg of scales. The customs officers estimate that they came from 115 specimens.²²

March 23, 2017

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 24 live pangolins from the back of a car.²³

March 29, 2017

Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of 2 frozen pangolins (15.5 kg) and scales.²⁴

INDIA

January 21, 2017

State of Maharashtra, India

The threesome have found a female pangolin aged of one year and a half in a ditch. One of the suspects who was working as a guardsman, was hoping to sell it for 100,000 rupee (\$ 1500 US). He found a buyer for 50 000 rupee (\$50 000 US). The police was informed about the sale and arrested the three of them.²⁵

INDONESIA

January 21, 2017

Tambang Baru, Merangin Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 5 pangolins in a restaurant. Three arrests. They were purchased in the Lembah Masurai district known for its geological park labelled by UNESCO.²⁶

February 12, 2017

Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 89 pangolins, most of which were dead. All of the survivors were in bad shape. Heading for Malaysia, they came from the south of the island of Sumatra. Four suspects were arrested, ages 32, 39, 42, and 49. During a patrol, police smelled a nauseating odor coming from a car and discovered the prisoners kept in bags and baskets.²⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 25, 2017

Muaradua, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 4 live pangolins and a scale used to weigh them. The couple were habitual pangolin traffickers. The wife was apprehended, the husband got away.²⁸

MALAYSIA

January 6, 2017

Alor Setar, Kedah State, Malaysia

Conviction of a man to a fine of 120,000 ringgits (US \$ 26,759) for possession of 109 live pangolins and for cruelty to animals. He kept them in a shack at home, locked up and tied up in bags (see "On the Trail", n°15, p.47). For lack of payment of the fine, Manshor Hat - 49 years old, father of 4 children and working small jobs in the agricultural sector – will serve one year in prison.²⁹



PHILIPPINES

March 17, 2017

Bacolod, Western Negros Province, Philippines

Fifteen frozen and mutilated pangolins were found in a ditch.³⁰



THAILAND

February 2, 2017

Bangkok International Suvarnabhumi Airport, Thailand

Disclosure of the 2 seizures on the 4th and 23rd of December 2016 in Turkish Airlines flights from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and at the destination of Vientiane, Laos via Istanbul and Bangkok. They totaled 2.9 tonnes of scales. According to Thanya Netithamkul, director of National Parks and Wildlife, a kilo of scales sells in China for 40,000 bahts (\$1,100 US).³¹

February 14, 2017

Bangkok International Suvarnabhumi Airport, Thailand

Seizure of 1066 kg of scales separated into 22 packages. Estimated value of 40 million bahts (\$1,148,000 US), or about \$1,100 US per kg. They came from Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo via Kenya, destined for Vientiane, Laos. Pangolin scales were officially declared "fish maw". To gather this many scales, between 2500 and 3000 pangolins were captured and boiled.³²

VIET NAM

January 4, 2017

Da Nang city, Viet Nam

Seizure of 4 live pangolins for a total weight of 15.4 kg by the Department of Forest Management. They were to be illegally transported from the Central Highlands region to the city of Da Nang but were intercepted by the police and the mobile rangers' brigade. One of the four pangolins had a serious injury. He had to undergo an emergency intervention at the Cuc Phuong's center for Endangered Species Rescue. The suspects are questioned.³³

January 9, 2017

Cau Treo, Huong Son District, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam. At border of Laos.

Seizure in a car of 9 pangolins and 5 tortoises with a total weight of 28.1 kg, originating from Lac Xao (Laos). Two arrests, Nguyen Thi Hong Chi, 43, and Tran Van Tuyen, 33, who work manufacturing car parts.³⁴

January 12 and February 4, 2017

Border with Laos, Nam Giang District, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam

- Discovery of a pangolin (1.8 kg) on the side of the road in the line of entering vehicles.
- Seizure of 3 live pangolins (6.5 kg) that were in a false gas tank.³⁵

January 17, 2017

Viet Nam

Rescue of one pangolin. A paw was caught in trap.³⁶



February 10, 2017

Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

Seizure of a mother and her baby that had been bought in Laos for less than a dollar by a Vietnamese man. A healthcare specialist from the NGO Save Viet Nam's Wildlife took them into care.³⁷

February 28, 2017

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

A shipment is inspected by customs officers. They discovered 4 packages containing a total of 322 kilograms of scales from Nigeria. Officially, they contained "office supplies".³⁸



Pangolins and Elephants



ASIA

CHINA

February 21, 2017
Yiwu Airport, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure in a box of cookies from a bag of a passenger traveling from the Democratic Republic of the Congo via Hong Kong of raw and worked ivory (557 grams) and pangolin scales (195 grams). The "goods" were packaged in brown paper.¹



VIET NAM

February 27 to March 3, 2017
Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

The airport freight area's warehouses are effervescent. Anti-smuggling, customs, and magistrate services opened hundreds of unclaimed packages. A metric ton of prohibited merchandise was found: almost 300 kg of khat leaves that had come from Kenya, 704 kg of pangolin scales that had come from Nigeria and Cameroon, and 20 kg of raw ivory that had come from Portugal.²

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

CAMEROON

February 22, 2017
East of Cameroon

Rescue of a 10-month-old baby chimpanzee. He had been spotted by a female expat in a house more or less derelict and overrun by army ants. He was brought to a special refuge in Mefou. He is in good care with Ape Action Africa.¹



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 30, 2017
Domaine de Chasse Mondo Missa, Upper Uele Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sudanese border.

The female baboon (*Papio* spp., Annex II) was a baby. A seller of bush meat, nationality unknown, held her in captivity. She was crying out and was heard by the police. She was transferred to a wildlife refuge in Lwiro.²



February 5, 2017
Village near Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo

The welcoming in Lwiro wildlife refuge of a young female chimpanzee had yet to be secured. She was held captive in a village close to Garamba National Park and her "owners" did not want to rid of her.³

ARGENTINA

March 1, 2017
Argentina

"I know that it's not legal, but he's like a son. We've raised him by the bottle and at the teat." A family had taken in a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II) 20 years ago. "He eats lollipops, he drinks his milk from a cup, he tucks himself in to sleep, and he misses his family," explained Alberto Tellarini, the veterinarian at the refuge the capuchin had been sent to. A judge decreed that the family could have him back.⁴

BOLIVIA

January 26, 2017

Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia

Seizure of two white-faced capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II). Detained since 7 years ago, they were mistreated.⁵



BRAZIL

January 17, 2017

Catanduva, State of São Paulo, Brazil



A vehicle was stopped by the military police on the Rodovia Washington Luís Route (SP-310). In the trunk, there were 2 young black tufted capuchins (*Cebus nigratus*, Appendix II). They were said to have been bought on the internet. They were going to be resold in the city of Arujá, 400km away.⁷

March 21, 2017

Joao Pessoa, State of Paraíba, Brazil

Seizure of a black-striped tufted capuchin (*Cebus libidinosus*, Appendix II). The police were searching for stolen motorcycles. They found a capuchin that had been "incarcerated" for 20 years. The man explained that he had saved the monkey from a fire "He was on his mother's back and he fell. I risked my life to save him. He escaped a bunch of times, but he always came



back. I had already considered giving him to a zoo, but my wife is very attached to him. And I'm afraid the other monkeys will treat him badly." They received a 500 reais fine (\$160 US).⁸

When apes turn out to be animals that bring bad luck rather than pets

January to march 2017

States of Minas Gerais, Esperito Santo and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Cruelties towards howler monkeys are increasing (*Alouatta* spp, I or II Appendix). At least 200 monkeys were burnt, poisoned, smashed or shot in the only State of Sao Paulo. Autopsies, when they could be done, showed that the victims were not carrying the yellow fever. People are afraid of the new epidemic wave. They persist in attacking the howler monkeys. The authorities remind that the monkeys do not transmit the disease but the mosquitoes do and they are the only carriers. But people won't hear. The human cost of the yellow fever epidemic is heavy. 148 within 209 deaths are from Minas Gerais. In the monkeys' side, the Northern muriquis (*Brachyteles hypoxanthus*, I Appendix) and the howler monkeys have been the first victims. The human disease could be restrained by vaccination, but the monkey disease is out of control. They are being the scapegoats and the sentries at the same time. When the people don't hear them around, they think the viral disease is approaching. It's easier to kill monkeys than scourges of mosquitoes. One of the aggravating results is that some persons, often "peoples", possessing monkeys as pets, abandon them on the streets where they are targeting by rude and coarse fierce reprisals.

The yellow fever surge started in the State of Minas Gerais and Esperito Santo, both irrigated by the Rio Doce's basin which was the subject of an ecological disaster in November 2015, when dykes broke off because of the rains and bad maintenance. 50 to 60 millions m3 of mining muds rushed into the Atlantic Ocean, at 700km from there (See "On the Trail" n° 11 p.99). Some scientists of Fiocruz, the Institute for public health protection and healthcare monitoring, think that the yellow fever that is hitting Brazil at the time is the result of the mine disaster. Thousands of monkeys were the first victims. Most of them were living on the banks of rivers and streams, the lack of food after the catastrophe weakened them, and they were also infested by rapid multiplication of mosquitoes who found many breeding grounds after the flood.⁶





COSTA RICA

January 7, 2017

Tamarindo, Guanacaste Province, Costa Rica

His neighbours described him as an executioner. They had already alerted the services, but the man was never worried. This time, the neighbours contacted the online newspaper Teletica.com about his suspected plans. He had already killed a number of animals; white-fronted capuchins (*Cebus albifrons*, Appendix II), spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II), squirrels, birds... he cut branches of trees so the monkeys would fall and hit them with rocks. He was also in possession of firearms. In Costa Rica, the mistreatment of wild or pet animals is rampant.⁹

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 6, 2017

Laconia, New Hampshire State, United States of America

Seizure of a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix II) in the home of Burnie Johnson and Penny Dessalines. They have to pay a fine. In the State, duly accredited zoos are the only places allowed to hold wild animals.¹⁰

PERU

February 2, 2017

Piura, Province of Piura, Peru

A female brown-headed tamarin (*Saguinus fuscicollis*, Appendix II) was seized and placed in the Cecilia Margarita de Piura Zoo, where all her health needs are being attended to. She was underfed. Her fur was matted and full of fleas. She had lost hairs on multiple parts of her body.¹¹

ASIA

ORANGUTANS

INDONESIA

January 2, 2017

Gunung Leuser National Par, Indonesia

Tumultuous evacuation from the village of Kinangkong, 6 September 2016. The operation lasted four hours. He was hurt by gunfire. After 5 months caring he was released in the forest.¹²



January 15 and March 7, 2017

Pematang Gadung, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Reva was delivered in the beginning of the year. She was found in a paddy field, hands and ankles tied and covered in sores. Despite her terrible state and the presence of several bullets in her left hip, right thigh, neck, and hands, she recovered in 6 weeks in the International Animal Rescue (IAR) enclosure in Sungai Awan. She was set free after a long boat trip to a location not far from Pematang Gadung in a forest rich with biodiversity that already was home to almost 500 orangutans. The local population welcomed the arrival of Reva. She wants the forest to become a place for ecotourism.¹⁴

Friday January 6, 2017

Patumbak, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Seizure of a female orangutan about a year old, wounded in the head. The capture had taken place 4 months before in a forest of Dairi.¹³

January 28, 2017

Kapuas, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Palm oil plantation workers exploited by PT. Susantri Permai, subsidiary of Genting Plantations Bhd, is a Malaysian company that killed an orangutan – they decapitated, dismembered, cooked, and ate him among friends and neighbors. Genting Plantations Bhd is a member of RSPO, the Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil.¹⁵



February 2, 2017

Sidikalang, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Rescue of a captive adult female orangutan, weak and injured.¹⁶

February 6, 2017

Seruyan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Seizure of a young Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*, Appendix I), being kept as a pet. His neck was injured by the leash that kept him prisoner.¹⁷

February 21, 2017

Air Hitam Besar, Ketapang, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Seizure of a 7-month-old female orangutan. Her owner had treated her like a human baby for 3 months. She was quarantined. This is the third rescue this year by the NGO International Animal Rescue.¹⁸

February 28 and March 1, 2017

District of Telaga Antang, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 4 young orangutans ages 2 to 4 from now locked up in disgraceful conditions and today put up in two wildlife rehabilitation centers. A joint operation by BKSDA ((Nature Conservation Agency of Indonesia) and the NGO Crusader.¹⁹



1^{er} mars 2017

March 1, 2017

Indonesia

Long live freedom. Ten orangutans returned to the forest.

-Kutai Kartanegara Regency and East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia.

Two males and 5 females were set free in the forest of Kehje Sewen, 86,000 hectares, handled by the BOS (Borneo Orangutan Survival). After having been taken out of captivity, the happy animals benefited from a long program of readaptation to wildlife in the area of Samboja Lestari.

- Gunung Palung National Park, Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia.

After having been saved from famine, violence, and captivity, and after a short course in the "jungle school" of IAR in the area of Sungai Awan, 3 orangutans were set free in the Park. The preliminary observations guarantee that local food sources are sufficient. The ecosystem was up to then spared by forest exploitation and the agribusiness. As soon as the cages were opened, the 3 individuals were climbing the trees. Between November-December 2016 and January 2017, they were saved by the interventions of IAR and BKSDA. One was close to a village, the other, expelled by the clearing of the forest, had taken refuge in a pineapple plantation and the female, a rope around her neck, was stuck in a rubber tree plantation (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 52).²⁰



March 2, 2017

Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

A female was stuck in a palm oil plantation. Entrenched and famished. Entrenched, famished, and wounded in the face by air rifle bullets. One eye punctured. Yet still, in regard to her general good health, she was immediately transferred to the forests of Leuser. The operation was organized by the rangers of Leuser National Park and the Human Orangutan Conflict Response Unit (HOCRU) and BKSDA teams.²¹

March 13, 2017

**North Kayong Regency and Ketapang Regency,
West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**



One was a male, almost 4 years old. He was a pet for 3 years to Yudas, who bought him for 400,000 rupees (\$30 US) from an orangutan dealer.

The other was a female, no older than a year. She was bought from a neighbor one month ago for 500,000

rupees (\$40 US). The two are now safe. The healthcare specialists hope they will be able to return to the jungle soon. This is the fifth time BKSDA has saved orangutans since the beginning of the year.²²



Mid-March, 2017

Ketapang, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia



This is the cage of an approximately 7-year-old orangutan. After being freed, she was staggered. She ate 2 bananas in 4 days. Her “mistress” said that Amy only lived in the cell made of bad wood and steel for one month. Without a doubt a lie! The medical visit identified atrophy of the legs and deformation of the back. Two symptoms that most likely came from a long and hopeless captivity during her adolescence. Amy was taken in by the team at IAR, who are devoted to the reduction of conflict between humans and orangutans. “This is a tragic tale of cruelty and neglect. It will require plenty of time and patience for Amy to recover and it is still doubtful as to whether she will ever recover enough to be a candidate for release back into the wild.”²³

March 20, 2017

**Lempuyang, Central Kalimantan Province,
Indonesia**

He had been in captivity for one month. He wore baby clothes and was fed fried chicken. He was “found” by a deer hunter in a palm oil plantation.²⁴

Indonesia, except orangutans

January 6, 2017

**Lawang, East Java Province,
Indonesia**

Seizure of 4 young black Javan lutungs (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II), 3 females and one male all in good health. They were for sale on Facebook on an account named Red Devils.²⁵

facebook



January 6, 2017

**Timbang Jaya, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra
Province, Indonesia**

Seizure of 2 slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I). They are suffering from malnutrition. They will be set free after a healing period. For the time being, they are cared for at the Medan shelter.²⁶

January 12, 2017

**Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province,
Indonesia**

Seizure of 3 slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) in 2 villages thanks to a joint action by the Wildlife Authority (BKSDA), the Indonesian Species Conservation Program (ISCP), and the Scorpion Foundation.²⁷

January 20-21, 2017

West Java Province, Indonesia

- **Cirebon Regency.** A person of 24 known by the initials AJ sold 19 slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) on the Internet; 16 adults, 2 children, and a newborn, 8 males and 10 females.

The NGO IAR available 24/7, rushed to the home of the seller once his address was found. IAR was escorted by the police.

The newborn died during the journey to the Ciapus wildlife refuge (250 km from the Cirebon Regency). For the vast majority of those saved from the Internet, the prognosis is optimistic. Their teeth had not been pulled out; their natural reflexes were still strong, showing that their capture had been recent. In short, they could be quickly freed into the forests where unfortunately poachers are roaming. It is not excluded that IAR will have to take again these 18 individuals. “If we don’t take immediate action to combat the illegal trade of slow lorises, they might disappear within the next five years,” said Achmad Pribadi, the assistant director of the forest under the Indonesian Minister of Ecology.

- **Majalengka.** Eight slow lorises were terrorized in wire cages. They were going to be delivered to a middleman. Instead, they were collected by the IAR. The refuge was therefore full.²⁸

January 30, 2017

Satria Wildlife Market, Denpasar, Bali Province, Indonesia

Thanks to the vigilance of the NGO Scorpion, young long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) chained up by the neck, were brought directly to the mangrove tree forest and released. The sellers could also be charged with animal cruelty.²⁹



January 30, 2017

Medan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Seizure of a 2-year-old female slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) at the home of a student.³⁰



February 26, 2017

Lampung Province, Indonesia

Seizure of a 3-month-old male baby javan lutung (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II). He was going



to be sold.³¹

LAOS

Early January 2017

Laos

Voluntary handing over to the Laos Wildlife Rescue Center (LWRC) of a large male pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II). Twelve years of captivity, one-eyed, with broken or rotten teeth, he cannot be released in the wild.³²



Early February 2017

Xaisomboun Province, Laos

Seizure of a young northern white-cheeked crested gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*, Appendix I), an orphan about 1 year old. His owners wanted a pet. In the wild, gibbons stay with their families for at least 6 years before acquiring their territory and independence. So he's not yet weaned. He rejoined a group of 5 other gibbons in the Laos Wildlife Rescue Center. They benefit from a play gym, where they learn to balance on branches and grow strong muscles. Once he comes of age, he should be able to be released back into the forest along with the others.³³



THAILAND

January 5, 2017

Thailand

Voluntary handing over to the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT) of a female long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) who has been captive for 5 years. At night she slept in her master's bed. She spent the rest of the time in a cage in the garden. He claims that he saved her after a collision with a car. His mother did not survive. The survivor shows physical sequels supporting this ver-



sion. Her deformed spine prevent her from climbing. She is in attendance at the WFFT

hospital.³⁴

January 2017

Thap Lan National Park, Prachinburi Province, Thailand

Poaching of pileated gibbons (*Hylobates pileatus*, Appendix I) by illegal harvesters of Siamese rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, Appendix II). The guts of monkeys feed the woodcutters at their camps and can be found on sacks of rice littered all over the forest floor. Gibbons are easily identifiable by their yells, audible over 1.5 km away, slowly being replaced by a grim silence. There were 14,000 in the country in 2005, and their population has diminished by half between 1970 and 2015. Between 2000 and 2014, illegal exportation of Siamese rosewood to China is estimated to have valued about 2.4 million dollars. "People need to know that the



poaching problem starts with rosewood," said Kasidis Janpradub, a law enforcement officer based at Thap Lan. "The Chinese community should know that the demand is coming from their side, and they should realize there's a war here in the forest, and

for now, it never ends."³⁵

**January 23, 2017
Thailand**

Rescue of a female Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I). She was going to be a snack for fishermen. In good health, she will rapidly be released into a protected forest.³⁶



**March 15, 2017
Thailand**

Voluntary handing over of 4 Bengal slow lorises (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I). Three males without canines and a pregnant female.³⁷



March 27, 2017

Bangkok, Thailand

Arrest of a slow loris trafficker (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I). They were sold on Facebook. Eight were found in 4 cages in the woman's bedroom. Kalyaporn Rukthum, 30, had bought them at the Chatuchak Market and had them force-feeding for some time before attempting to sell. She used to sell the adults for 6000 – 7000 baht (\$170 - \$200 US) and the young for 1500 – 2000 baht (\$40 - \$60 US).³⁸

facebook

VIET NAM

January 4, 2017

- Ha Long city, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) in a private house.

- Binh Thanh district, Ho Chi Minh city, Viet Nam

Seizure of a macaque in a pagoda.³⁹

January 11, 2017

Huong Son District, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a freezer of 26 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Annex II) with a total weight of 200 kg and of 21 civets (*Viverridae* family) with a total weight of 60 kg. They were to be a part of the buffet for the celebration of the Vietnamese New Year.⁴⁰

January 13, 2017

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of a female slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I). Pregnant, she refused to eat. She was getting weaker. She had been bought a week earlier from a street vendor in the Cau Giay district in Hanoi Province.⁴¹



February 20, 2017

Trau Quy, Gia Lam District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Voluntary release of a pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II). He was seen chained to a tree in front of a shop by an ENV volunteer.⁴²

February 23-24, 2017

Viet Nam

Seizure and freeing of 13 macaques in National Parks.

- Lam Dong Province. Seizure of 2 pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II), caught and trapped in cages in a karaoke bar. They were released into Cat Tien National Park.

- Tay Ninh Province. Seizure of a crab-eating macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II). He was in an amusement park. He was released into the Lo Go Xa National Park.

- **Ninh Thuan Province.** Seizure of 9 crab-eating macaques in a hotel. They were released into Nui Chua National Park.

- **Dalat Station, Lam Dong Province.** Seizure of a crab-eating macaque that had been tied up. He was released into Bidoup Nui Ba National Park.⁴³



March 2, 2017

Danang City, Viet Nam

New! The pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) has just been tattooed. He was freed by the forces of law and order and released in the Son Tra Reserve.⁴⁴

March 7, 2017

An Giang Province, Viet Nam

To be seized! Three stump-tailed macaques (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) in a tourist restaurant. One of them was very old. He was submitted to an extensive medical checkup.⁴⁵

March 10, 2017

Hanoi and Cam My District, Province of Dong Nai, Viet Nam

Voluntary return.

- The long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), 9 years old, had been captive since he was very young. He tried to bite a young child in the house. This is what prompted his masters to get rid of him. He was chained to a tree. He was set free in the Vinh Cuu reserve. Wildlife do not make good pets.

- A Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 1.5 kg, was handed over to the Cuc Phuong National Park.⁴⁶

Mid-March 2017

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 slow lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I). The owner of a pet shop wanted to sell them for a million dong, about \$44 US.⁴⁷

March 24, 2017

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of 2 pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II). When they are young, they are very cute. As they grow, they become aggressive. Their bite is toxic. They are now in the Cu Chi refuge.⁴⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 5, 2017

Murcia, Murcia Region, Spain

The investigation began in October 2016. Two common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) were sold online. The police intercepted communications between the seller and an interested buyer and decided to intervene once they spotted the place for the transaction. It emerges from the first clues that the woman had already been implicated in illegal trade of wildlife and that the small primates had arrived from another European country.⁴⁹

January 11, 2017

Toledo, Province of Toledo, Autonomous Community of Castille-La Mancha, Spain

Seizure of another common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II), whose owner could not present its papers.⁵⁰



Cebus albifrons aequatoriali, cf. page 99

Felines

Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), tiger (*Panthera tigris*), and oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*) are in Appendix I. Lion (*Panthera leo*) and lynx (*Lynx lynx*) are in Appendix II.

LEOPARDS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 15, 2017
Burchell Private Game Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Controversial slaughter of a magnificent animal. 113 kg. The hunters claimed it was self-defense. The NGOs believed it to be the perverse result of hunting in the reserve with a pack of dogs, a practice only authorized against caracals since they are deemed "pests" by the law.¹



GABON

January 25, 2017
Lambaréné, Moyen-Ogooué Province, Gabon

The francophone African medias have the knack for the figures of writing. We learn that "the judiciary police had laid hands on Gérald Mindou and David Mouandza who were preparing to sell 2 leopard's skins to customers who perceptibly felt in the mood to take away the booty without any resentment".²



March 3, 2017
Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Seizure of 2 skins. Arrest of a Nigerian national. The 2 skins were in an empty rice bag. According to the first confession of Idrissa Issa, he obtained them near Biboulou in the Moyen-Ogooué Province.³

March 18, 2017
Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Poacher with a jacket made from two leopard furs. Estimated value: at least \$20,000 US.⁴



March 28, 2017
Libreville, Province of Estuaire, Gabon

Seizure of 2 skins. Two arrests. In the neighborhood of Montagne Sainte, the first man arrested, Innocent Ogbonnaya, was displaying 2 skins. He was waiting on a client. The police and the NGO Conservation Justice arrived first. In the neighborhood of Petit Paris, the second, Fofana Mamadou supplied the skins and was waiting to receive a payment of 500,000 CFA francs (\$818 US) for their sale but instead received a visit from the police, since Innocent had given them his name and address.⁵

NAMIBIA

Mid-March 2017
Namibia

A young leopard was hurt and attacked by 4 dogs, then lynched and beaten with sticks. The men laughed before cutting off its head with an axe. Hunting with dogs is prohibited in Namibia. It is allowed to kill an animal in cases of self defense, which opens the door to lies and abuses. The feline would have attack livestock in a farm owned by the Minister of Agriculture.⁶



UGANDA

March 25, 2017
Northern Uganda

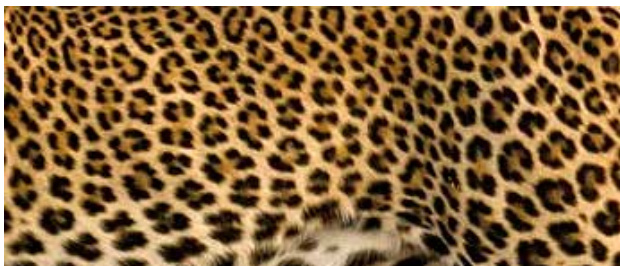
Seizure of a skin. One arrest.⁷



Between January 1st and mid-March 2017, 131 leopards have died in India – 2 per day. 53 were victims of poaching, compared to the 154 for all of 2016, and 78 have died by accident and collision or of natural causes, if indeed “natural causes” still has a meaning for leopards. The numbers from the WPSI (Wildlife Protection Society of India) are much than startling.



Solely for the day of February 1st, Karnataka forest rangers spotted and destroyed 131 traps along the 17 km edge of the Nagarahole National Park. Mr. Maranko, regional director of the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau), described the plague: “In most cases, villages and tribes supported by organized gangs tie up domestic animals near the villages to attract leopards. When leopard tracks are spotted, they set traps and ensnare the leopards. The spotted fur and teeth will sell for over \$10,000 US on the international black market.”⁸



INDIA

January 5, 2017

Tarikere, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of a leopard skin, a moped, a cell phone and a knife. Arrest of Nagaraju, the 2 other suspects, Suresh and Ravi, escaped. The police was alerted by an anonymous call.⁹

January 2017

State of Uttarakhand, India

- **January 6, Didihat.** Seizure of 4 skins. One arrest. An accomplice fled. “We used highly toxic poison to poach leopards, and sold their skins and body parts in India and Nepal.”

- **January 7, Devaprayag.** Seizure of 2 skins.

- **January 10, Rudraprayag.** Seizure of 2 skins. The 4 suspects each have their little job: seller on the side of the road, day laborer, a tea street peddler. The list is currently at 8 skins in 4 days in the State.

- **January 12, Ghat.** Seizure of one skin. Ghat is known for its leopard skin and paws, bear gallbladders, and musk deer preputial glands trafficking. “Nearby each people has a gun at home” Times of India writes and the divisional forest officer added “We don’t have any weapons in our forest division, almost all vehicles have been sent to the election duties.”¹⁰



Sunday, January 8, 2017

Maharashtra State, India

- **Chandrapur Super Thermal Power Station.**

Discovery of a female leopard carcass, half submerged in a nullah and caught at the waist in a trap. According to the post-mortem before cremation, the cause of death was drowning. A nullah is a branch of a river, a stream or a lake.

- **Dorlibhingare.** A female leopard is found dead. Her carcass was in the forest for 5 days. Her injuries indicate a territorial conflict with a tiger. This is a hypothesis. She was cremated.¹¹



January 25, 2017

Melghat, State of Maharashtra, India

They were in route to Ghatang in Khamla. They were going to sell leopard skin after having killed the big cat by poison and as reprisal for having killed and eaten a calf. The parts of the leopard were found at the home of their accomplices. The participation of Baheliya in this affair was not rejected (cf. “On the Trail” n°1 p. 17, n° 2 p. 37 et 41, n°3 p. 41 et 43-44, n°4 p. 56, n°5 p. 65, n°6 p. 52-53, n°8 p. 49, n°11 p. 48-49, n°12 p. 56-57, n°15 p. 63). Poachers haunt the forests of Melghat.²⁸



LEOPARDS - FOLLOWED

February 4, 2017

Dalanwala, Dehra Dun, State of Uttarakhand, India

Seizure of 2 skins, estimated value of 14 lakh Rs (\$20,603 US), 2.4 m long. They came from the hills of Garhwal. Poaching has been happening there for about a year. Vivek Parmar is one of the two suspects already apprehended for the sale of Keeda Jadi, also known as cordyceps, a mushroom from the upper Himalayas that is attributed to many different cures, notably recovery from erectile dysfunctions (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p. 71, n°13 p. 111).¹²

February 7, 2017

Haldwani, State of Uttarakhand, India

The Special Task Force seized 3 skins with a value of approximately \$45,000 US and stopped 2 men that night. They confessed to poisoning their victims and selling the skins and other parts on the domestic and the international market.¹³



February 8, 2017

Kangra, State of Himachal Pradesh, India

Seizure of 2 skins. 3 arrests. Because of the winter and snow, the leopards leave the plains and become very vulnerable to poaching in the open.¹⁴

February 17, 2017

Taluka de Una, State of Gujarat, India

Bhagwan Mala said he was attacked by a leopard in his wheat field in the middle of the night. With 6 accomplices, they beat it to death with a hatchet and clubs. They tied heavy stones to its legs before throwing it into the river. The following day, they took it back out of the water and burned it to ashes. Hairs and bones were still found on site by the police. The farmer gave the names of the majority of his accessories.¹⁵

February 19, 2017

Champawat, State of Uttarakhand, India

The Special Operation Group (SOG) seized 3 skins with a value of \$30,000 US and stopped one man. The largest measured approximately 2.13 m long and the other 2 were that of leopards. The man was a freelancer. He poaches using firearms or buys the skins at his "colleagues".¹⁶

Night of February 23 to the 24th, 2017

Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of a 3-m long skin. It was going to be sold in Nepal for 9 lakh Rs (\$13,860 US). Two arrests.¹⁷

March 18, 2017

Sariska National Park, State of Rajasthan, India

Lynching of a leopard accused of having attacked, injured, or killed 7 people. The Park's Quick Response Team was overwhelmed by a mob of angry villagers. The stones being thrown prevented them from acting. The leopard was cornered into a cave and burned alive.¹⁸

IRAN

January 31, 2017

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Iran

Arrest of 2 people for the poaching of 2 leopards in the high-plateaux. One body had had the paws and tail cut off.¹⁹

February 7, 2017

Iran

The leopard's spinal cord was incurably struck down after being caught in a metal trap. The decision was made to finish him off.²⁰



TIGERS

AMERICA

MEXICO

January 3, 2017

Tijuana, Southern California, Mexico. At the United States border.

Seizure of a 4-month-old Bengal tiger. The locals reported the man would walk it and let it run through the streets of the town. The tiger was transferred to a zoo.²¹

ASIA

CHINA

January 8, 2017

Yiyang, Hunan Province, China

A video was posted on a Chinese video-sharing website, aqiyi.com. It showed 3 workmen in a circus attaching a Siberian tiger to an iron table. About 30

people were in line. They wanted to ride the tiger and take a picture. Young children, brought by their parents, were scared and the parents laughed. One of the circus employees encouraged it. "How cool is it to sit on a tiger? Perhaps this can keep you away from the devils and bring you wealth too?"



Elisa Allen, director of PETA UK, added, "This tiger was bound and strapped so tightly that he couldn't even lift his head, while a caged bear paced around and around in the background, showing the psychological damage that's commonly seen in animals used in circuses." The video sparked international outrage.²²

March 10, 2017

Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of an adult tiger skin, of which the value is estimated to be about 480,000 yuans, close to \$70,000 US. The skin was purchased in Mong La in Myanmar for 60,000 yuans, about \$8700 US, by Shu, an expert on the country after having spent several years working on banana plantations. Shu had rented services from a "mule" named Yan, who, for \$580 US, had crossed with the skin the Myanmar-Chinese border and brought it to the home of Qi in Daluo. An old friend from school, Zhou, the final buyer of the skin, was on the way to Qi's home who has before received a \$16,000 US payment on his wife's bank account. Zhou was arrested on the road by a patrol while returning to his home in Kunming. At first, he tried to pretend that the tiger skin was false. All of a sudden, he dropped everything, admitting that he had wanted to offer the tiger skin to a "boss" to be sure to sign a work contract with him. Shu, Yan, Qi and Zhou are all in prison.²³



INDIA

State of Karnataka, India

January 4, 13, 16, and 18, 2017

- The carcass of an adult tigress was discovered in the forest near the Nagarahole Reserve.
- A tiger died while being transferred to Bannerghatta Park from Bandipur, where he had been found injured.
- A tigress died after a tranquilizer overdose in the buffer zone of the Nagarahole Reserve.
- Near Bekkesodaluru, a 2 to 3-year-old tiger was trying to pull his paw out of a boar trap. Despite the intervention and emergency transport by the staff to the Koorgally refuge, he died a few days later.
- Near Nittur, a body was found decomposing at its paws and head. The forest rangers said that this has nothing to do with poaching. The tiger was said having been injured and infected while trying to eat a porcupine.



The State authorities, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) assuage the worries of local environmentalists. There were 15 tigers in 100 square kilometers of forests throughout Nagarahole and Bandipur, and fights between tigers over hunting, territorial, and dominance disputes would explain the important number of violent deaths.²⁴

January 12, 2017

Nagpur, State of Maharashtra, India

Sentencing of 4 poachers (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 62) – Nirafal and Shriyal Chouhan, Nupustan Patle Pawar, and Bandariya Chouhan – belonging to the Baheliya community of Katni to 3 years in prison and a fine of 50,000 Rs (\$735 US) for the poaching of a tiger on the Melghat Reserve in 2013 and a \$10,000 rupee (\$150 US) supplementary fine for the sale of the skin and other parts of the tiger. The poachers will be free shortly. They had been held prior to their sentence for over 3 years, but if they do not pay their fines, they have to spend another 6 months in prison. The famous Kartik Shukul, legal counselor for forest services (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p. 52, n°7 p. 51, n°11 p. 48-49) had successfully pled against the release under bail of the 4 men.²⁵



TIGERS - FOLLOWED

January 13, 2017

Mysore District, State of Karnataka, India

- Arrest of Chandrashekar. He is suspected of having promised the villagers money in exchange for skins, claws and tiger teeth, of having proposed tiger skin to customers and having sold sand snakes for thousands of \$ US dollars.

- A 7 year old tiger who was a victim of a trap has succumbed to its injuries. It was taken under care by the Forestry Department. He suffered from a fractured paw and couldn't walk again.²⁷



GANG REPEATED OFFENSE FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 13, 2017

Kempegowda International Airport Bangalore, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 4000 teeth, from 100 camels, and 130 cow skins made up to look like tiger skins (cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p. 51). Discovered in the luggage of 5 passengers going to Bangkok on a Thai Airways flight, the teeth were wrapped by the hundred in 40 plastic bags and the skins rolled up. Five arrests: Gopi and his wife Priya Gopi, Sinkanni Gotty, Chandrakantha and Udesch Kumar Ravindra. They are all part of a gang. According to the investigators, the teeth came from Goa and the skins from Mysore. Gopi, Priya, and Udesch had already been arrested by customs officers in Bombay with 180 kg of camel teeth heading for Thailand. Camel teeth are used for ornamentation and jewelry.²⁶

FAKE SKINS



© Petr Baum

Saturday, February 11, 2017

15 km from the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, Kalinagar, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

A difficult capture of a young 2-year-old tigress took place before she could be burned alive by the angry mob. Forest rangers and veterinarians had massive difficulty intervening. Stones and cane trash were thrown at them. "Mallu" was hiding in a sugar cane field. She was shot with an anaesthetic and then transported to the Lucknow Zoo. She was defensive until the end. Some of the forest rangers were riding elephants. Mallu attacked one of them. They had had to bring the elephants in as reinforcement. The tigress is suspected of having killed 6 people since the end of November 2016.²⁹

March 16, 2017

Ramnagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

The SOP (Standard Operation Procedure) didn't foresee the use of a bulldozer to monitor an anaesthetized tiger and counter its jolts. This, however, is what the forestry authorities decided to do. When the tiger moved, the public works equipment moved forward. In the video of the event, "crush it" is heard clearly. The National Tiger Conservation Authority's report denounces the use of a bulldozer and deplores that the fifteen or so forest wardens on site could not prevent the angry mob from approaching the tiger and claiming its death. The tiger, 8 years old, died of a hemorrhage. It was suspected to have killed 2 quarry workers in the buffer zone of the reserve. It was from this quarry that the bulldozer and its operator were requisitioned. The NTCA recalls that, in these circumstances, only rangers mounted on elephants can attempt to capture the wild animals.³⁰ See "On the Trail" n°8, p. 51.

March 25, 2017

Banderdewa, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Interception near the border of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Two men ran off. The driver was stopped. Inside the car, an impressive tiger skin – 3.33 m long – and 200 bones were found. According to the police, the total value on the Chinese black market is the equivalent of \$180,000 US, if the bones are truly tiger bones. The skin was examined by a forensic laboratory. "Our digital records and expertise on tiger stripes will determine which sanctuary, forest, or area he came from."³¹

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

INDONESIA

February 27, 2017

Koto Gadang, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Seizure at 8 o'clock in the morning local time of 8 cell phones, 2 cars, and a Sumatran tiger skin. The victim was about 2 years old. Five arrests. The suspects are 23, 28, 33, 35, and 49 years old.³²



LIBAN

Mid-March, 2017

Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport, Lebanon

The French Press Agency (AFP) announced that 3 tiger cubs expedited from Ukraine by a "private entrepreneur" to the Samer Alehsenawi Zoo near Damas were stranded in a crate for one week in the freight zone of the Beirut Airport. It is not known if the CITES certificates were authentic and why exactly it was necessary to import 3 small tigers to the Syrian capital. At the decision of the Lebanese justice, they were entrusted to the NGO Animals Lebanon. According to the site importgenius.com, in 2016, the Samer Alehsenawi Zoo exported 80 green monkeys from Ukraine. In 2013, lion meat, possibly from a natural death in the Al-Qarya al-Shama Zoo, was served to inhabitants of Damas during the famine.³³

VIET NAM

January 13, 2017

Dien Chau district, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure on a breeding farm of 2 frozen tigers with a total weight of 300 kg. Endangered species trafficking intensifies surrounding the celebration of Têt, the Vietnamese New Year (cf. "On the Trail" n° 8 p. 86).³⁴

March 20, 2017

Dien Chau District, Province of Nghe An, Viet Nam

Seizure of 5 frozen and eviscerated tigers, each weighing between 100 and 150 kg.³⁵

LIONS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 10, 2017

Letaba River Lodge, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Once again. Three male lions, ages 4 to 6, were found poisoned and mutilated. This is the second attack in 6 months (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 62). The paws and the heads were removed. They are often used in muti, traditional South African medicine. The owner, a young farmer, estimates his loss at 900,000 rands (\$67,818 US). The complicity of a staff member has not been excluded. The police started a manhunt. The poachers were working for a client or collector from another African country, possibly Mozambique.³⁶



January 2017

South Africa

We can remember the dire amendment adopted at the 17th CITES conference in Johannesburg in October 2016, where South Africa wanted to implement a quota for the exportation of bones, bone pieces, bone products, claws, skeletons, skulls and teeth for commercial purposes, derived from captive breeding operations.

The fateful hour has come. The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) is in favor of an annual quota of 800 lion skeletons from bred lions.

Teeth and bones cannot be exported for retail purposes. Each exportation request emitted by a captive breeding operation or a hunting farm will be examined by the Department of Environmental Affairs. Skeletons will be weighed, labelled separately, and be the subject of a genetic analysis in each establishment. The packages will be inspected and weighed again at each point of exportation and unexpected genetic verifications will happen before shipping.

There are 6000 to 8000 bred lions in South Africa and less than 20,000 wild lions in all of Africa. Despite the precautions put forward, there is a big risk of wild lion skeletons being slipped inside stockings of bred lions skeletons thanks to corruption and tricks.

The most distressing is to see the richest and most industrialized African country positions itself in the traditional pseudo-medicine market and accredits the fake idea that lion bones have curative and invigorating powers. If Asia is a buyer of lion bones, then it is by shortage of tiger bones. Tigers are also victims of quacks and simple-minded people. Along with others, Humane Society International, Blood Lions, and Captured in Africa Foundation are working to reverse the trend and derail this quota project.³⁷

Cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 61, n°14 p. 52, n°15 p. 64.

LIONS - FOLLOWED

January 27 and January 31, 2017

Limpopo Province, South Africa

-Polokwane. Discovery of 3 poisoned and decapitated lions. Five arrests outside of Phalaborwa, near Kruger National Park (200 km), 4 South Africans and a Mozambican. They were looking to sell a head with its mane.³⁸



-Close to Alldays. Poisoned chicken has taken more victims among the lions bred at Ingogo Safari Game Lodge. One lion beheaded, 4 amputated paws. Two other were poisoned, but didn't die. One suspect is in custody; at his home, police found the 4 paws and the head. Three accomplices ran away. The brigadier Motlafela Mojapelo said, "the suspects appear to have been disturbed, as they also attempted to remove the skin but failed."³⁹



March 12, 2017

Letaba River Lodge, Tzaneen, Limpopo Province, South Africa

At nightfall, 2 men cut the fence and entered the private property. They stealthily approached a cage holding 2 lions, but they were immediately caught by security team. In their backpacks, they also had knives and wire cutters. Their plan was to throw poisoned chicken to the lions, wait about 30 minutes for the lions to die, and then take the paws, tails, and heads.⁴⁰



UGANDA

Mid-March 2017

Katwe, West Region, Uganda

The tracking collar of a 10-year-old lion followed for 6 years by biologists in the Carnivore Uganda program had not been signaling movement for many days. The subsequent investigation found a fishing shack on the banks of Edwards Lake from where the last signals were emitted. Thanks to the raid led by village leaders and the police, the collar of the lion was found next to a bottle of grease. The grease of the lion is used in traditional African medicine, believed to counter rheumatism. The skin and bones of the lion are smuggled into Asia, where they are slowly replacing tiger bones in traditional Asian medicine and charlatanism. The fisherman was sentenced to 2 years in prison.⁴¹



© Uganda Carnivore Program



EUROPE

UKRAINE

March 23, 2017

Port of Chornomorsk, Odessa Oblast, Ukraine

A Turkish driver attempted to pass with a lion cub in a suitcase.⁴²



ONCILLA

COLOMBIA

February 27, 2017

Tuluá, Valle del Cauca Department, Colombia

Seizure of a 3-month-old oncilla at a private residence. The man explained that he had “adopted” him after having found him wandering all alone in the town. He had ignored the fact that he was from an endangered species.⁴³



MEXICO

February 17, 2017

Pachuca, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

Seizure of an oncilla. It had been taken to the vet for a checkup. When the medical team asked for the animal's papers, the woman responded that she forgot them at home and that she'd go get them quickly. She never came back. The cat, in good health, was transferred to a wildlife center.⁴⁴

February 2017

Sabancuy, State of Campeche, Mexico

Manuel Alejandro Garcia Martinez, farmer, alerted the Tribuna Campeche newspaper. He explained that he had found an oncilla over a meter long decomposing in one of his plots. A band of poachers had been at work in the region. He asked PROFEPA to investigate. He had also alerted authorities last year when he came upon the remains of toucans. The folder was quickly filed.⁴⁵

March 1, 2017

Playa del Carmen, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Witnesses sounded the alarm. A feline, seeming to be an oncilla, was hit by a Spanish tourist driving. The next part was confusing. The police said that when they arrived, there was no body. Witnesses said that upon arriving, officers interviewed the driver for a few minutes and let him go, taking his victim with him. An investigation is being conducted to determine the truth from the lies. The fact remains that the body disappeared.⁴⁶

LYNX

FRANCE

In France, lynx survival is being poisoned by lead.

January 14, 2017

Besançon, Doubs Department, France

Conviction of a hunter in his 60s to a 600€ fine and 2000€ in damages. He shot to death a lynx in October 2014



supposedly protecting his dogs in the course of a battue. He can continue hunting, his permit was not revoked.⁴⁷



February 21, 2017

Doubs and Jura Departments, Region of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, France

In Bretonvillers, a “problematic” lynx was confined in a 500-square-meter sheep pen for several days, where he took to the habit of killing the sheep to feed. He had gone away after several scare tactics by the ONCFS (French National Hunting and Wildlife Agency), but he came back in February. He was caught and anaesthetized, then transferred to a veterinarian at the Athenas refuge in the neighboring department of Jura, which takes in and heals wild animals in distress. He died during the transport due to a hemorrhage in the liver.

During the autopsy, it was determined that he had been disabled by a hundred or so lead bullets during 2013 and 2014. Articulatory and respiratory inflammation limited his mobility and his ability to hunt. According to the Athenas center, he had to attack domestic animals in his struggle for survival. The Eurasian lynx in Jura is the only viable population in France providing that hunters and poachers make peace with her.⁴⁸

RUSSIA

January 2017

Moscow, Central Federal District, Russia

Confinement of a lynx by a family in an apartment. Kept in a small enclosure on the balcony, he was trained to use the bathtub to do his business. The problem of keeping big cats in captivity in private residences (cf. “On the Trail” n°5 p. 55, n°8 p. 39) has been well-known in Russia since the 1970s. A family with 2 kids kept a lion that became very famous in a Soviet-style apartment with a balcony and 3 rooms. One day, the lion got loose in the street and hurt passerby during the filming of a documentary before being killed by the police. Some time after, the head of the family, an architect, acquired a puma and another lion. In 1980, the 2 big cats were killed after attacking his wife and killing their

14-year-old son. Despite this drama, it's common for Russian restaurants or other commercial spaces to show off wild animals, in cages or allowed to roam free, to attract customers. The Duma is working on introducing a bill on the responsible treatment of animals.⁴⁹



OTHER FELINES

AFRICA

UGANDA

March 31, 2017
Uganda



Seizure of a cheetah skin (*Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I) and 2 African civet skins (*Civettictis civetta*, Appendix II in Botswana). Two immediate arrests. Two accomplices who had attempted to bribe police officers were also apprehended. There are no more than 30 wild cheetahs left in the country.⁵⁰

AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 13, 2017
Lins, Sao Paulo State, Brazil

Seizure of a jaguar skin (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), a 12mm caliber rifle, 7 cannabis plants, and a precision balance at the home of a 22-year-old man, reported anonymously.⁵¹



March 10, 2017

Juquia, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

They killed a jaguar on a private farm. They filmed it and put it on WhatsApp with this message: "You said that there weren't any big jaguars here, look at these teeth and these paws".⁵²



ASIA

INDIA

February 14, 2017
Khurda, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 3 jungle cat carcasses (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II). Witnesses saw the killers. They escaped by motorcycle. The license plate numbers had been noted. The jungle cat roams the forest, reed beds, sides of rivers, lakes, and streams. He eats small rodents and frogs. He will also go after peacocks.⁵³

THAILAND

February 4, 2017
Bangkok, Bangkok Province, Thailand

Voluntary release of a female leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), 6 months old. Bought online, she lived in an apartment with 2 domestic cats. As she grew, she became aggressive with her roommates. Thus, the owners contacted the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand. The leopard cat is about the size of a domestic cat and is a good climber. At night, it chases squirrels, birds, and bats. On land, it catches small rodents and very young deer.⁵⁴



EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

February 8, 2017
Buxton, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of a Geoffroy's cat fur coat (*Leopardus geoffroyi*, Appendix I) in a store. The Geoffroy's cat originates in South America. It generally measures 70 cm to a meter long, tail included. It is found from sea level to altitudes of 3000 meters, in pampas to the mountains. It is a good swimmer.⁵⁵



VARIOUS SPECIES FELINES

AFRICA

ZAMBIE

January 5, 2017

Heroes National Stadium, Lusaka, Zambia

Seizure of a lion skin and a cheetah skin (*Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I). Two arrests, Mercy Phiri 33 years old and James Moshe 28 years old. They were preparing to meet with potential clients.⁵⁶

AMERICA

MEXICO

February 12, 2017

Valladolid, Yucatán State, Mexico

Seizure of 5 jaguar skins and an ocelot rug with the head in a souvenir shop.⁵⁷

March 24, 2017

Carichi, State of Chihuahua, Mexico

They rushed on the "Ranchito". According to tips, the space was occupied by armed men and belonged to César Raúl Gamboa Sosa, also known as "El Cabo" or "El Tigre", the boss of organized crime in the region. Special police were searching for firearms, weapons, stolen cars, or anything else that would attest to illegal activities. They finally found a male lion, a female jaguar, and 4 llamas.⁵⁸

ASIA

CHINA

February 17, 2017

Tai'an, Shandong Province, China

Sentencing of Sun Hongzhi to a heavy prison sentence (18 to 21 years according to sources) for having accepted or solicited financial gifts or tiger and leopard skins in exchange for diverse facilities and small favors. Between 2002 and 2014, the convicted held prominent responsibilities, among which included vice president of the coal industry and vice president of the commerce industry for the Shandong Province. The man and his wife accumulated a considerable estate thanks to corruption.⁵⁹



INDIA

Beginning of January 2017

Mirzapur, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure inside a car of 5 caracals (*Caracal caracal*, Appendix I) and a leopard cub, all alive, in metallic cages destined for Hyderabad in Telangana (India). Three arrests and 2 suspects on the run. They were to travel more than 2000 km. The animals are believed

to have been snared in Bihar, close to the border to Bangladesh and Bhutan. Around Hyderabad and Bangalore, illegal private zoos open within farms. Exotic turtle and bird species can be seen. The owners probably now wanted "rare" felines behind their fences to attract more clients. It is very hard to observe caracals in the wild and there would be no more than 200 individuals, maybe even less, in the North-West of India. All populations in Asia and the Indian sub-continent are listed in Appendix I of CITES. It does not seem that skins are part of international trade. The caracals are used as pets. On the African continent, on the contrary, the caracal is still present. In Namibia and South Africa, sheep breeders see them as a nuisance and caracal hunting is allowed.



The range of the caracal, also called Persian lynx or gazelle cat, spreads across part of Africa and Asia from the Middle East to India. They were for a long time joined with the lynx, yet now is considered to be an entirely different genus similar to the serval. Naturally shy, they avoid conflict by hiding up trees. Solitary and nocturnal, they are excellent hunters, thanks especially to their very sharp hearing. In Asia, he also hunts at daylight. He drinks a little bit of water. He limits itself with the liquid content of his preys.⁶⁰

GANG

Sunday, March 5, 2017

Shankarpuram, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of a leopard and 3 stuffed tigers (2 males and 1 female). Their value is estimated at 10 million rupees (about \$300,000 US) total in the Indian megacities or abroad. At the bottom of the pyramid, traffickers were trying to make 3,000,000 rupees per animal, close to \$47,000 US. Two cars and a money counting machine were also seized. Four people were arrested – an animal photographer, 2 software developers, and a security agent. They would have poached the animals in the forest of Bandipur, 660 km from Shankarpuram. The taxidermist is unknown.⁶¹

Bears

AMERICA

CANADA

January 20, 2017 Quebec Province, Canada

The price of a polar bear fleece (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix I) has been multiplied 5 fold between 2009 and 2013. Sheldon Jordan, director of trade control in wildlife, says there is a high global demand regarding polar bears and narwhals.

In Canada polar bear hunting is legal under certain conditions. A chip has to be hidden in all the skins enabling to track the trophy route. This device is what made it possible to "catch" a taxidermist workshop and its supplier. 3M Nature and so named Parisian Marcel, both settled in Quebec, made a deal to smuggle 2 skins to British Columbia. The company and its provider were each sentenced to 5000 Canadian \$ (3801 US\$) in fine.

Every year Canada exports between 300 and 350 polar bear skins.¹



COLOMBIA

March 18, 2017 Near Chingaza National Park, Departments of Cundinamarca and Huila, Colombia

Discovery of a spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I), dead from gunshot wounds.²



PERU

March 8, 2017 Querocoto, Province of Chota, Region of Cajamarca, Peru

Seizure of a spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I) in the backyard of a house downtown. She was being kept in a cage that was too small. She was malnourished and weighed much less than she should. She will be admitted to the Cochahuasi Sanctuary, where animals that have been victims of human activities can attempt to recover their natural instincts.³

ASIA

INDIA

January 24 and February 12, 2017 State of Maharashtra, India

- **Paratwada.** A sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) was poached by electrocution. One woman and 3 accomplices were arrested. "We want to protect our fields," they said. There's also a less honorable motive. The bear's 4 paws were cut off. They were found in the same hiding place with an axe.



- **Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve, State of Maharashtra, India.** A sloth bear was poached by electrocution. The heart, gallbladder, liver, teeth, and claws had been removed and the skin was burnt to remove the evidence.

The poaching of sloth bears is common in this area. Bear organs are used in black magic.⁴

Electrocution is commonplace in this area. In a first time, the bodies are sometimes decapitated and hidden in trenches. A tigress and 2 sambar deer are the new victims.⁵

Mid-February 2017 Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Electric trap for a female sloth bear and her cub. The mother died, the cub survived. Tracking dogs followed the footprint of the poachers. Six people are in custody. The orphan is 10 weeks old. He was taken to the Agra bear refuge in Uttar Pradesh. "The male is stressed and traumatized, it's necessary to observe his behavior" emphasized Amol Narwade, veterinarian of the NGO Wildlife SOS.

The Indian sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) feeds on insects. Its long tongue is adapted to catching termites. When it attacks a termite mound, it exhales powerfully to disperse the dust. Its breath can be heard from 200m away. Bernhard Grzimek, in his Animal Life Encyclopedia (Volume VII) recalled that sloth bears were common in India 150 years ago. They were decimated because of a slaughter premium and a false rumor about their aggressiveness.⁶



ITALY

Début janvier 2017
Padua, Region of Veneto, Italy

Bear paws in Padua?

A Chinese restaurant in Padua was inspected following pictures posted on Facebook by the restaurant's head cook. Police proceeded to a series of controls, nearly 25 kg of fish and meat from suspicious origin were seized, as well as passed date frog legs and crab meat. Yet no trace of any bear meat paw. Investigations are to be extended to all Chinese restaurants in the region so as to determine whether this is an isolated case or a regional practice.⁷

facebook



RUSSIA

February 12, 2017
Zabaykalsk, Siberian Federal District, Russia

Seizure of 41 bear paws (*Ursus* spp., Appendix I or II) weighing 34.3 kg by customs officers from a snow-capped floorboard of a freight car. The goods train was entering China.⁸

March 2, 2017

Zabaykalsk border control, Siberian Federal District, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 26 bear paws (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II) thanks to Sultan, a border police dog. They weighed a total of 28 kg and were spread through 10 cars of the Trans-Baikal Express.⁹



SLOVENIA

January 2017
Slovenia

Will it be necessary to capture bears in the French Pyrenees in 30 to 50 years to slow their disappearance in Slovenia? Bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) imported from Slovenia starting in 1997 slowly helped reestablish the population in France. The Slovenian government authorized hunting for a hundred bears in 2017. There would be 400 to 500 bears in the country. Slovenia and its neighbor Croatia are not paradises for bears. "Bear hunting happens at night from watchtowers. You get set up 1 to 2 hours before nightfall and stay until midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning. The towers are comfortable, but you have to be silent and patient! It's not rare to see other species like wolves, wild boars, and foxes," recalled a hunter.¹⁰



Wolves



© Bruno Congar / Robin des Bois

Air Gunning

January 2017

Regional district of Columbia-Shuswap, Province of British Columbia, Canada

According to Sadie Parr who is the head of the Wolf Awareness and the spokeswoman of the pack of 20 NGO's of the North American continent who are against the province's government's project "the resilient nature of exploited wolf populations does not excuse our butchery of them." It's an undeniable fact that the wolves are toughly resisting to the lack of food, to climate variations, to diseases, to habitat fragmentations, poaching and libel. In Northern America and Europe, apart from Rome, wolves were always scapegoats. British Columbia carries on the tradition. The project of the provincial government is to allow shoot on sight on the wolves' hordes from helicopters. The university scientists and the experts of the Province expect to save caribous with this extreme, unfair, cruel, and socially destructive measure. In 20 years, the number of caribous decreased from 2500 individuals to 1500, divided into 15 herds. The wolves share in the fast decline of the caribous is thin and it's natural. Humans' share is huge, not only because of industrial activities but leisure, poaching, and hunting ones. The Province of Alberta and British Columbia allow without a break, the industrial exploitation of trees and forests on the caribou's path, the prospection and production of fossil fuel and the incursions of disturbing motorized vehicles. As Monopoly wildlife model of what happens to rhinoceroses, elephants, and some species of antelopes in Southern Africa, residual herds are surrounded, blocked, and partially moved in order to revive the herds which are doomed.

Caribous are far away from the lyrical and stunning descriptions made by Farley Mowat (1921-2014) in 1947. "This big heap unknots itself as never-ending lines of beasts, standing one behind one like pearl rows. Here and there, a fawn would walk alongside a female, herself pregnant again. No male could be seen in this ocean of deers. Females were ready to give birth and were irresistibly attracted by the vast tundra of the North, place of birth of every caribou..."

The waves of caribous were reduced to the nearly absolute failure because of men hunting and not wolves' preying. Nowadays, the caribous of Alberta and British Colombia are numbered, enclosed, marked out by chainsaws, oil drillings, trucks, lagoons of trashes, garbage yards, and wildfires caused by human carelessness or fed by it. .../...

.../...

The decision to practice "air gunning" would not save the caribous but would put in danger the wolves while strengthening their deceptive reputation of being harmful. Wolves usually attack isolated, weakened, ill or limping animals, in some way they are a sanitary police. They regulate the balance between the herbivorous populations and the resources of plants available. They would eat only what they need of their preys and would leave the rest to birds, foxes, and other small omnivores or carnivores.

In 2015 and 2016, more than 300 wolves were killed in 2 "wolf kill zones" inside the Province. Columbia-Shuswap could be the third wolf kill zone.¹



Send your "howling", your words and your arguments with courtesy to Mr. Steve Thomson, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations by email to FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca or by mail P.O. Box 9049, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC V8W9E2, Canada.

Wolves and caribous in Canada and USA, see "On the Trail" n°1 p. 39, n°8 p. 95-96, n°10 p. 69 et p. 75, n°11 p. 88, n°12 p. 63, n°13 p. 99, n°15 p. 72.

8th march 2017

Republic of Yakutia, Russia

3 million km² – 960.000 inhabitants.

There too! Victor Fedorov took the initiative of the project. There may be 12.000 wolves in Yakutia. 9000 reindeers and 900 horses would be killed per year. Victor Fedorov is offering to give hunting licenses of \$ 10.000 with the possibility for hunters to come back home with the wolf's skin. The tracking and the shooting of the wolves would be done from A600 helicopters, flying at a maximum speed of 300 km/h. The cost of a A600 is less than \$ 100.000. 3 of them will be needed. "The aim is not to get rid off wolves, but to regulate them while making money for the Republic", explains Fedorov. Hunters from Russia, U.S.A, Europe, and China are expected. To avoid the shooting of other animals than wolves, cameras would be placed on the helicopters which would be piloted by sworn guards. The excesses would be punished by a fine of \$ 20.000 and a hunting ban in the territory and above. At last, Fedorov claims the fact that it's easier to hunt rhinoceros and lions in Africa than mooses in Yakutia because of the hunting rules.²

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 13, 2017

Duluth, Minnesota State, United States

Douglas Anthony Marana, 70, and Roderick Robert Kottom, 68, set traplines in northeastern Minnesota. These 2 industrial trappers were outside of the norm. Yet the hunters would only risk a fine of \$3000 US. Agents from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources were used to seizures of a dozen traps maximum.

The investigation took 2 years and the mobilization of 20 officers in Saint Louis, Itasca, Koochiching, and Lake Counties. The judge authorized a GPS tracker on one suspects' car. Everything began with an anonymous tip about a trap that had caught a wolf near Duluth. Upon arriving on site, Kipp Duncan, the chief wildlife conservationist, noted the presence of the trap and the wolf and discovered a minefield of traps in the surrounding area.

In the State, regulated traps have to be put in specific locations during specific seasons, and in restricted number. The snare loop cannot be larger than 25.4 cm in diameter. The traps have to be inspected every day. In this particular case, checking 638 traps every day would be impossible.

Kottom was already sentenced for similar infractions in 2004 and 2007.³

EUROPE

FRANCE

January-February 2017

France: public enemy number one.

-The department of Hautes-Alpes is giving hunters thermal imaging cameras in order to kill wolves by night.

-Two wolves were roaming in Courchevel, a classy ski resort. Moreover, they were near the village for children. Further away, in the skiing area, "a deer was slaughtered", according to the local press, the unlucky animal was not victim of a hunter but of "a pack of 4 wolves at least".

-Nièvre's administrator, a subdivision in the center of France, is clear about it. It's obviously a lone wolf – the idiom is sometimes used concerning terrorism- who is responsible. He has killed 4 sheep and has wounded 3 others. The predator is around 18 months old. Cameras have filmed him behind his back.

And the thing that cannot be missed "The wolves are moving closer to Paris" with some variations "Are the wolves settling down near Paris" or worse "The wolves are getting closer to Paris".

-Wolves are always wrong. The populace will never let it go of. "This Tuesday night, at about 10 pm, a restaurant owner and his wife were going back home from Nice. Not far away from the town of Utelle, the couple faced a wolf, who rushed at their all-terrain-vehicle", says the local press.

-In the subdivision of the Cantal, in the Massif Central, farmers are denouncing the procedure of identification to prove a wolf "responsible" of a sheep attack. The trial of the wolf is open everywhere, and it's forbidden to give them our blessing or mitigating circumstances.

-Fortunately, we can feel that the enemy of the wolf is discouraging himself. Wolves are really cool! "Yes, we can kill them with a rifle but they will never disappear of our lands. Psychologically, it's difficult to bear." Thus, a farmer from Colombey-les-Belles, Eastern France, was reacting to the rejection of an application which cancelled the decree allowing shooting wolves. The administrative court of Nancy dismissing 4 in favour of wolves NGOs had serious words that could have inspired the illustrated front page of "Le Petit Journal" in 1922: "The work and private life of farmers are turning upside down because of the constant risk of a wolf's attack".⁴

ITALY

OPERATION AVE LUPO

January 15, 2017

Italy

Writ of sequestration of 229 hybrids that were neither dogs nor wolves. They came from a cross between German shepherds and European or North American wolves. The straying or extension of this new canine species adds to the confusion of responsibility for the deaths of sheep in the alpine arc mountains. The Czech wolf-dogs are more familiar with human activities than pure wolves. One sells for at least 5000€. During the judicial and genetic investigations, the dogs were assigned to residences. The breeders and owners around the country do not have the right to sell or breed them, or allow them to run away. They are subject to the national law that prohibits the voluntary crossing of a wild animal with a domestic animal. They also risk a fine and prison sentence for being involved with international trade of a CITES-protected species. In the Czech Republic, the breeding of wolf-dogs is prohibited because of their aggressiveness.⁵

Italy

Suspended sentence for wolves

The quota of 85 wolves to be slaughtered each year as advocated by the sheep breeders was not adopted at the end of the "wolves" conference held in Rome. The conference was attended by representatives of the State and regions concerned by the conflict between the wolf protectors and the shepherds.

A consensus emerged on a crucial point: the main predators of sheep are stray or abandoned dogs.

The conflict is not definitively resolved, but Stefano Masini, spokesman of the farmers' association Coldiretti on the front line, shares the opinion of the associations protective of wolves. Excluding shooting, all measures of the plan, if fully implemented, would be self-sufficient. These include installing and co-financing electric fencing, accelerating payment of compensation and combating cross-breeding between wolf and wolfdog.

The Italian Minister of Ecology, like others in Europe, continues to believe that legal shootings will reduce poaching, while other voices say that legal shooting adds to poaching and even encourages it. The Italian league for the protection of animals and environment, Ecoradicali and WWF Italy are satisfied with this truce granted to wolves. However, neither party has definitely won or lost. The bottom line is that they got closer.⁶

KOSOVO

Late January 2017
Zaplluxhe, Prizren
District, Kosovo⁷



SWITZERLAND

Mid February 2017

Val d'Anniviers, Canton of Valais, Switzerland

Crash of an F16. That's the identification number of an adult female wolf. She was poached, shot by a Pomy rifle. The Swiss Wolf Group (Le Groupe Loup Suisse) is offering a 10,000 Swiss franc reward for anyone who can assist in the arrest of the poacher.⁸



Hippopotamuses

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

AFRICA

UGANDA

January 27, 2017
Northern Uganda

Seizure of 24 teeth. One arrest.¹



January 31, 2017
Uganda

Seizure of 68 teeth.
Two arrests.²



February 20, 2017
Uganda

Seizure of 176 kg of teeth. Three arrested, one of which was an advisor to President Yoweri Museveni.³

BENIN

February 28, 2017
Klouékanmè, Kouffo Department, Bénin

Seizure of 10 teeth. Two arrests.⁴



Hippopotamuses and Elephants

AFRICA

MALAWI

January 15, 2017

Mzuzu, Northern Region, Malawi

Seizure of 4 tusks (16.575 kg) and hippopotamus teeth. Arrest of Aubrey Tchali, 35. He was attempting to sell it all to an Asian client in Mzuzu.¹

UGANDA

March 14, 2017

Northern Uganda

Seizure of 3 elephant tusks and 6 hippopotamus teeth. Two arrests.²



ZAMBIA

March 7, 2017

Mongu District, Western Province, Zambia

Two pairs of tusks cut into 6 pieces (30.5 kg in all). Four arrests. And 412 kg of hippopotamus meat found in the food stocks of the town. A civil servant was questioned by the police, as were 4 women, who were wild meat wholesalers connected to the 2 hippopotamus killers, ages 37 and 45.³

Rhinoceroses



The circus and the rhinoceros. 1955. Bernard Buffet.

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°16
The value of horn on the black market,
according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Namibia	5900	31
Asia	Hong Kong (China)	25,770	38
	Hong Kong (China)	25,732	39
	Thailand	10,000	50

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

January 5, 2017

Lac Nakuru National Park, Nakuru County, Kenya

Poaching of one. Two others were killed on 31 December 2016 in the neighboring Ngulia sanctuary (see "On the Trail", n°15 p. 75). Nothing is working anymore, the helicopters broke down, so did the cars. "Sometimes for the love of our heritage, we use our own cash to hire motorbikes or beg for lifts from tourists to respond to incidents" explains a ranger. Lack of means prevent legal forces from protecting endangered species. The poachers take complete advantage of this. Their cars don't break down.¹

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 7, 2017

Makhado, Limpopo Province, South Africa



There was a high-speed chase between a police car and a pick-up truck with bull bars. There were 3 men, 2 white and 1 black inside. A plastic bag had been tossed overboard. The fugitives were stopped not far from by the roadblock. The plastic bag was recovered. There was inside a big rhino horn. It would come from a recent poaching trip in the Witpoort sector. Two of the suspects have a dirty record. Brothers Gideon and Nicolaas van Deventer have already been sentenced to 8 years and 2 years and 5 months in prison. Gideon, on his own, had killed 22 rhinoceros between 2005 and 2006. "You don't need a saw. It's quick, and the entire horn comes off clean, just like a bottle cap," he told a National Geographic journalist. In a letter apparently destined for his family that Julian Rademeyer, author of "Killing for Profit" had consulted in legal files, van Deventer confided that "The rhinos that I shot were shot clean. It was a shot to the brain every time and they fell to their knees and not on their sides. They did not suffer. I took off the horns in the right way with a knife. Woep-wap, and the horn is off. That is how I operate," and he signed the letter "Rhino".

With his brother Nicolaas, he poached in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park and Kruger Park. They used, separately or together, arrows and bullets. The gang was headed by Clayton Fletcher, a hunting safari organizer and a businessman in the Free State.

These 2 repeat offenders, therefore, were a great prize for the Makhado police, the Public Order Police members, and the Limpopo Endangered Species Unit.

Gideon van Deventer, 48, nicknamed Deon, and Nicolaas van Deventer, 51, nicknamed Nick, were accompanied by Onward Muchangowa, a Zimbabwean national. It remains to be seen if the Limpopo justice will be as diligent as the police and resists the repeated requests for bail for these 2 bad brothers and their accomplice.²

Beginning of January, 2017
Polokwane Game Reserve, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

A rhino shot dead was discovered by a hiker. The horn had been taken. There are only 9 left in the reserve.³

Early January 2017
Upington, Northern Cape Province, South Africa
 One more poached.^{3bis}



Still life, 2017. A rhinoceros on dead wood.

January 14, 2017
Madikwe Game Reserve, North west Province, South Africa

Another one poached approximately 4 days earlier (see "On the Trail" n°6 p.66 and n°10 p.48).⁴

January 14, 2017
Hazyview, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Discovery of 6 horns cut into pieces, 3 long and 3 short, in an icebox in a house under construction.⁵

Mid January, 2017



Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

- **Malelane;** Six arrests. Seizure of a large caliber fire arm and ammunition.
- **Hazyview.** Seizure of 6 horns (see "On the Trail" n°9 pages 63, 64 and 66).
- **Satara, Kruger National Park.** Three arrests. Seizure of 2 fire arms, ammunition and poaching equipment.
- **Stolsnek, Kruger National Park.** Two arrests after the discovery of a recently poached rhino, a fire arm, ammunition and a full poaching kit.⁶

Mid-January 2017
Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrest of 5 poachers. One of them is a police officer.⁷



January 20, 2017
Limpopo Province, South Africa
 A poached rhinoceros.⁸

The weekend of January 21-22, 2017
North West Province, South Africa

Poaching of 5 rhinoceros on a private reserve. Four were dehorned. The following night, a new one was shot in another reserve in the Province.⁹



Sunday, January 22, 2017
Paulpietersburg, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Poaching of a rhinoceros.

Rhinoceros poaching is on the rise in the Province. In 2015, there were 97 cases counted. 159 in 2016. 129 poachers have been questioned in 2016.¹⁰



January 22, 2017

Mokopong Reserve, North West Province, South Africa

Poaching of a rhinoceros. Tyre prints led police forces to 3 Mozambican immigrants, ages 39, 40, and 42, in possession of 2 horns and a rifle.¹¹



January 25, 2017

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Caught for poaching, carrying of horns, and rebellion in 2011 in Kruger Park, Simon Ngubane was sentenced to 33 years in prison. 28 years still remain, since Ngubane has been in prison for 5 years. Two accomplices succeeded in getting away.¹²



**January 27 and February 3 and 5, 2017
Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

-January 27

Supplied with a search warrant, the police discovered 7 hoofs and meat, 7 rhinoceros tails, and 2 skins in a salt room and a cold room.

Antonio Xavier Freitas, who goes by Tony Freitas, a South African citizen of Portuguese origin, had a secret rhinoceros slaughterhouse on his farm. The pachyderms, still of unknown origin, arrived by van in November 2016. According to information yet to be confirmed, the horns of at least 7 rhinoceroses were taken from Freitas's property by helicopter. Freitas was released on a bail of \$18,500 US on February 3.

-February 5

With the help of an excavator and a metal detector, the police discovered bones and 20 other remains of rhinoceros, riddled with bullets.¹³



End of January 2017

Hluhluwe Umfolozi Game Reserve and Nongoma, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Arrest of 6 men, ages 27-40. They are suspected of poaching in an organized group. Five were arrested in a Bed and Breakfast in Nongoma, and one close to the fence of the Reserve. Their arms were banned and weapons seized.¹⁴

February 4, 2017

Limpopo Province, South Africa

Poaching of two orphans. One died. The other is under therapeutic obstinacy, comparable to that endured by Hope (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 79).¹⁵

February 6, 2017

Polokwane Hunting Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

New poaching of a rhinoceros in the Reserve.¹⁶

February 13-19, 2017

Pongola, KwaZulu-Natal Province and Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Ten suspected of poaching, ages 24 to 51. Rhino hunting has been passed down through generations and is practiced in organized groups. Great numbers of firearms, silencers, munitions, and axes were seized. The arrests occurred all over Kruger National Park.¹⁷

February 20, 2017

Thula Thula Rhino Orphanage, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

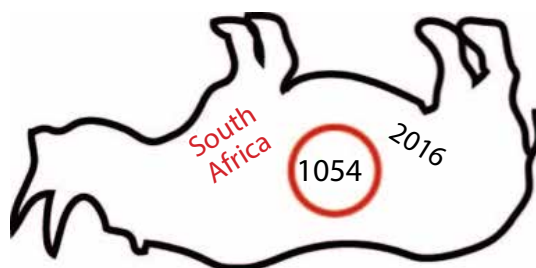
In the night, 5 barbarians neutralized the security systems and invaded the refuge for young rhinos and hippos whose parents have fallen victim to poaching. Two young white rhinoceroses were mortally wounded by firearms and then dehorned. One of the two was alive while being mutilated. One of the members of the international team of healers was raped. The culprits escaped.¹⁸



February 27, 2017

South Africa

Official numbers: 1054 rhinoceros killed in 2016. 680 poachers and traffickers arrested. Robin des Bois adds that 1 ranger and 13 poachers were killed in 2016.¹⁹



**February 27 and March 15, 2017
Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**

Mandla Chauke was sentenced to 77 years in prison, the heaviest sentence ever given to a horn or ivory trafficker (cf. "On the Trail" n°6, p. 62). He made an appeal. His appeal was accepted and his sentence was much better, both for him and for the corporation of poachers and traffickers. He was released on the modest bail of 15,000 rand (\$1165 US), even though the public prosecutor's claimed a sum of 100,000 rand.²⁰



Kruger National Park put under video and dog lookout

March 4-28, 2017

The Park spans 20,000 km². For comparison, the entire island of Taiwan is 38,000 km², Switzerland is 41,000 km², Denmark is 43,000 km², the Falkland Islands are 12,200 km², and Puerto Rico is 9,104 km². Kruger is surrounded by fences. The animals and intruders break through going over or under to enter or leave. 1.6 million people visit Kruger every year, and entry is paid. Trips can last from a couple hours to a few days. There are 11 official entryways.

From the north to the south of the Park, 16 rhinoceros carcasses have been found between March 4-22. On 3 carcasses, the horns remained, probably wounded animals running away from some poachers. If the crime scenes are found 2 to 3 days later, tracks or other evidence left by poachers will be impossible to detect, since lions, hyenas, and vultures will have been there. At best, a ballistics investigation can still take place.

During a press conference and a site visit, the Park management explained these problems and presented solutions to the increase in horn thefts.

The gateways are weak points. Poachers that are working in an organized group can enter as a lambda visitor. When their car enters, it's full. When it leaves the driver is the only one to remain, maybe one other passenger. For the next month, a new admission protocol will be implemented on the southern gates, which are the most frequented.

The canine squad is useful. It's composed of 53 dogs. They've contributed to 168 of the 200 arrests last year. "We can't do the job without the dogs." They are already trained when they arrive. A good tracking dog costs between 35,000 and 50,000 rands (\$2700 to \$3900 US). The Park doesn't have the financial resources or the skills to train the dogs.

The Park management also believes that military-inspired technical innovations will control intrusions or suspicious movement. The Wide Area Surveillance System (WASS) is made up of an easily deployable and transportable radar connected to electronic sensors, cameras, and screens. WASS is also called MEERKAT, after the animal. Meerkats are known for their constant appearance of vigilance.

At the end of March, 13 poachers were arrested in 24 hours in an area covered by MEERKAT. Mr. Funda, the director of anti-poaching teams in the Park, believes in this new technology. "At present, the criminals own the night. These systems will help us take it back." The system was developed thanks to a partnership between SANParks, the Peace Parks Foundation, and the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).²¹

Northwest Province, South Africa

- **March 8, 2017. Madikwe Game Reserve.** This is the seventh poaching since the beginning of the year. Its nasal horn was cut off. Female rhinoceros no. 202 was anaesthetized in September 2016 to remove her DNA to implant it in a microchip. She caught the attention and admiration of her veterinarian and her team. She was accompanied in the bush by three young adolescent rhinoceros, almost adults. The only explanation possible is that she had adopted at least 2 orphans. She also surprised the healers by adopting a hyperprotective attitude towards her youngs. When the helicopter was approaching, she steered the three into a vegetal shelter before returning alone out into the open. She has since passed away.

- **March 9, 2017.** OSCAP and WAR reported that in 24 hours, 13 rhinoceros had been poached: 4 in the Northwest Province, 3 in l'Etat-Libre, 2 in Limpopo, 2 in Kruger National Park, and 2 in KwaZulu-Natal Park.

- **March 10, 2017. Madikwe Game Reserve.** One poached.

- **March 12, 2017. Mahikeng Game Reserve.** Two females poached. One injured orphan was taken in.²²



March 13, 2017 South Africa

Poaching of Wozani, a rhino that became famous because of a crazy interpretation by the press and the public that he was sending kisses. Insensitive to this would-be loving behavior, poachers targeted and killed him and cut off his horns, his tail, his ears, and his hoofs.

A Taiwanese media outlet took hold of this poaching to denounce the myth of the curative properties of rhinoceros horn.²³



March 16, 2017

Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa

Injured but not killed, the mother and her calf are likely to make a full recovery.²⁴

March 19-20, 2017

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- "The worst came 2 days crowned with the arrest of 10 presumed poachers and the seizure of 4 large firearms." It happened in the area covered by the Lower Sabie rangers. Poachers were immobilized. The SAPS, the South African Police Service, arrived to proceed with the arrest. One of them disarmed a suspect of his rifle thinking it was unloaded. He aimed the gun in the floor. One last bullet has been fired inadvertently. It ricocheted on cement and hit the body of George Mdaka, 30, a Kruger Park ranger. He died hours later in a clinic in Nelspruit.

- **Pretoriuskop.** Three poachers were arrested with the help of the K9 unit. A .358 caliber rifle, along with a silencer, munitions, and dehorning tools were seized.

- **Stolznek.** Close contact between rangers and a pair of poachers. Once again, seizure of a rifle calibre 358 with a silencer, ammunitions and a dehorning kit. One arrest. One run away.

- **At the border of the Park, near Crocodile Bridge.** Four arrests. There were two horns found in their bags. One accomplice was arrested a little later with a big caliber rifle and ammunitions.²⁵



March 28, 2017

Kruger National Park, South Africa

Anti-poaching operations happened in multiple sectors. There were 12 arrests and a death:

- Pretoriuskop. A nighttime dispute. One poacher was mortally injured, and his accomplice was arrested. One ranger was wounded by gunfire.

- Paul Kruger Gate. Five arrests, including one police officer.

- Phalaborwa Gate. Six arrests, including one SANParks employee.²⁶



March 31, 2017

Vanderbijlpark, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

A professional hunter was spared. Should the law have 2 punishments, one heavy for nomadic poachers, another lighter for professional hunters? Adrian Van Staden was only sentenced to 12 months of correctional supervision out of jail and 12 months of community service. He was supplied with horns or slices of horns from his dealer, near Polokwane.²⁷



NAMIBIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 10, 2017

Gobabis, Omaheke Region, Namibia

Court appearance of Domingo Justice Moma, 32, Erwin Tjiteere, 37, and the ex-Namibian soccer team doctor Gerson Uakaerera Kandjii, 51, for the poaching of 4 white rhinoceros in December 2016 (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 84). During the trial, the suspects were calm. Domingo made faces as if it were all a big joke, and Kandjii skimmed the newspaper and smiled until journalists filmed the trio. He then got irritated and used his cap to cover his face. The enquiry is not finished, as the police are still searching for 2 other accomplices. Until then, bail is refused.²⁸

January 20, 2017

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Lu, 41, and Chen, 29, are in a pickle. Police officers discovered poaching equipment and 5.5 kg of horns in their home. They denied that they were poachers. Others had keys to the apartment. The court case took place in April 2017. Their lawyer objected the translator into Mandarin. "He understands nothing." Release on bail was refused.

The public, as well as political figures, worry about the implication of a part of the Chinese community in Namibia in poaching and smuggling. Pohamba Shifeta, Minister of the Environment and Tourism, is blaming the Chinese embassy for not calling their citizens to order. The Minister wants all foreigners convicted of poaching charges to be deported after they serve their time and classified as persona non grata. According to the director of the national police, a crackdown on crime should not take into account the diplomacy. Qiu Xuejun, the new Chinese ambassador to Namibia, declared that his government strongly supports Namibia's efforts to protect their exceptional environment and fight against poaching and smuggling to the Parliamentary Commission on the Environment in the beginning of the year. "It should be noted that offenders are just a few in number, and the isolated cases should by no means be exaggerated and jeopardize the deep friendship and close cooperation of our two countries and two peoples." Over 100,000 Chinese nationals have moved to Namibia. This number is uncertain.²⁹

January 21, 2017

Otjiwa Game Ranch, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Poaching of a 20-year-old pregnant female white rhinoceros. Her horns were removed. A reward of \$10,000 Namibian dollars (\$740 US) is offered for any information assisting the capture of those responsible.³⁰



Very big calibre.

Since 2014 Namibia

451 rhinoceros were preventatively dehorned in 4 national parks: Etosha, Namib-Naukluft, Nkasa Rupara, and Waterberg. The total cost of this operation is 14.5 million N\$, about a million US\$. 932.05 kg of white and black rhinoceros horns, an average of 2.066 kg per rhinoceros, were gathered and stored in confidential locations. Their estimated value is 74 million N\$, about \$5,440,000 US or \$5900 US/kg (local value). The Ministry is satisfied, but is complaining about the number of veterinarians in the country. As a reminder, rhinoceros, before being dehorned, have to be anaesthetized and then reawakened and brought on their feet again. The operation must be repeated every 2 to 3 years. Private ranches also practice dehorning.³¹

March 15, 2017

Grootberg, Kunene Region, Namibia

This is the third rhinoceros to die this year in the Kunene desert and even the fourth since one gravely injured in December 2016 around Gobabis (cf. "On the Trail" n15 p. 84), died in February 2017. This one is a young black rhinoceros. His "horns" were cut with a sharp-edged tool. A bullet was found in the body with the help of a metal detector.³²

Death toll for the past 4 years, according to Pohamba Shifeta:

- 9 in 2013
- 56 in 2014
- 95 in 2015
- 59 in 2016



Late March 2017

Selela, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Seizure of 2 horns. One arrest.³³

SWAZILAND

February 25, 2017

King Mswati III International Airport, Swaziland

Seizure of 24 pieces of horns hidden in boxes of fine wines. Arrest of 2 Taiwanese smugglers, ages 30 and 54.³⁴

ZIMBABWE

March 14, 2017

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

A search warrant has been posted for Nhamo Kufakunesu. He was released on bail for \$100 US. He failed to appear in court. January 1, he had been stopped in the Bubye Conservancy, in the southern Matabeleland Province, in possession of a high-caliber firearm and munitions. He is suspected to have shot in the direction of rangers after having escaped. Two of his accomplices have fled.³⁵

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 21, 2017

New York City, New York State, United States

One brother, Joseph Chait, had been sentenced to one year and one day in prison in June 2016 (cf. "On the Trail" n13, p. 77). This time, Jacob Chait has been charged with smuggling with conspiracy of 15 horns of which a pair from a black rhino in his luggage in the course of a personal journey in China. Jacob Chait, in 2012, was an animator for the reality show Final Offer on the Discovery Channel, centered on antiquities sellers. The value of the trafficked goods is estimated to be \$2.4 million US. The Chait Gallery and its auctioneers were founded by the father of Jacob and Joseph Chait. Rhinoceros horns and ivory were not the only thing to have been brought to the Chait house under dubious conditions. Three years ago, Nicolas Cage had bought a dinosaur skull from them. After an investigation, it was proved that this prehistoric vestige had been stolen in Mongolia and bought by the Chait Gallery. Nicolas Cage has agreed to return it to its country of origin.³⁶

February 22, 2017

New York City, New York State, United States

He was demanding \$20 million US from Bloomberg Business Week for defamation and emotional distress. The weekly magazine, in an investigation into Rathkeale Rovers and the theft of horns from European museums, had named O'Brien senior as the "king of nomads" and painted him as the project manager or instigator of this museum and collections pillaging epidemic. The article made reference to horns found in the O'Brien family's caravans during the search of one set's camp.

The plaintiff and his lawyer are pressing the fact that the horns were fake. The Supreme Court justice recalled that the certificates of non-authenticity were produced in July 2015, while the press article was dated to September 2013. O'Brien has made an appeal.³⁷



ASIA

CHINA

Hong Kong International Airport, China

- March 8, 2017. Seizure of 7 kg of entire horns or fragments in the bags of a 21-year-old man, estimated to be worth 1.4 million HKD (\$ 180.392 US). They were wrapped in aluminum foil and covered in adhesive paper. The man had travelled from Maputo, Mozambique through Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- March 22, 2017. The "coffee" came from Namibia. The two express packages had a value of 1.3 million HK\$ (\$167,507 US). X-rays uncovered the truth. Rhino horns, cut into 12 pieces, underwent genetic



testing. Already, having come from Namibia, a trafficking hotspot, their authenticity is supported. The man who came to pick up the packages was apprehended and then was released on bail. This is shocking facing the imminent

extinction of wild rhinos and the value of the loot. Unfortunately, those responsible face only 2 years' maximum in prison.³⁸

March 29 and 30, 2017 Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 2 horns (2.5 kg) estimated to be worth 500,000 HKD (\$ 64,331 US), or about \$25.73 US per kilogram. One arrest. The express parcel had come from Mozambique.³⁹



INDIA



REPEATED OFFENSE January 25, 2017 Jakhalabandha, Assam State, India

Arrest of 2 poachers, Riful Ali and Lhoisha Sema, responsible for the poaching of a female rhinoceros on June 18, 2016 (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 75). Photos of the men with automatic rifles with silencers at the

scene of the crime allowed them to be shown up.⁴⁰

February 14, 2017 Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Poaching of a female rhinoceros. 14 empty cartridges were found near the body. One arrest.⁴¹

March 14, 2017 Baihata Chariali, State of Assam, India

Three deaths after an accident involving a car and a bus. The victims were not only human. In the broken up carcass, the rescuers found a fresh 400 gram rhinoceros horn with fragments of nasal bone, tendons, and shreds of bloody muscle. The accident occurred at daybreak. The poaching had happened in the night in Kaziranga Park. In the car wreck, weapons, heroin, and tranquilizers were also seized.⁴²



March 17, 2017

Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

"It was a full grown male rhino," said Park officials. His carcass was found near the Pichola anti-poaching camp.⁴³

March 23, 2017

Kamargaon, State of Assam, India

Arrest of 2 poachers, one of whom was a student. They were breaking into the Agoratoli area. According to their own statements, this was not their first time. They gave the names of forest rangers who served as accomplices. They denied any involvement in trafficking to foreign countries. Their sponsors are based in the Nagaon and Karbi Anglong districts.⁴⁴

NEPAL

January 2, 2017

Gauri, Western Development Region, Nepal

A rhino is found dead, he wasn't mutilated. The Forest Office Chief is on the case. He indicates that the rhino was electrocuted outside the Chitwan National Park. The horn and hoofs were removed in the presence of the National Park officials, the army, police and veterinarians. One suspect is being questioned.⁴⁵

January 30, 2017

Bhaktapur, Central Development Region, Nepal

Two suspects, ages 21 and 23, were transporting a horn. They were stopped and accused of smuggling.⁴⁶

March 21, 2017

Lalitpur, Central Development Region, Nepal

Arrest of 5 derelicts, ages 18 to 25. They had fake horns in their bags. They gave the name of the counterfeiter, Ghimire, a 48-year-old man. The tools and materials used to make fakes were seized.⁴⁷

FAKE HORNS

March 31, 2017 Nepal

An arrest was made by the army and Chitwan National Park agents. Durga Rana Magar had been on the run for 7 years. Her poaching partner, Khadak Bahadur Mahat, was arrested in 2009 and sentenced to 15 years in prison. About 100 people are researched by the Park services for acts of poaching.⁴⁸

PHILIPPINES

February 27, 2017

Manila, Philippines

6 rhinoceros horns seized in 2012 were given by customs to the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB). The horns were hidden in a cashew container, which came from Mozambique. It is not impossible the horns be back soon to Mozambique. The other options, according to Ms. Lim, director of the BMB, are to treat them as well as possible or to destroy them.⁴⁹

THAILAND

March 10, 2017

Bangkok International Suvarnabhumi Airport, Thailand

Seizure of 21 horns totaling 50 kilograms or \$500,000 US en route to East Africa, according to a press release from the Minister of Justice. A 56-year-old woman was apprehended by the police, 14 days after the seizure. She was wanted after fleeing from the airport after police was on the way to check her suitcase that she was carrying on a trolley. Another woman that was with her is still on the run. Two police officers and the vice prosecutor of the Saraburi Province are on the list of suspects. They were coming to meet the two traffickers at the airport.⁵⁰



VIET NAM

March 14, 2017

Noi Bai International Airport, Viet Nam

After the arrival of a Kenya Airways flight from Nairobi, 2 unclaimed suitcases, without indication of weight, owner, or sender, caught the attention of customs officers and the anti-smuggling task force. Upon opening, the two suitcases revealed horns that exactly resembled rhinoceros horns. Genetic analysis confirmed it. The suitcases were shipped in Malawi. CCTV footage shows suspicious handling of both suitcases by members of the Kenya Airways flight Q870. Agents of the Nairobi International Airport will also be questioned by investigators. Upon arrival in Hanoi, the blue and brown suitcases contained 102 kg of horns according to the Vietnamese press, or 119 kg according to the Kenyan press.⁵¹



EUROPE

FRANCE

March 7, 2017

Thoiry zoological park, Yvelines, France

Poaching in the most famous zoo of France

The front horn of a 4-year-old male rhinoceros is stolen. "Vince" was killed by 3 bullets in the head. In the following weeks, rhino horns in the Dvur-Kraloveen Zoo, Czech Republic, were cut as a precaution. A Vietnamese mafia of ivory and horn is very active in Europe (see "On the Trail" n°4 p.4, n°5 pp.103-104, n°6 pp.95-96, n°13 p.96, n°14 p.97). Its hard cores are in the Czech Republic, Germany and France. Those who have killed and dehorned a rhinoceros near Paris have certainly already done it elsewhere or organized it.



In France, some directors of zoos are also planning to practice preventive dehorning without specifying what will be done with the horns. If carried out, these operations should be done under State control and the horns should be destroyed to avoid trafficking from zoos. The director of the Safari in Peaugres (Ardèche) in southern France claims that it is better to have "a dreadful rhinoceros than a dead rhinoceros". Consequently, she wishes to dehorn as if the horns were only a decorative element on the rhinoceros forehead.

Horns are used as bumpers. While grazing, the rhinoceros continually clears the ground with its nasal horn. In case of danger, the cub does not follow his mother, he precedes her and he would be protected from an attack by the nasal horn which can serve as a dagger. The rhinoceros can use his front horn and back horn as pincers to uproot the mtombati (*Spirostachys africanus*) which tender leaves he enjoys. The horns are used to dig the salinas, to play, to practice horn against horn in battle simulacra and even to massage the bellies of the mothers before parturition. The horn is the Swiss knife of the rhinoceros.⁵²

SWITZERLAND

Early February 2017

Bern, Canton of Bern, Switzerland

Appointment of a rhinoceros horn trafficker to a prestigious and strategic post as the Ambassador of Bern, Swiss Confederation. Han Tae-song was evicted from Zimbabwe in 1992 for trafficking horns using his diplomatic position. Switzerland authorized the north-korean diplomat. Switzerland is regularly suspected of being a refuge and financial reservoir for important Pyongyang public figures.⁵³

Rhinos and Elephants

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 11, 2017

Zevenwacht Mall, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Transparency! Seizure inside a sedan with tinted windows of a rhino horn, 10 ivory balls and a lion tooth. Three arrests, a 27-year-old Zambian and 2 Congolese ages 25 and 32.¹

January 30 and February 2, 2017

Hout Bay and Wynberg, Western Cape Province, South Africa

After having dined Sunday night in a restaurant, they forgot their backpack. They went back to retrieve it Monday afternoon. The problem is that the backpack contained ivory and rhinoceros horns that had been taken by the restaurant owner to the nearby police station. The two Chinese young adults, ages 24 and 27, were immediately arrested and given a 5-year suspended prison sentence and a fine of 35,000 rands (\$2574 US) each. The seizure is estimated to have a value of \$4,413 US. It's made up of pieces of rhinoceros horn, jewels, and sticks of ivory.

Tracey Brits, an animal rights activist, is outraged at the leniency of the sentence. "It's a travesty of justice."²



ZIMBABWE

January 2017

Zimbabwe

Dumisani Moyo. Wanted by Interpol. Sought after by the justice in Botswana for rhino poaching. He was born in Zimbabwe and has Zimbabwean citizenship. He sought asylum in Lusaka, Zambia. He is one of the international poachers of the High Valley of the Zambezi River. According to Caroline Washaya-Moyo spokesperson of Zimparks, they are very organized and cooperative. They exchange information on cyanide and good business plans, they learn the basics of local dialects to assimilate into the populations, as well as a precaution, they are in with lawyers to ensure they'll be well represented in case of arrest. Caroline Washaya-Moyo sees the lawyer-poachers connexion as a sign of well-structured and well-financed gangs.³



OCEANIA

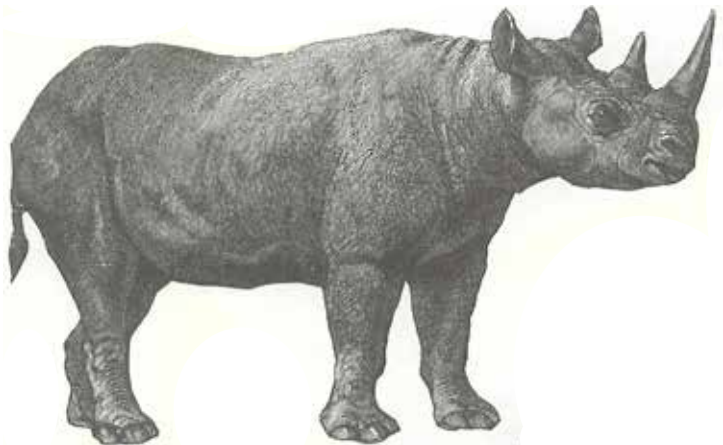
AUSTRALIA

January 2017

Australia

The Leonard Joel House - managing director John Albrecht- and the Mossgreen House -managing director Paul Sumner- are the two first market providers for the ivory and horn trade in the country. John Albrecht has announced he would put an end to ivory and horn sales within the next 2 years, beginning with an immediate ban on modern ivory. The Leonard Joel company owns 300 auction houses and will yet continue to sell musical instruments, cutlery and "certified" antiques made partly or entirely in ivory. "This is going to make me loose close to 400.000 US\$ but it must begin somewhere" says Mr. Albrecht. Paul Sumner for his part has described his competitor's position as "flagrant opportunism" and announces that his business will continue to sell horn and ivory because "it is a natural material alongside shells". He conceals nevertheless that restrictions must be imposed regarding modern ivory.

According to an IFAW study carried out over a period of 9 months, 2400 carved ivory pieces and 7 horns were offered for sale in 17 auction houses. The certification documents in most cases were incomplete and exposed buyers to the risk of illegal purchases. The other main auction rooms to provide ivory are Lawsons, David Barsby, Aalders, Vickers and Hoad, Raffan, Kelaher and Thomas, Bonhams, Bargain Hunt and Sotheby's Australia (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, page 117).⁴



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.

"On the Trail" n°16 Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	465	14
	Uganda	82	18
		100	28
Asia	Hong Kong (China)	2,578	77
		2,645	84
	Malaysia	1,900	102
	Thailand	1,479	111

EASTERN AFRICA

ETHIOPIA

February 24, 2017

Addis-Abeba Bole International Airport, Ethiopia

Seizure of 302 kg of ivory. The shipment came from Nigeria. The sender and recipient are still unknown as of now. ¹

KENYA

January 4, 2017

Tsavo Conservation Area, Kenya

They killed Satao 2. Satao 1 was poached 3 years ago in May (cf. "On the Trail" n°5, p. 89). The dynasty of "tuskers" lost one of its most esteemed members. The distinction of "tusker" is reserved for elephants who have tusks larger than 45.45 kg (100 lbs).

The 2 tusks of Satao 2 weighed 50.5 kg and 51 kg.



He died like Satao 1, by poisoned arrow. The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) discovered the murder before the poachers could take the tusks. Two suspects were stopped. On their 44,000 square kilometer property, Tsavo accommodates 6 "super tuskers", 15 tuskers in the making, and 7 females whose tusks are so long they touch the ground. Tsavo's administration hopes that 1 or 2 of these prominent tuskers will be the object of a presidential decree of protection. The celebrated Ahmed in Marsabit National Park had benefited from this political protection in the beginning of the 1970s. 25 to 30 tuskers in all of Africa are in existence. ²

January 12, 2017

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

Medical care given to a male elephant wounded by an arrow that hit his right back hip. It was a joint action of Mara Conservancy, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and Mara Elephant Project. ³



January 14, 2017

Namanga, Kajiado County, Kenya. Border to Tanzania.

Seizure of 4 tusks for a total weight of 40 kg coming from Tanzania.

Three arrests. The Big Life Foundation took part in the operation. ⁴

January 28, 2017

Mombasa-Nairobi route, Kenya

The Mombasa-Nairobi route has become a new poaching spot. No arrows, no AK47s, no traps, no hypodermic syringes or poisoned pineapples, just crazy trucks that don't break and cause accidents (cf "On the Trail" n°15 p. 104). This time again, the tusks disappeared. ⁵

**GANG
FAMILY AFFAIRS
January 30, 2017**

Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya

Brothers Akasha, Vijaygiri Goswami, and Gulam Hussein, members of a drug-trafficking organization called Akasha, were extradited to the United States.

The DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), confirmed the possession of phone calls from April 2014 where the Akasha brothers said they could provide ivory from Botswana and Mozambique. They had the same discussion about rhinoceros horns. Genetic research on the ivory seized showed that the exporting African countries are not, with some exceptions, the tusks' countries of origin.

The Akasha brothers are accused of having sent almost 100 kilos of heroine from Kenya to the United States. A DEA supervisor in Washington has evidence that the Akasha family and their associates trafficked many different types of products. "The smuggling routes for ivory are the same as the smuggling routes for drugs." According to the same sources, Mombasa Port is both an exit point for smuggled ivory and a transit point for heroin produced in Afghanistan and destined for Europe. The heroin arrives by sea in large packages in Kenya and Tanzania. It is then divided into smaller portions and transported by plane through Europe.⁶

February 9, 2017

Mount Kenya National Park, Nyeri County, Kenya

Discovery of 2 deaths in the span of 24 hours by the Mount Kenya Trust, an adult elephant and a 4-month-old calf caught in a trap. The 2 carcasses were excessively pillaged.⁷



March 1, 2017

Nyeri, Nyeri County, Kenya

Sentencing of Zachary Mboya Kinyua, a farmer, to a 1 million shilling (\$9,664 US) fine or 5 years in prison for the possession of 2 tusks, each weighing 600 grams. At the court, he pretended to have found them while working his fields. The policemen at the time of arrest allegedly molested him and asked him for money in exchange for his freedom. The judge deemed the case file convincing.⁸



March 3-4, 2017

Galana Kulalu Ranch, Tana River County, Kenya

- Two poachers were killed, 2 that fled were injured, and one injured ranger was helicoptered to a Nairobi hospital.

- Four poachers were killed; one ranger was killed and another injured. Two firearms, 35 bullets, and 2 tusks were found at the site of the dispute. Tsavo East National Park is under pressure. 80,000 cattle have attempted to enter searching for water and pastureland.⁹



March 17, 2017

Amboseli National Park, County of Kajiado, Kenya

Seizure of pineapples and poison pesticide. Elephant poachers' arsenals are very diverse. See "On the Trail" n°2 p. 48.¹⁰



March 24, 2017

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Seizure of 10 pieces of tusks and 2 python skins. Arrest of one woman who was the ringleader.¹¹

March 26, 2017

Olarro Conservancy, County of Narok, Kenya

Discovery of the carcass of a young elephant in a thick cluster of bushes. The tusks were still there. The decomposition of the corpse and the attacks by predators impede the ability to determine cause of death. Many hypothesis are being considered, including a poaching attack and the frenzied escape of the elephant.¹²

March 28, 2017

Chepseon, County of Kericho, Kenya

Seizure of 2 tusks. Two arrests. One of the traffickers was taken to the hospital. He had been shot in the shoulder while attempting to flee. A third accomplice nicknamed Transmara got away.¹³

March 29, 2017

Nganja, County of Kwale, Kenya

Seizure of 88 pieces of tusks (41.91 kg). The local value is estimated at 2 million shillings, or \$19,500 US or \$465 US/kg. One woman was arrested alone in her home. "We are not going to leave anything to chance because the suspect cannot have been working alone," said the chief of police.¹⁴



MOZAMBIQUE

January 4, 2017

Lalaua, Province of Nampula, Mozambique

Seizure of 4 tusks. 5 Mozambicans were arrested while carrying a large suspicious suitcase. Origin and destination of the tusks remains unknown.¹⁶

UGANDA

January 13, 2016

Border of the Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda

Seizure of 2 tusks. One arrest.¹⁷

January 17, 2017

Nwoya District, Northern Region, Uganda

Seizure of 2 tusks, each weighing 27 kg. Arrest of Ayella Bob, Okello Eric, and Otema Justin. They were going to sell their loot for 300,000 Sh per kilo (\$82 US/kg) to a middleman. The elephant was killed the day before in Murchison Falls National Park.¹⁸

January 21, 2017

Nebbi, Northern Region, Uganda

Seizure of 21 kg of worked ivory. Arrest of Draku Adnan, 36, and Bakole Bruhan, a 42-year-old carpenter. The ivory was purchased at a market a year earlier from a Congolese man.

The Ugandan government wants to toughen sanctions against poachers by amending the Uganda Wildlife Act. Poachers could risk 20 years in prison and a \$60,000 US fine.¹⁹



Mid-February 2017

Northern Uganda

Seizure of 63 kg of cut ivory. Arrest of one woman.²⁰



February 17, 2017

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Seizure of 1.5 tonnes of ivory in an opulent house. Arrest of one Liberian and 2 Bissau-Guineans. The stamps, unknown by local authorities, suggest that they come from Congo or Tanzania.²¹

February 27, 2017

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Two soldiers were sentenced to a 4 million shilling (\$1115 US) fine each or 2 years in prison for the possession of 19 kg of ivory (cf. "On the Trail" n°12, p. 80) that is estimated to be worth 129 million shilling (\$35,961 US), about \$1900 US/kg.²²



March 2, 2017

Northern Uganda

Seizure of 20 kg of ivory. 4 arrests.²³

March 4, 2017

Uganda

Seizure of 5 tusks. Three arrests.²⁴



March 14, 2017

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Seizure of 18 kg of raw ivory. Two arrests, one of which was a Sudanese man.²⁵

March 18 and 31, 2017

Gulu, Northern Region, Uganda

Seizure of 16 kg of elephant ivory and hippopotamus teeth, an AK47, and 2 motorcycles. Four were arrested: Solomon Nyeko, Samuel Inyero, Ojok Lenox Stephen, 32, and Stewart Kibwola, 26. They admitted to having killed elephants in Murchison Falls National Park. Nyeko was sentenced to 5 years in prison, the 3 others 18 months each in prison.²⁶



March 23, 2017

Uganda

Seizure of 30 kg of raw ivory. A full of incident arrest of a police officer, a soldier, and a prison guard.²⁷



March 28, 2017

Abim District, North Region, Uganda

Seizure of 5 tusks (22.5 kg). Ages 67, 45, 38, and 24, the 4 traffickers sold their ivory for \$100 US per kilo. A great deal! Alas, the buyers were members of the Natural Resource Conservation Network (NRCN) and a police flying squad.²⁸

March 31, 2017

Kampala, Uganda

Seizure of 12 kg of ivory. Two arrests.²⁹

SOUTH SOUDAN

March 15, 2017

South Sudan

During the oath of a Wildlife Director, President Salva Kiir announced the suspension of the national ivory market for a minimum of 10 years.³⁰

TANZANIA

January 17, 2017

Kisutu, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

Three Chinese citizens appeared in court for the trafficking of 1,023 pieces of tusks (cf. "On the Trail" n°3, p. 61) with a value of 7 million Tanzanian shillings, or \$3,138,238 US (\$1076 US/kg). Xiao Shaodan, 30, Chen Jianlin, 35, and Liang Hu, 31, complained of judiciary harassment and even torture.³¹

January 23, 2017

Tunduru District, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

Sentencing of a poacher to 8 years in prison.³²



January 28, 2017

Katavi National Park, Rukwa Region, Tanzania

Arrest of 3 poachers. They were Ugandan. They were found with a bag holding a semi-automatic firearm. They were on an SBS bus that was approaching the Park. A poached elephant had been discovered a couple days earlier.³³

February 2, 2017

Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 66 kilograms of elephant meat and 3 tusks. One arrest.

The protected area of Ruvuma covers 25,000 kilometers and is connected to Selous National Park in Tanzania and the Niassa National Reserve in Mozambique.³⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 13, 2017

Kisutu, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

The couple Peter and Leonidia Kabi had been arrested in their home in late October 2012 and 450 kg of ivory had been seized. The reconstruction of the tusks determined the number of elephants slaughtered: 93. The 2 were sentenced to 20 years in prison without the possibility of bail.³⁵



February 20, 2017

Songea, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 29 tusks (104 kg) thanks to the cooperation between official services and ONGs in Tanzania and Mozambique. The elephants were poached in Niassa National Park in northern Mozambique. The poachers then crossed the border and took refuge in Tanzania. Their boss was apprehended.³⁶

March 3, 2017

Dodoma, Dodoma Region, Tanzania

Sentencing of Boniface Matthew Maliano, nicknamed "the Devil" to 12 years in prison (cf. "On the Trail" n°11, p. 71). He organized poaching in East Africa and the gathering of ivory in exportation ports.³⁷



March 28, 2017

Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 45 kg of ivory. Arrest of 2 South Africans and a Serb.³⁸

ZAMBIA

January 2017

Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, Southern Province, Zambia

Botswana leaves his mark on Zambia (see. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 94). The Safari by Excellence and Zambezi Elephant Trails stopped allowing tourists to ride on the backs of elephants. The tourists will watch the elephants as a part of the excursions to the Zambezi River and take a break at the Elephant Café, where they partake in a friendly and informative meal. The idea is to get to know elephants better without harming them. The renouncement of the elephant riding will be progressive. It is justified by ethical principles, but also economic. This type of entertainment interests less and less visitors.³⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Late March 2017

Western Province, Zambia

- **Mongu District.** Seizure of 96.4 kg of ivory split into 26 different pieces of tusks, 2.5 kg of meat, and a car. Four arrests, three of which were the Kalakula brothers.

- **Sesheke District.** Seizure of 144 kg of ivory split into 23 different pieces of tusks. Four arrests, including one woman.⁴⁰

ZIMBABWE

January 10, 2017

Hwange, Province of Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 3 pairs of tusks, 2 elephant tails, a .450 caliber rifle, ammunition, an ax and 4 cell phones. The carcass of a male elephant was discovered. Two poachers open fire. The rangers shot them down. In 2015, 317 people involved in trafficking or poaching were arrested, in 2016, 443 some of whom come from Zambia and Mozambique.⁴¹



January 10-11, 2017

Zimbabwe

December and January have the reputation of being the worst months for wildlife in Zimbabwe. Many lookouts take time off, and the season of rain favors vegetation. It's easier for plunderers to stake out the park.



- **Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North.** 8 hours from Harare, Hwange National Park often "benefits" from two types of visitors – tourists and poachers. Shots were fired, and things took a turn for the worst. There were two deaths in the camp of the poachers. They had come to kill an elephant. It was not their only offense, since according to the spokesperson for ZimParks 3 pairs of tusks were also found.

- **Hurungwe, Mashonaland West Province.** Bhejane Trust announced that another poacher lost his life in a second dispute in the low valley of the Zambezi River. Two men got away. All 3 were Zambian.⁴²

End of January 2017

Masvingo, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

He was carrying 2 kilos of cyanide on him (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 92). He had been released on bail for \$500 US. With two accomplices, he surveyed the protected land of Chishakwe (Chishakwe Wildlife Conservancy). All 3 were surprised by a patrol. Two of the accomplices of Chindeka attempted to run while getting rid of machetes and oranges. They wanted to poison the water with cyanide and eventually gather the tusks of poisoned elephants.⁴³



January 30, 2017

Sibomvu, Pandamasule Forest, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Border with Botswana

A life for a life! Rangers surprised them while they were attempting to uproot the tusks of an elephant they had just killed. Shots were fired. One poacher was killed too, another injured, who fled with 2 accomplices. The 2 phones found in the pocket of the dead man gave police the clue that the men were Zambian. Firearms, munitions, a big knife, an axe, a blanket, a weighing scale, and their bags were seized.⁴⁴



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 8, 2017

Limpopo Province, South Africa

With its ear half cut off by the cable of a trap, an adult elephant crossed the Olifant by swimming. Treated by Provet with antibiotics, pain medication, and stitches, he seems to be on the road to recovery.⁴⁵



February-March 2017

Somkhanda Game Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Transfer of 13 elephants. After anaesthesia and being lifted by a crane to be transported by truck, they were brought from the Nambiti Game Reserve to the Reserve in Somkhanda, which is 270 km away. The objective is to restore the ecosystem of the savannah and develop tourism. Elephants haven't been in Somkhanda for 70 years. In Nambiti, there are too many. The local communities are in favor of the project, which came about thanks to the support of Jumbo Cash and Carry, Elephant, Rhinos, and People, the Emvokweni Community Trust, and the Wildlands Conservation Trust. To be continued. Elephants don't like forced migration.⁴⁶

March 7, 2017

Primrose, Germiston, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure of raw ivory cut into pieces and put in discrete sachets to transport, but still found during the search.⁴⁷



March 8, 2017

Munsieville, Krugersdorp, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Some people judge it necessary to cut tusks into small pieces and stuff them into ziplock bags, this one was in the street with a tusk as long as his arm on shoulder. A police patrol was alerted. The man ran, and at his home the police found 3 other adult elephant tusks.⁴⁸



BOTSWANA

REPEATED OFFENSE

Mid-January, 2017

Maun, North-West District, Botswana

Court hearing for the sale of 4 tusks to Namibian buyers in March 2014. Aritoko Dubo, aged 63 years old, was paid 8800 pulas (842 US\$) for this transaction. Fire arms and ammunition were also seized at his home, with the money wrapped in a white plastic bag. His 4 buyers from Namibia, Joseph Muyambanga, Mazila Kayambiso, Mukonda Dave and Muhambiwa Vista have already been sentenced in Namibia. Found in possession of the tusks, they admitted to having bought them in Botswana from a certain "Sechoni", who is actually none other than Aritoko Dubo. The tusks are under guard of the Namibian Ministry for the Environment and Tourism. They weigh 90.20 kg and are estimated to be worth 91,092 Namibian dollars (6,662 US\$).⁴⁹

February 27, 2017

Francistown, Northeast District, Botswana

"Some say we should be free to kill elephants because they belong to us. However, we must be aware that if we kill them contrary to the international agreements we have entered into, this will harm other sectors of our economy." "This will hurt our tourism, which is the biggest earner after minerals." This is the response of Patrick Ralotsia, Minister of Agricultural Development and Food Security, at an association of farmers who complained of damages inflicted on cultures by "problematic" elephants.⁵⁰

NAMIBIA

January 4, 2017

Harrisy Farm, near Etosha National Park, Outjo District, Kunene Region, Namibia

A poacher was injured – the second in Etosha since December 2016. The rangers attempted in vain to catch him after summations. Three of his accomplices were later apprehended. The Minister of Environment Pohamba Shifeta confirmed that the policemen are authorized to shoot in cases of legitimate defense. In this case, the man fled down the road, holding an axe in his hand. The week prior, another poacher had been killed in Bwabwata National Park, 600 km from Etosha (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 94).⁵¹

January 16, 2017

Bwabwata National Park, Namibia – Border with Botswana and Angola.

Discovery of an elephant carcass. Tusks gone.⁵²

January 24, 2017

Tjova, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Seizure of 13 tusks and counterfeit money. Two escapes. Three men were stopped, two of Angolese nationality.⁵³

January 27, 2017

Katima Mulilo, Caprivi Region, Namibia



Three men will go to prison. One of the 3 was an ex-police officer. The other two were agricultural workers. On September 25, 2013, they were on a poaching trip in Mudumu National Park. Four elephants were killed and 8 tusks pulled out. After they get out of prison, they will be unable to possess firearms for two years.⁵⁴

February 1, 2017

Andara, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Seizure of 3 tusks a few kilometers from Bwabwata National Park near the Kavango River. Three arrests.⁵⁵

February 24, 2017

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Release on a bail of 20,000 Namibian dollars (\$1,543 US) of Xinxu Xue and Ruhe Zhang. They were caught red-handed transporting ivory. They were arriving in Windhoek International Airport (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 94). In addition to elephant tusks cut into pieces, they were carrying a seal skin, whose exportation is authorized only after paying a tax.⁵⁶

Night of March 14, 2017

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Klaus Kapundula, 39, was arrested at a hotel in possession of 2 tusks.⁵⁷

March 17, 2017

Oshigweda, Ohangwena Region, Namibia

Amidst the diverse occurrences and crimes of the week, we note the discovery of 63.1 kg of raw ivory by children, hidden under a bridge in a yellow bag.⁵⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 28, 2017

Mashi Conservation Area, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Seizure of raw ivory that potentially came from the poaching of a female elephant near the village of Katamba. Arrest of 2 Zambians and then a third suspect, a 21-year-old Namibian man. He had his father's rifle in his possession; his father had been arrested in 2015 for poaching and illegal detention of tusks.⁵⁹

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

January 17, 2017

Kandi, Alibori Department, Benin

Two poachers received 6 month suspended prison sentences and a fine of 300,000 FCFA (\$486 US) each. They were arrested October 22, 2016 with 3.2 kilos of ivory (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 95).⁶⁰



March 28, 2017

Parakou, Department of Borgou, Benin

An elephant calf. An adult. Three arrests.⁶¹



CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

March 13, 2017

Bertoua, Eastern Region, Cameroon

Three males. 33 to 39 years old. 160 small tusks. The car was coming from south, from Djoum and heading north, towards Nigeria. The remains of the 80 young elephants are under the care of the regional delegation of the Forest and Wildlife Services.⁶²



REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 16, 2017

Ouéso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 2 ivory tusks (12 kg), a rifle, and munitions. Three arrests: Arly Ebam, Jean Armand Ekondza Ngolo, and Adolia Okoumoungueke Dzanaboni. They were the head of a poaching gang. They supplied weapons and brought the ivory to the cities.⁶³



February 15, 2017

Ouessou, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 6 tusks weighing a total of 36 kg. Papy Bilombo, 37, and Rodolphe Mobonda, 58, were arrested. They were at the head of a triangular network between southern Cameroon, the southern Central African Republic, and northern Congo.⁶⁴

Mid-February 2017

Sembé, Region of Sangha, Republic of the Congo

Three assegais, 2 rifles, and handmade cartridges. An archaic arsenal, but it's sufficient for killing two young elephants. Two pairs of tusks, at least 5 kilograms each for the first pair and at least a kilo for the second pair. Mendoulou and Oyono were under a warrant for arrest. Congo, Gabon, and Cameroon signed an accord to preserve their zone from poaching and trafficking. The "Espace TRIDOM Interzone Congo" (ETIC) receives support from the WWF. The efforts of institutions and NGOs are undermined by corruption and complicity from certain village leaders.⁶⁵



March 13, 2017

Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 30 kg of raw ivory. Two traffickers were arrested, one of whom said he was a "pastor". The ivory came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The traffickers travelled by speedboat across the Congo River and then drove to Brazzaville on Route 2 to get rid of their contraband.⁶⁶

GABON

January 4, 2017

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Seizure of 2 ivory tusks. With the help of the NGO Conservation Justice, police arrested Arsène Bousougou, 32 years old, employed by the company Olam as a harvester. He was transporting the 4 pieces in his backpack and was waiting for his client when he was stopped. The company Olam harvests palm oil and rubber tree plantations in Gabon. It is based in Singapore.⁶⁷

February 13, 2017

Port-Gentil, Ogooué-Maritime Province, Gabon

Malian Dicko Bareima, more known in the area by the name Ibrahim, waited for his client complacently in a hotel room with the ivory on the bed. He was awakened from his torpor by the police. The 6 tusks weighed a total of 10 kg, pointing to the elimination of 3 very young elephants.⁶⁸

March 14, 2017

Gabon

Seizure of 2 tusks. One arrest.⁷⁰

The dizzying decline of elephants in Minkébé National Park, Gabon

Makokou is close to the Minkébé National Park. The new study by 12 scientists and field specialists was published in *Current Biology Magazine* and was financed by the Gabon Agency for National Parks, the FAO, and the US Fish and Wildlife Services. This study was a good example of international cooperation and it is hoped that political changes and financial restrictions in the United States of America will not cause its demise.

The comparison of elephant dung descriptions between 2004 and 2014 is clear. There were an estimated 35,404 elephants in 2004, and 6,542 in 2014, meaning a loss of 81.5%. Poaching is the principal reason. The eco-guards that are far from traversing the entire Park found 161 tuskless carcasses between 2011 and 2012. The majority of the ivory seized all over the world comes from the Cameroon-Gabon-Congo triangle, of which Minkébé Park is an angle. The north of the Park has been infested by transnational poachers coming from Cameroon. The decrease in elephant dungs in this area is the most spectacular. In 2011, 6,000 illegal immigrants were expelled from the Park. The majority were Cameroonians, gold diggers, ivory trackers, and bushmeat hunters. They were trafficking in the city of Djoum in southern Cameroon. A Cameroonian national road passes 6 km from the northern border of the Gabonese Park. The west and south of the Park are subject to national poachers. The uncontrolled forestry works open access to poachers and facilitate the compliance of timber lorries drivers and other employees of the logging sites.⁶⁹

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Morning of February 18, 2017

Dzanga-Sangha Special Reserve, Prefecture of Sangha-Mbaéré, Central African Republic

Rod Cassidy, the founder-director of the Sangha Lodge, testified that "Four hours after having heard gunfire in the forest, I found a cartridge and a track covered in blood. We set out to look for the victim with a team from my lodge and 2 eco-guard teams. A little while later, the eco-guards left us. We heard a fifth, and then a sixth shot, and the guards came back. With my team, they had found the body. It was too late. The tusks had been taken. I had the impression that the eco-guards did not want to catch the poacher."⁷¹

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Late February 2017

Bili-Uere Hunting Reserve, Bas-Uele Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Over the course of the last 2 weeks, 11 elephants were slaughtered by members of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Mbororo livestock farmers. Their meat and tusks were then sold at the Zemio Market in the Central African Republic, according to the head of the Reserve.⁷²

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, foreign livestock breeders called Mbororos are mainly from Rwanda, Uganda, Chad, Cameroon, and Libya. They invade the northern Democratic Republic of the Congo by the thousands to search for fertile pastures and fields. They are accused of attacking the native populations and disturbing their traditional activities.

CHAD

March 22-30, 2017

Chari-Baguirmi Region, Chad

Twelve elephants were poached. The locals rush to the scene of the crime to share the meat. One female adult is wounded. She is limping. She was left in the field. She was vulnerable. There wasn't a veterinarian available. She was fed and protected by SOS Elephant members. Many days later, she was still there. She wasn't getting worse, but she wasn't getting better. The veterinarians were still absent. SOS Elephant was crossing their fingers. Three other elephants were injured by poachers and had been wandering around the area but couldn't join the rest of the herd a few kilometers away. She took bath in a stream to take care of herself. More in the next "On the Trail" issue.⁷³



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AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 8-9, 2017

Beverly Hills, Long Beach, and Pomona, Los Angeles County, State of California, United States of America

Regulatory inspection of 10 stores. Seizure of combs, brushes, and knives with ivory handles and marble and bronze sculptures with ivory inlays, all recently made. "The grace period has seen its light; most people know or should now know about the law," said US Fish and Wildlife.⁷⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 8, 2017

New York City, New York State, United States

Landmark Gallery pled guilty. Since 2014, New York State has prohibited the sale of mammoth ivory without a special permit. However, owners still had a delay of 2 years to sell their stocks.

Acting on information, the New York State Taxation and Finance Investigations and agents from the US Fish and Wildlife Service investigated the gallery with a search warrant given by the prosecutor of Manhattan.

47 worked ivories were seized. They were mammoth ivory, according to the sellers and accompanying documents. Experts from the Museum of Natural History however, were certain. All the ivories were from elephant. Therefore, its sale is prohibited (cf. "On the Trail" n°14 p. 88). The gallery owners, brothers Behrooz and Hersel Torkian, were sentenced to a \$250,000 US deposit to the New York State Public Treasury, \$150,000 US in commercial taxes to the city of New York, and a \$50,000 deposit to the Wildlife Tomorrow Fund, which focuses on the protection of elephants, the fight against poaching, and land conservation.⁷⁵



ASIA

CAMBODIA

Late February 2017

Cambodia

Diplomatic and pedagogic ivory

The Prime Minister has rejected an "American" wish that encouraged Cambodia to get rid of its stocks of seized ivory and rhinoceros horns. He emphasized that the USA doesn't have the right to scrutinize the Cambodian administration. "There is no reason to destroy them because it would look like we are destroying evidence." The seizures will be used for scientific research and shown in a museum. The measures taken to protect these animal materials from crime networks have not been described. As we know, thefts have been increasing in court registries, museums, auction rooms, government stocks, in the entire world.⁷⁶



Ivory seizure in Cambodia, December 2016.
Cf. "On the Trail" n°15, p.98

CHINA

January 7 and 9, 2017

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 26 kg of chopped ivory, wrapped in tin foil and shared out into 30 boxes inside the luggage of a passenger coming from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Estimated value 520.000 HK\$ (67.042 US\$), that is 2578 US\$/kg. The 43 year old trafficker was sentenced to 8 weeks prison and 100.000 HK\$ (12.892 US\$) in fine.⁷⁷



January 14 & 16, 2017

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 24 kilograms of ivory in the bag of a passenger coming from Jakarta. The 30-year-old man was sentenced to only 8 weeks in prison and a fine of \$90,000 HK (\$11,599 US).⁷⁸



January 19, 2017

Guiyang Forest Wildlife Zoo, Guizhou Province, China

Twelve sad clowns were welcomed with great fanfare. All the domestic elephants, from ages 2 to 40, were treated to bananas and carrots by the children. The 12 lived in a 700 m² enclosure, meaning 58 m² per elephant. The "elephant hall" can hold 3000 people in 3000 m². It is here also where the elephants are subjected to their quarantine. In Laos, in the Sayaboury Province, the temperature rises to 20°C in the winter. Here, it is 5°C.⁷⁹

TAILOR NETWORK



**January 24, 2017
Shanghai Railway Station, China**

After having spent a year in Zimbabwe, he returned to the country for the New Year with many little

white jewels. He passed through security at the airport unharmed, but his Michelin Man silhouette caught the attention of a customs officer in hallway near the entrance to the third railway gate. Under his jacket, a cardigan hand-sewn by a tailor in the smuggling business hid 10 pieces of ivory. He transported a dozen more objects in his backpack. While he was stopped, another man attempted to flee the waiting room. He was caught and the customs officers unearthed approximately 30 ivory objects in his suitcase. The two traffickers came from Taihe County in the Anhui Province.⁸⁰

February 2017

Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, China

- Sentencing of a trafficker to 3 years in prison for having concealed 3562 grams of ivory from Asia and Africa in his home. He was arrested in September 2015.

- Sentencing of a trafficker to 6 months in prison, a year of probation, and a fine of 100,000 yuans (\$14,540 US) for possession in his store of 159 antelope horns, 193 grams of ivory broken into 48 fragments of raw ivory, 19 pearls, and 4 ivory works including 2 Buddha heads totaling a value of 8042 yuans (\$1169 US).⁸¹



February 27, 2017

Putian, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of 61.6 kg of raw and worked ivory, estimated value of 2.4 million yuans (\$349,000 US). It was sold through the mobile application "WeChat". No arrests have been made as of yet.⁸²



March 14, 2017

Tianjin Binhai International Airport, China

Seizure of 2 ivory objects (371 g), coming from the United States of America.⁸³

TAILOR NETWORK

March 25, 2017

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 25 kg of semi worked ivory, with an estimated value of \$514,000 HK (\$66,133 US), or about \$ 2,645 US/kg. It came from Harare, Zimbabwe via Dubai. One arrest of a 20-year-old man. He was wearing a jacket specially made for smuggling.⁸⁴



March 28, 2017

Hong Kong, China

Hong Kong cosies up to smugglers.

Two shopkeepers were caught red-handed selling sticks of ivory. They had recently been industrially cut – which was proved by carbon-14 dating. They received only 2 fines, 6000 and 8000 HKD, or 770 and \$ 1030 US.⁸⁵



INDIA

Early January 2017

Bijnor District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The elephants were lured by alcoholic vapors coming from secret distilleries on sugar cane plantations into the buffer zones between the Corbett and Amangahr Reserves. The home distillers are all over the region. The alcohol management force and the police picked up 200 cases in December 2016. 2586 liters were seized. Elephants can detect the scents from 2 km away. After breathing in alcohol vapors, elephants regularly ransack everything. Already in 2010 and in 2012, elephants that were victims of binge-drinking partly devastated villages.⁸⁶

January 9, 2017

Ulipanda village, Krishnagiri District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Poaching of a female elephant aged 25 years old by 2 men who were hunting wild boars. Found dead with 2 bullets to the head, she was intentionally killed. For lack of a crane, she had to be buried on the spot. One of the suspects T. Madesh was arrested, so were 2 villagers, but the supposed author of the shot, 34 years old A. Basavaraj, is nowhere to be found. The victim was a member of a small herd that left the North Cauvery protected



zone. This sanctuary created in 1987 harbors also 280 bird species, Indian giant squirrels (*Ratufa indica maxima*) and grizzled giant squirrels (*Ratufa macroura*).⁸⁷

January 22, 2017

Ambedkar Nagar, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The elephant was being sequestered, the mahout in custody, and the boss on the run. The two tusks of the male had been cut off. The elephant had only ever been kept in captivity. The difficulty was in finding the ivory. The clandestine domestication of an elephant is punishable by law by a sentence of 7 years in prison and a fine of 10,000 rupees (\$147 US).⁸⁸

January 24, 2017

Bangalore, State of Karnataka, India

At twilight in Omkareshwara Forest, sandalwood poachers (*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Appendix II) took advantage of any opportunity. Having discovered the body of an elephant that they said died naturally, they took his 2 tusks and then attempted to bargain them instead of entrusting the locals authorities with them on compliance with the law. The 4 inhabitants of Nanjangud were arrested thanks to watchmen. Caught red-handed cutting down sandalwood trees, one of the 4 was wearing an elephant hair bracelet. One thing led to another and the investigators traced back to the tusks.⁸⁹

February 1, 2017

Fulbari, State of West Bengal, India

It was night. Two tusks, each weighing a kilo, a handgun, and 3 cartridges were seized. Three young men were arrested, ages 24 to 26.⁹⁰

February 5, 2017

Powai Forest Reserve, Tinsukia District, State of Assam, India

Thanks to its smell, the decomposing body is located by the villagers. Poaching is considered as a possible hypothesis.⁹¹

February 8, 2017

Gosainganj, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of an enslaved elephant. Exploited in bazaars, marriages, and as a tool for begging, the elephant was 50 years old and weight 3.5 tonnes. He was the subject of a meticulous medical examination. His eyes and feet were swollen. "He has many problems, and that will require much care and much time to heal", said the chief veterinarian of the Elephant Conservation and Care Center. The old elephant had been captured many years ago. When he was not working, he was beaten, chained, and starved.⁹²



February 9 – late March 2017

15 km from Bhubaneswar, Chandaka Reserve, State of Odisha, India

The elephant was limping, its front left paw caught in a tire. The forest rangers attempted to locate him. The elephant was burying himself deeper and deeper into impenetrable nooks in the forest and, furthermore, he was in a bad mood. He traveled over 10 km per day. Many ways were attempted to approach him in acceptable, secure conditions to anaesthetize him. The assistance of tribal trackers capable of following an elephant great distances by scent has failed. It was only at the end of March the elephant could be approached without danger and be tamed by a tranquilizing technique. The removal of the tire took about 10 minutes itself, but the whole operation, from anesthetic, and the treatment of his swollen paw until his revival took over 3 hours under the direction of Professor Indramani Nath, expert veterinarian.



Is this a fairytale or the truth? The forest rangers said that after he woke up and before returning to the forest, the miraculously cured elephant stood up and stared at the healers for a long time, as if he wanted to thank them. The dumping of waste, particularly tires, in forests and other natural areas is increasingly problematic (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 69).⁹³

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February 13, 2017

Chikka Tirupathi, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 5 pieces of ivory, 17.2 kg. Six arrests, one of which was Basha, an ex-officer of the Regional Office of Forestry. His mission was to guard the seized tusks. They were selling their poached and stolen products in Bangalore.⁹⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 16, 2017

Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Hassan, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 2 tusks. Ashray Neelakantappa, 25, had asked his cousin Harsha Shivakumar, 29, who works at the hospital, to stash them, which he did with the help of a colleague. As for Ashray, he is already in prison for a history of shootings on the highway.⁹⁵

February 18, 2017

State of Karnataka, India

- Saturday

The police interrogate 3 men. Raw ivory had been found in their car, two tusks that, they said, were sold to them by Kunji Mohan, a resident of Gudalur.^{95 bis}

February 21, 2017

Gudalur, Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

- Monday

So, the police interrogate Mohan. He says he "picked up" the pair of tusks from the carcass of an elephant that had been dead a long time. He stumbled upon it by accident while picking up wood or food. The investigators go to the scene, as directed by the suspect. The dead elephant is right there, near a tea plantation. A decomposing elephant has a horrible odor, perceptible hundreds of meters away. Curiously, no one sounded the alarm. The police consider returning to the place with the tusks to verify that their size corresponds with this elephant. They want to make the skeleton talk and verify the coherence of Mohan's statement. In India, as in Africa, the alibi of "I found the tusks on a dead elephant" is rather common. In any case, Mohan and his accomplices are in the wrong. Tusks taken from an elephant that died naturally should be reported as soon as possible to the nearest forestry service.⁹⁶

February 21, 2017

Jujomura, State of Odisha, India

Nighttime seizure of 2 6-kg tusks in the backyard of a restaurant on the side of the road. Five arrests.⁹⁷

March 1, 2017

Hyderabad, State of Telangana, India

Five o'clock in the morning. Seizure of 8 worked ivory with an estimated value of 20 lakh Rs (\$30,000 US) at the Kali Khaber bus stop. Narsaiah, one of the suspects, said that he received the ivory as payment for a debt of 20 lakh Rs (\$30,000 US). "A friend couldn't reimburse me in cash, so he paid me in ivory." Two years later, with the help of an accomplice, he was attempting to sell it and had been ready to meet up with a client.⁹⁸

Late March 2017

Mysore, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 2 tusks (18.78 kg) and a car. Two arrests, 29 and 32 years old.⁹⁹

INDONESIA

January 14 and 17, 2017

Aceh Province, Indonesia

- **Jambo Reuhat, Aceh Timur Regency.** An 11-month-old elephant calf weighing 230 kilograms was found injured on a palm oil plantation. He was suffering from multiple wounds, stress, and malnutrition. At this age, the average size of an elephant is 500 to 600 kilograms. He was taken to the elephant refuge of Aceh Besar before being released into the wild. Right nearby, the carcass of an adult male elephant was discovered. He was killed 7 days earlier. He had 5 bullet wounds in his neck



and back. His tusks had been taken.

- **Saree, Aceh Besar Regency.** A 9-month old elephant calf weighing 350 kilograms was discovered aloof from his herd. He was taken in by the BKSD.¹⁰⁰

Mid-January, 2017

Nunukan, North Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. Border with Malaysia.

Seizure of 5 sections of tusks in the suitcase of a woman coming from Malaysia heading for the island of Flores, Indonesia. An estimated value of 100 million rupees (\$7,500 US), the ivory was supposed to serve as a dowry for a marriage. The "mule" was released.¹⁰¹

MALAYSIA

January 1, 2017

Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia

Seizure following an anonymous call of 17 parcels containing 254 tusks (846.2 kg) estimated worth 7.2 million ringgits (1,605,546 US\$), i.e. 1900 US\$/kg. The Turkish Airlines airplane came from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, via Istanbul. According to the air transport register, the parcels contained "wood chips". No suspect has been arrested and the precise origin of the tusks remains undetermined. In 2015, 6 seizure amounting to 259.9 kg of ivory estimated worth 2.3 million ringgits (512,882 US\$) and in 2016, 9 seizures amounting to 1,054 kg estimated worth 10.9 million ringgits (2,430,619 US\$) can be credited to custom services. The same channel was used in July 2016, see "On the Trail" n°14 p. 93. Ivory traffickers often use Turkish Airlines (See "On the Trail" n°6 p. 77, n°9 p. 81, n°13 p. 93).¹⁰²



GANG

Friday-Sunday, February 10-12, 2017

Gua Musang District, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

A successful weekend. The gang circulated in 2 all-terrain vehicles. At the border, there was a carbine with a rifled barrel, 3 smooth barrel rifles, 109 cartridges, 3 sticks of explosives, detonators, 109 nails, 27 firecrackers, 9 machetes, 2 knives, and an axe. The 7 men among them an industrial grower were at the border of the jungle and the National Park. They were all from Kelantan. Their arrest was a joint operation by a task force of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan) and the Armed Forces.

In the following 2 days, the search warrants for their 7 hideouts in Tanah Merah and outside Gua Musang led to the discovery of dried elephant meat, 2 elephant tusks, 9 chainsaws, munitions, and 2 firearms.



"With the capture of this group, Perhilitan believes it has crippled a major poaching gang in the State of Kelantan that has been actively hunting elephants, guar, sambar deer, and serow," said Perhilitan Director General Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim.

The gang is suspected to have poached 15 elephants since 2013. Traffic Malaysia recalls at this occasion that Asian elephants are more threatened than their African cousins. For one, they are less numerous. Also, only the males have tusks, and the preference of poaching males is serious for the reproduction cycle of the species.

The elephant population in Malaysia is estimated to be approximately 1000 individuals.¹⁰³

MYANMAR

January 2017

Bago Region, Myanmar

In 2016, the new government decided to place logging under suspension in the region. Thirteen governmental timber stations must be converted into tourist elephant camps by the end of the year. Four camps are already open with elephants that are too young or too old to convey timber. Ten to twenty elephants are predicted to be in each camp. The entry ticket is \$0.75 for nationals and \$15 for foreigners. To ride an elephant, visitors must pay \$4 US. To give an elephant calf a bottle, they must pay \$0.11 US.

A camp director explained that each elephant costs about 28 lakhs Rs (about \$2,000 US) per year to take care. Elephants ages 18-55 will continue to work in the timber industry in the Sagaing region, northern part of the country. At the beginning of the year, 75 elephants were transferred there from the mountains of Bago, 18 from the Ayeyarwady region, and 12 from Taungdwingyi. Trucking can take several days and certain elephants risk having difficulties adapting to their new living conditions.¹⁰⁴

January 2017

Myanmar



Wild elephants have quickly been falling down the slide. At this rate, they will be in a mass grave in 15 years. The government launched the Myanmar Elephant Conservation Project to fight against the fall. The first step was a census of wild and domestic elephants. There are about 2000 to 3000 wild elephants left in the country. Between 2010 and 2016, 133 known poachings occurred. The worst area is the east of the country. Chinese poachers support the network. Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi had much to do.

Mount Kyaikhteeyoe, State of Môn. At the foot of the celebrated Golden Rock and near a respected Buddhist temple, a new "do-it-yourself" bio beauty product has become all the rage. Creams and ointments made of coco oil and the ashes of elephant skin – no more than 2-3 square centimeters sold for 4 € – "cure skin conditions and get rid of blackheads".¹⁰⁵

TAIWAN

January 9, 2017

Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, Taiwan

Seizure from the luggage of a passenger coming from China of a 10.22 kg tusk, 115 cm long and 11 cm diameter. One arrest. The origin of the tusk is unknown.¹⁰⁶



THAILAND

January 4, 2017

Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand

Excavations 3 meters deep and in 5 different places inside the Moo Baan Chang elephant village. Discovery of bones that would apparently come from 5 wild elephants, one of them a baby, captured in the Kaeng Krachan National Park to be introduced into the domestic population. One of the ossuaries was covered with a monk's gown. According to anonymous sources, the Park elephants were drugged before being transported to Moo Baan Chang. Some died of an overdose of tranquilizers and were buried.¹⁰⁷



© Chaiwat Satyaem

January 18-22, 2017

Phuket Island, Phuket Province, Thailand

A 5-day campaign took place to confirm the identity of the elephants on the island. DNA tests were done on 222 elephants in 23 different camps. Certificates and electronic chips were verified, as well as the sanitary and living conditions. Owners have until January 26 to declare and register their elephant. Past this date, unregistered elephants will be seized and the owners punished.

This campaign has triggered accidents. Elephants panicked by procedures have injured people and destroyed vehicles.¹⁰⁸



© Winaï Sarot

Late February 2017

Ayutthaya, Province of Ayutthaya, Thailand 20 elephant workers rebel.

They contested the genetic analysis done by public powers that showed identity falsifications for the elephants employed at zoos and amusement parks. They threatened to besiege the government

palace with 100 elephants. The leader of the revolt was the director of the Ayutthaya Elephant Palace. M. Chaiwat, director of National Parks, keeps saying that the 3 elephants from the Elephant Palace were captured in the forests and is shocked that the 6 elephants sent to Germany for circus performance with an exportation permit valid for one year never returned to Thailand.¹⁰⁹



Partial view of the press conference setting up the association of elephants owners.

March 7, 2017

Bangkok International Suvarnabhumi Airport, Thailand¹¹⁰

Ethiopian Airlines acted again as a "mule". When the flights ET 618 and ET 628 landed in Bangkok on the 3rd and 4th of March, they had in their baggage hulls 330 kg of elephant tusks mixed in with the official cargo qualified as "rough stones".

When a Gambian man who for 15 years has been living in Thailand came with papers and a truck delivering 2 packages, and he was asked to open the two containers. 422 tusks and sections of tusks sprung out in front of the eyes of the gathered authorities.

The Thai customs confirm that the flights arriving from Lilongwe, Malawi via Addis Ababa, were the object of particular vigilance, given that trafficking networks use Thailand to add the most possible value to raw ivory, by transforming it to worked ivory through clandestine and expert labour.

The man, Sainey Jagne, married to a Thai woman, and father of 3 children, does not have an identified profession.

From 2015 to March 2017, 24 traffickers were arrested and 7 tonnes of raw ivory were seized in Thailand.

In 2015, 2 tonnes of seized ivory were burned in a gesture of good faith designed to improve Thailand's image in the eyes of the CITES secretary and the global community of protectors of elephants. The 330 kg of raw ivory is valued at 17 million baht, or \$488,000 US (\$1479 US/kg).¹¹¹

VIET NAM

February 16, 2017

Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam

Destruction by crushing and burning of 100 kg of raw ivory. Tusks and sections were seized being carried by a trafficker attempting to return to Lao Cai from Hanoi in 2015. In 2016, he received a 2 year suspended prison sentence and 4 years' probation.¹¹²



February 21, 2017

Hanoi, Viet Nam

The first large seizure of the year was in a maritime shipping container that was going to be unloaded. The 350 kg of raw ivory cut into 340 pieces of tusks were discovered during a roadside check. The complicity of the truck driver has not been proved. Six kilos were given to scientists to determine the exact origin. Already it look to be African ivory.¹¹³

Mid-March 2017

Hanoi, Viet Nam

A 30-year-old man transported 50 kg of ivory from Angola in May 2015. He was just sentenced to 5 years and 6 months in prison.¹¹⁴



EUROPE

ITALY

January 20, 2017

Civitavecchia Port, Latium Region, Italy

Seizure of 50 worked ivories with an approximate value of 100,000 €. The shipping container harbouring carved tusks, statuettes, netsukes, and canes, would have triangulated between Sydney (Australia), Asia before being stopped in a container terminal approximately 50 km from Rome.¹¹⁵



PORTUGAL

March 30, 2017

Portugal

ASAE, the Food and Economic Security Authority, seized 2 elephant tusks for sale online. One was 36.5 cm long and weighed 1.5 km. The other was 91 cm long. Four arrests.¹¹⁶

UNITED KINGDOM

February, 2017

County of Derbyshire, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of an elephant tusk inlaid with a thermometer, a so-called work of art dating from 1870 or around then, in an antique shop specialising in clocks, barometers and other precision instruments. The object was also for sale on the Internet and thus, was visible to traffickers from Asia. It is a flagrant case of raw ivory insufficiently worked and transformed to claim designation as worked ivory and for commercialisation.

Maggie Campbell Pedersen, President of the Gemmological Association of Great Britain, deplored that the new regulation of December 2013 was not the object of more publicity in relevant professional circles. At the same time, she reports that it is not enough to polish a tusk, mount it onto a pedestal, and to graft into it an accessory, to claim that it was removed from an elephant before 1947 in order to have the right to sell it.

The poor appropriation of the rules by antique stores is confirmed by a study conducted by the University of Portsmouth. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the antique stores questioned acknowledge they are aware of illegal sales committed through the profession and salerooms. The sale of modern ivory carvings is common, even if only carvings or other worked items made before 1947 can be sold. This enforced regulation in the United Kingdom and in the whole of the European Union strives to prevent recently poached tusks of elephant from being cut, transformed, and put on the market which would serve to feed the market, perpetuating the poaching. The study, "The Elephant in the Sale Room", confirms that the sellers do not look for a scientific way, such as radiocarbon dating, to sort and separate the antiquities of pre-1947 art from the copies or fakes post-1947.

¹¹⁷



© Steam Mill Clocks

Other news from the front line

KENYA

January-February 2017

Counties of Laikipia and Nyeri, Kenya
12,052 km² – 1,100,000 inhabitants

10,000 nomadic breeders coming from the counties of Baringo, Isiolo, and Samburu have descended upon the counties of Laikipia and Nyeri with 125,000 cattle. Local and settled farmers, ecotourism, and the wildlife have been violently disorganized by these new arrivals. Wild animals and livestock suffer from over-grazing by the nomadic herds. Thefts of goats and sheep have increased. As usual, the drought is the prime reason to justify and explain the intrusion.

Some observers have put forth another hypothesis; they do not think that, on the day the rain comes back, the undesirable herds will leave. The problem would have other roots. Ecotourism and the biggest farms are worked by white families. The shepherds from the Samburu, Pokot, and Laikipiak communities have been urged to reclaim the land by all possible means in this election period. Livestock will be used as a weapon.

Another explanation is strictly capitalist. Bushmeat is more and more rare, and the price of livestock meat has risen considerably in the last 5 years. The political and urban elite invest in the livestock and employ parents and henchmen to lead their herds. A 12,000-hectare ranch has suddenly emerged in the savannah like a cold sore. It is encircled by trenches and electric fences and is defended 24/7 by armed guards. It works thousands of zebu cattle and would be rented to an influential individual by the Agricultural Development Corporation, a State organization. This new speculation drains the ecosystems and dislocates the equilibrium between ancestral activities and tourist attractions.

January 1, 6 Dutch tourists on vacation in the Laikipia Nature Conservancy were robbed and then saved by a bodyguard who fired shots into the air. January 15, the Mugie Conservancy, 10,000 hectares of culture, farming, and wildlife, was invaded by nomads. 200 cattle and kilometers of fences were stolen. 35 or 50 jobs were lost. The elementary school in the village was temporarily closed. January 30, the Suyian Protected Reserve and its main lodge were ransacked and burned down. February 11, at Mugie again, 6 elephants and 3 giraffes searching for water were killed by nomadic shepherds. Space for the herds! The lions, leopards, servals, and African wild dogs will be the next victims of the conflict.

February 13, the Ngwesi eco-lodge was assaulted. The American, French, and British tourists were evacuated in a hurry and transferred to Nairobi by plane.

Embassies recommended that their nationals keep out of Laikipia County, which is the second biggest tourist area of the country. The trouble began in March 2013 – the government was not indifferent but they were powerless.¹

To be continued in the next "On the Trail" Issue.



January 17, 2017

Tsavo East National Park, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

Exchanges of open fire in the Park. Two armed poachers were killed by the rangers. Two others were injured but they escaped. Seizure of an AK-47, ammunition, empty cartridges, bows and poisoned arrows. Archaic and modern weaponry.²



NAMIBIA

March 10, 2017

Bwabwata National Park, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Death blows in the bush. The survivor from the poaching camp, aged 61, said at the bar of the Court that he had been taking a break with his friends before collecting honey. They shot at the rangers that tracked them. One dead, 2 injured among the would-be beekeepers. There are quieter sites than Bwabwata Park to collect honey. Last year, 2 poachers were killed in an skirmish with rangers.³



ZAMBIA

Sunday, February 12, 2017
Zambia

- Kafue National Park, Central Province. Between 4000 and 6000 poachers equipped with firearms and traps combed through Kafue National Park (22,400 km²). For the poachers, it went well. For the National Park rangers and the wildlife, it went badly. Poorly paid, some are open to corruption, and the bravest fall victim to gunshots, like the animals. One ranger recently was badly injured.

- **Luangwa National Park, Eastern Province.** Roderick Ngulube was killed around 7 o'clock in the morning. With his patrol of 6, he fell victim of a 7 poachers' band at the banks of the Mweteshi River. He leaves behind a widow and 7 children.⁴



Mammoths and Woolly Rhinoceroses

ASIA

CHINA

February 2017

Luobei County, Heilongjiang, China. Border with Russia.

Seizure from hidden compartments of 1.11 tonnes of jade, 107 mammoth tusks (1.07 tonnes) and 37 woolly rhinoceros horns (72.75 kg). The truck driver fled. His shipment had been declared as "soybeans". The search of the van, which came from Russia, took 5 hours. Two arrests.

The woolly rhinoceros (*Coelodonta Antiquitatis*) has populated Eurasia, from England to Kamtchatka. In weight and size, it resembles contemporary rhinoceros and is protected from the cold by a thick brown hide. It had two horns. The longer can measure up to a meter. It went extinct about 11,000 years ago. According Gennady Boeskorov, of the Russian Academy of Science in Yakoutsk, one global warming contributed to its extinction. The snow cover worsened the quagmires and the rhinoceros were dragged down by.¹



Chauvet Cave, France

EUROPE

RUSSIA

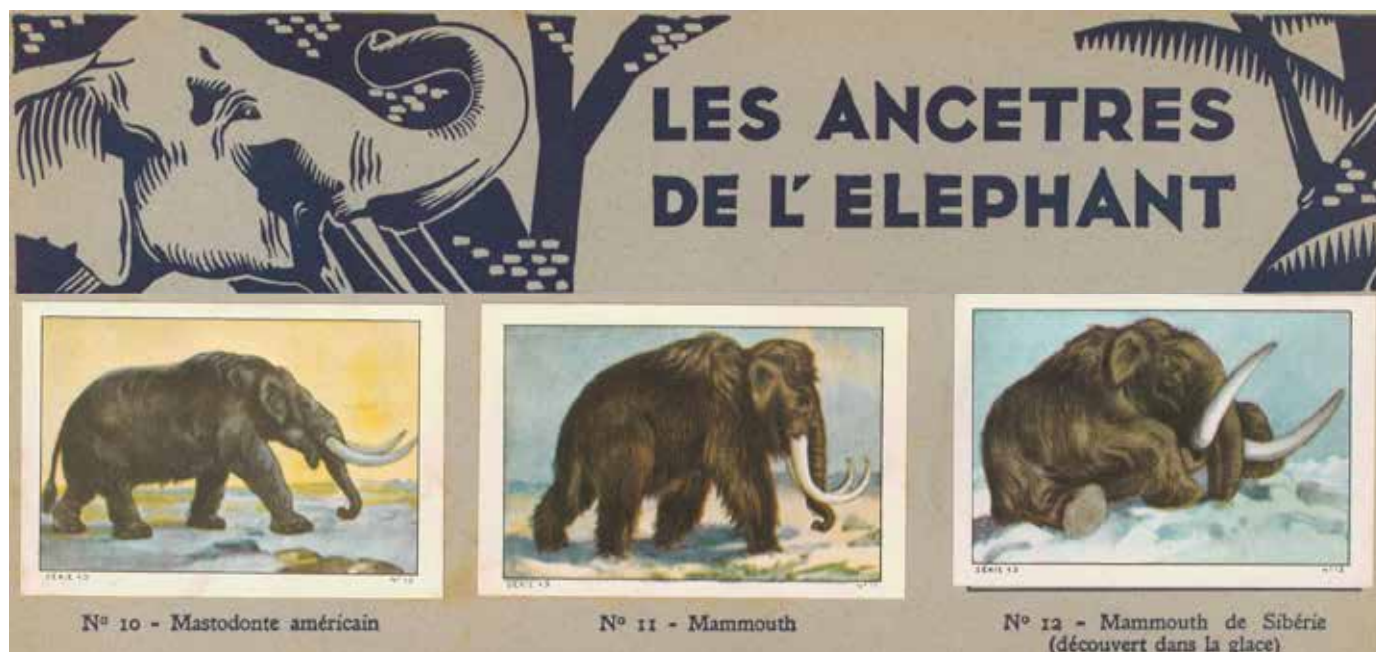
Mi janvier 2017

Mid-January, 2017



Check point "Amurzet", Leninsky District, Jewish Autonomous Oblast, Russia

Sentencing of a Chinese citizen to one year of prison and to a fine of 50,000 rubles (\$ 833 US) for the trafficking of 77kg of mammoth tusks divided into 28 sections. Estimated value: 250,000 rubles (\$6000 US). The 54 years old man transported the loot in his truck, his accomplice was questioned.²



Other Mammals

AFRICA

KENYA

January 19, 2017

Naivasha-Nakuru Highway, Country of Nakuru, Kenya

Discovery of a mutilated zebra carcass (*Equus quagga*).¹

March 25, 2017

Naivasha, County of Nakuru, Kenya

Eight arrests for the poaching and cutting up of 7 zebras (*Equus quagga*). A few days earlier, there were 2 arrests for the transport of 100 kg of wildebeest meat. The trafficking bushmeat and the clandestine slaughterhouses have developed along the expressway from Nairobi to Nakuru.²

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Early January 2017

General Güemes, Salta Province, Argentina

Seizure of 3 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), a female and 2 males, and a female gray brocket (*Mazama gouazoubira*) in a private citizen's home. He said that the peccaries were offered to him, and that he saved the brocket from the hands of poachers.³

February 10, 2017

San Carlos Department, Mendoza Province, Argentina

Inspections were organized on the roads and highways. Poaching hotspots were targeted.
- 4 armadillos were discovered in a pick-up. Four arrested.

- **Highway 40.** One armadillo was found dead and mutilated in a Ford. Four arrests.⁴



February 16, 2017

Mendoza, Province of Mendoza, Argentina

Seizure of 120 kg of guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) on Route 13. It was found in the rear

bags of all-terrain motorcycles coming from the department of Las Heras. The guanacos were cut into pieces to "increase the loading capacity". The area was raked to find the remains. Four arrests.⁵



February 23, 2017

Puerto Madryn, Department of Viedma, Argentina

Seizure of guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), hidden in the trunk of a Renault 19. The 2 passengers were questioned by the police and released.⁶

March 17, 2017

Belen Department, Province of Catamarca, Argentina

Seizure of vicuña skins (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). Arrest of a 56-year-old man.⁷



BRAZIL

January 20, 2017

Norte Pioneiro Mesoregion, Paraná, Brazil

Two men, Amarildo Antônio Pianissolli and Jonys Galdino dos Santos, were called out for carrying around a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), eviscerated and decapitated. During interrogation, they implicated 4 accomplices. The police are looking for them.⁸

January 21, 2017

Montes Claros, Minas Gerais State, Brazil

Patrol on route MGC-135. A 24-year-old man attempted to flee, tossing aside his motorcycle. A waste of effort, as he was quickly apprehended. The soldiers found a dead armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family), a net to catch birds, and a cage. The man had recently lost his permit to raise birds.⁹

Sunday, February 12, 2017

Ponta Grossa, Paraná State, Brazil

Seizure of a young 8-kg capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), a firearm, and 11 cartridges in a boat on the Rio Tibagi, a tributary of the Rio Paraná. One arrest of 64-year-old man.¹⁰



February 17, 2017

Cassilândia, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

11 kg of wild animal meat, which included collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), a pair of antlers, fishing equipment, 3 chainsaws, and an insulated box were seized at the home of a 43-year-old man. He was fined 11,000 reais (\$3,500 US).¹¹

February 17, 2017

Itiquira, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Seizure of 3 dead collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), firearms, and ammunition on a farm.¹²

March 9, 2017

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of a sloth (*Folivora* suborder), kept prisoner and thrown in the back of a pick-up. The woman pretended to have found it while she was driving along a coppice near Djalma Batista Avenue.¹³



COLOMBIA

January 12, 2017

Sahagún, Córdoba Department, Colombia

Poaching of a southern tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*). He received blows to the head by machete and did not survive. Anteaters are not a threat to human beings. It is a harmless animal that provides ecological services. It eats ants and other insects. Experts explain that "the human population does not reach to understand the importance of animals that control insects, in that if they were no longer part of the ecosystem, insects would multiply rapidly and cause great damage to cultures".¹⁴

PERU

January 14, 2017

Sauce, Sauce Province, Sauce Region, Peru

Seizure of 3 brown-throated sloths (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II) used as "tourist traps". These latter want nothing but to spend a couple dollars to take home a picture with a wildlife specimen, a story to show off at parties between friends or during

breaks at work. The exhibitors fled before law enforcement arrived and abandoned the 3 sloths in styrofoam crates. They were parched. One of the sloths died.¹⁵

EL SALVADOR

March 14, 2017

San Juan Opico, La Libertad Department, El Salvador

In extremis rescue of 3 South American grey foxes (*Lycalopex griseus*, Appendix II), 2 females and a male. They were a month old. The male's prognosis was the worst – he was very weak. They were found in a patch of burnt.¹⁶



Lycalopex griseus

ASIA

CAMBODIA

Early January 2017

Battambang Province, Cambodia

Traps are a plague. They catch and mutilate anyone and anywhere. They are set by irresponsible predators. A one-year-old gaur (*Bos frontalis*, Appendix I) was badly injured. His wounds are infected. The vets are pessimistic.¹⁷



February 24, 2017

Cambodia

Seizure and freeing of over 30 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III). Caged, they were destined for breeding to produce kopi luwak coffee – civet coffee (cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p. 41). They were released back into selected natural habitats.¹⁸

CHINA

February 10, 2017

Xiamen Gaogi International Airport, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of an antelope skull, a pair of horns, and 33 porcupine spikes. A strong odor caught the attention of customs officers. There were still traces of flesh on the skull. The passenger was coming from South America.¹⁹



© China Customs



March 29, 2017

Lantau Island, Hong Kong, China

Seizure on a speedboat of 914 kg of Mustelidae pelts, estimated to be worth about \$41 million HK (\$38948 US).²⁰

INDIA

Night of December 31 and January 1, 2017

Bhadra Tiger Reserve, Chikkamagaluru District, State of Karnataka, India

Sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) are the favorite prey of tigers. Without deer, there will be no tigers. A crazy group of people, heavily armed and driving all-terrain pick-up, hunted sambars while turning around in the Bhadra Tiger Reserve. Mr. Girish, a spokesperson for the Bhadra Wildlife Conservation Trust, was standing up. "A new and ugly generation of wealthy and educated poachers appears to be emerging, to so casually destroy the conservation gains achieved through decades of hard work by forest officials and conservationists in India." The poachers are not from Bahelya tribe. They work on coffee and tea plantations or are timber business owners. They are environmental or technical engineers, students, real estate agents, or top employees of travel agencies. The majority are 30 to 40 years old. A tight-knit group of rich friends came to hunt wild animals to celebrate the new year and gorge on wild meat in Bangalore with their wives and girlfriends on the occasion of the new year festivities. There are also good shots like Mohammed Sameer Ahmed, 29, a member of

the Karnataka State Rifle Association. One of the poacher is the son of an important figure in the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The 2 sambars, 80 and 250 kg, victims of a nighttime hunt, were found in the trunk of a van, one in a whole and the other cut up. The band was caught on Saturday. The first court appearance was held on Sunday. According to residents, these deadly, festive trips have been popular for the last 2 to 3 years.²¹



© WCS-India

January 15, 2017

Pilibhit, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Sentencing of 5 people to a joint 100,000 rupee (\$1470 US) fine for the poaching of a young male Nilgai antelope (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III, Pakistan). They were freed after the fine was paid. They were all from the same village.²²



MALAYSIA

February 28, 2017

Bandar Puncak Alam, State of Selangor, Malaysia

Seizure of an otter (*Lutrinae* spp., Appendix I or II).²³

MONGOLIA

December 2016 – late February 2017

Mongolia

A new epizootic disease, attributed to the small ruminant pests, transmitted by goats and sheep, has infested the Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica mongolica*, Appendix II). 3000 to 4000 have died since the beginning of the year. "The situation is tragic. Along with the impact to the saiga population, this event has the potential to produce cascading catastrophic consequences on the ecosystem. For example, ibex and argali may be affected, and rare snow leopards may suffer the effects of a diminished prey base," predicted Amanda Fine, veterinarian and director of the Asian program of the Wildlife Conservation Society. A swift epizootic disease from pastoral bacteria and a conjunction of environmental factors already decimated the Saiga antelope in Kazakhstan in 2015. The Saiga are a part of Asia. "The spirit of the steppe" figured in cave art is in peril.²⁴



NEPAL

January 13, 2017

Jorpati, Kathmandu District, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of 2 red panda skins (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I) thanks to a tip-off. Two arrests: Pritam Tamang, 29, and Sambhav Waiba aka Deni, 25.²⁵

March 6, 2017

Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of a Eurasian otter skin (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I). Two arrests: 26 and 54 years old.²⁶

15-31 mars 2017

March 15-31, 2017

Dang Deukhuri District, Kathmandu Midwestern Region, Central Development Region, Nepal

- Seizure of a red panda skin (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I). Three arrests, ages 28, 30, and 64.²⁷

- Second seizure of a dazzling panda's skin. Four persons were arrested. They are between 23 to 35 years old. They wanted to sell the skin for Rs. 850.000 Nepalese rupees, namely \$ 8,000 US.²⁸

THAILAND

Beginning of January, 2017

Thailand

Abandonment of an oriental small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II) aged 3 to 4 months at most. Not yet weaned, she is for the moment in care at the WFFT wildlife hospital.²⁹



VIET NAM

February 13, 2017

Ho-Chi-Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure by the Hooc Mon District police of 2 otters (*Lutrinae* spp., Appendix I or II) for sale on the Internet. One arrest.³⁰

Late March 2017

Vinh Long, Province of Vinh Long, Viet Nam

Seizure of 3 otters (*Lutrinae* spp., Appendix I or II) in the hands of a web-trafficker. They were released into a stream.³¹

EUROPE

FRANCE

March 31, 2017

Villefranche-sur-Saône, Rhône Department, France

Seizure of 13 live hedgehogs (*Erinaceus* genus) in a van stopped by police. They were in cages. The suspects were accompanied by several dogs. Three arrests.

Hedgehogs are covered under a statute of total protection by the order of April 23, 2007 (formerly the order of April 17, 1981). It is protected in the European Community – it is prohibited to kill, transport, stuff, or sell them under the articles L. 411-1, L. 411-2 of the French Environmental Code. Poaching is not the only enemy of the hedgehogs – in fact, it's far from it. They are victims of pesticides, automobile traffic, and diverse waste that covers the hedges and ditches.³²



Multi-Species

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 12, 2017

Musina, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Sentencing of 2 poachers to a 80,000 rupees (\$5851 US) fine or 4 years of prison if not paid. They were caught in the act while they inspected the 30 or so traps that they had placed in a private reserve. Leopards, hyenas and African wild dogs are often caught in the traps. Rhinoceroses and elephants are also victims. Generally, they achieve to extricate themselves from the traps but their injuries become infected and they die.¹



February 17, 2017

Bruma, Johannesburg, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

927,062 rand (\$71,559 US) is the value of the loot hidden by 7 men on Marcia Street. From seahorses to rhino horns, ivory, claws and lion teeth, they had all the fauna "gold" in their bags.²



CAMEROON

January 28, 2017

Yaoundé, Central Region, Cameroon

Seizure of worked ivory, of three zebra skins (*Equus quagga*) coming from Tanzania, and one leopard skin. Two arrests.³



EGYPT

February 2, 2017

Cairo, Governorate of Cairo, Egypt

Seizure of a female chimpanzee, about 15 years old, and two African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) in the home of a lawyer in Heliopolis, a city close to Cairo.⁴

GABON

March 2, 2017

Gabon

Three arrests.⁵



March 23, 2017

Makokou, Province of Ogooué-Ivindo, Gabon

- Sentencing of Cedric Gnaziet and Cyrille Nguel to 6 months in prison, a 50,000 CFA franc fine (\$81 US) and 2 million CFA francs (\$3273 US) in damages to pay jointly for having detained, transported, and sold 3 leopard skins (cf. "On the Trail" n°15, p. 56) and for poaching.

- Sentencing of Nwajou Sunday to 6 months in prison, a fine of 200,000 CFA francs (\$327 US) and 2 million CFA francs (\$3273 US) in damages for having detained, transported, and attempted to sell 2 elephant tusks and a fresh leopard skin (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 110).

- Sentencing of Salomon Ebenga to 4 months in prison, a 100,000 CFA franc (\$163 US) fine, and 1.5 million CFA francs (\$2455 US) in damages for having detained and transported 2 tusks weighing a total of 10 kg.

- Sentencing of Enada Arnaud and Saleh Aroun to 6 months in prison and a 1.5 million CFA franc (\$2455 US) fine each for detaining 3 ivory tusks (cf. "On the Trail" n°15, p. 97).⁶



FAMILY AFFAIRS

Late March 2017

Okondja, Sébé-Brikolo Department, Gabon

Seizure of ivory, leopard skins, and leopard teeth. Two by two, they fell into the nets of the judiciary police of Water and Forests and the NGO Conservation Justice. They are hunters and sellers. Two of the four are brothers. They are in the Franceville central prison awaiting trial.⁷



GUINEA

January 28, 2017

Macenta, Nzérékoré Region, Guinea

Seizure of 2 panther skins, 2 boa skins (*Boidae* spp., Appendix II), 2 crocodile skins (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 serval skins (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), one monitor lizard skin (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), 3 African civet skins (*Civettictis civetta*), and about 30 skins from other fully protected species, all coming from Mali. Arrest of one woman, Seiba Soropogui, who apparently has been in the business since 2010. She sells in Liberia, the Côte d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone. Ms. Soropogui is a central figure in the business of animal skins.⁸

January 18, 2017

Conakry, Guinea

Ansoumane Doumbouya, a former director of the Guinean enforcement CITES focal point, received a presidential pardon. He had been sentenced to 18 months in jail for delivering a number of false certificates and having contributed to the smuggling of animals protected by national law and the international convention (cf. "On the Trail" n°10, p. 71, n°13 p. 102, n°14 p. 103).⁹



FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 18 and March 6, 2017

Guinea

Father and son, the Sidibé's, are under lock and key. For how long? They've been sentenced to 5 years in prison. The family, led by the father Abdourahmane, has been involved for about 30 years in the international trafficking of monkeys, manatees, and other wild animals. The clan worked with Ansoumane Doumbouya, see above. The NGO WARA greatly contributed to this big haul.¹⁰

KENYA

February 12, 2017

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Rescue of a giraffe and an elephant hurt 500 m from each other by projectile weapons.¹¹



© Olarro Conservancy

MOZAMBIQUE

March 14, 2017

Maputo Central Market, Mozambique

Seizure of 22.5 kg of raw and worked ivory, 100 g of shark teeth, and a leopard skin. Two were arrested: Beltrano Salvador and Justino Siteo. For their defense, they claimed they came from "a brother" who had left them with his backpack. They said they hadn't opened the bag and that the "brother" had disappeared.¹²



© allAfrica

UGANDA

January 16, 2017

Murchison Falls National Park, Kampala, Uganda

The UWA (Ugandan Wildlife Authority) announced that a part of the 7 tonnes of poaching traps seized for 3 years from the Murchison Falls National Park in 2016 will be sold to metal recycling companies. The unrecyclable parts will be buried.¹³



January 27, 2017

Kampala, Central region, Uganda

Seizure of 12kg of pangolin scales and one lion skin. Two arrests by a police officer.¹⁴

February 15, 2017

Uganda

They were mad at natural insecticides. The two traffickers transported pangolin scales and the skin of an armadillo (*Oryzomys afer*), a nocturnal mammal that eats ants and termites like pangolins.¹⁵



Oryzomys afer © Abram K

**Late March 2017
Uganda**

Seizure of skins and 147 antelope horns, a protected species. Four arrests.¹⁶



Kobus ellipsiprymnus

ZIMBABWE

**February 24, 2017
Zimbabwe**

Ministry meetings on the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park resulted from the signing of a treaty in December 2002. The common objective was to improve ecosystem management. Great Limpopo includes Kruger Park in South Africa, Limpopo Park in Mozambique, and Gonarezhou Park in Zimbabwe. During the sixth ministry meeting, the Zimbabwean Minister of the Environment, Oppah Machinguri, announced that her country would “give” Mozambique buffalos, giraffes, antelopes, and elephants beginning in April. For the next 2 years, other donations will enrich the wildlife of a second national park in Mozambique at Zinave, in the Inhambane Province.¹⁷

**Late March 2017
Matusadona National Park, Province of West
Mashonaland, Zimbabwe**

Seizure of 2 leopard skins and 2 python skins. Seven arrests.¹⁸

AMERICA

BOLIVIA

**January 5, 2017
Cochabamba Department, Bolivia**

- Seizure of 2 small turtles. Vagrants were keeping them as pets.
- Voluntary release of one turtle.
- Seizure of a stuffed crocodile for sale.
- Seizure of 2 parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II) in a home. The neighbors couldn't take the cries any more and called the authorities.
- Seizure of an eagle.¹⁹

**January 11, 2017
Cochabamba Department, Bolivia**

-Sacaba. Seizure of a macaw (*Psittacidae*, spp., Appendix I or II), a puna hawk (*Geranoaetus polyosoma*, Appendix II) and an aquatic turtle.



Geranoaetus polyosoma

-Cochabamba. Seizure of a white-throated Capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II). He was wandering around on the roofs. This is the fourth white-throated Capuchin seized by the department since the beginning of the week.²⁰

BRAZIL

**Sunday, January 8, 2017
Planaltina, Federal District, Brazil**

Inspection on the DF-105. In a vehicle, the military police discovered 7 armadillo bodies, a parrot (*Psittacidae*, spp., Appendix I or II), pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III), capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), a boar and a bird – a giant cowbird (*Molothrus oryzivorus*). There were also 2 hunting dogs and 300 m of fishing line. The soldiers seized it all. The driver and the passenger attempted to flee, but they were caught and handcuffed. At their house, soldiers discovered other dead and already “cleaned” armadillos, ready to sell.²¹

**OPERATION SERINUS CANARIA
January 13, 2017**

Belém, Para State, Brazil

107 animals seized: 2 parrots (*Psittacidae*, spp., Appendix I or II), a young Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix I or II), 76 passerines, 10 cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), 9 chesnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), 7 great-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus max- imiliani*), a double-collared seedeater (*Sporophila caerulea*), and a plumbeous seedeater (*Sporophila plumbea*).²²



January 15, 2017

Orlandia, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Seizure inside plastic boxes of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 2 tarantulas (*Theraphosidae* spp., Appendix II), a blind ground snake (*Erythrolamprus typhlus*), 6 leopard geckos (*Cyrtodactylus macularius*) originating from Asia and the Middle East and 12 Madagascar hissing cockroaches (*Gromphadorhina portentosa*). The suspect claims he captured the local specimens on his own but cannot explain how the exotic animals ended up in his home.²³

January 20, 2017

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil. Border with Peru.

Seizure of 80 kg of arapaima and one paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix II in Honduras) on the Juruá River (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). All was neatly packed in styrofoam boxes. One questioning and release under bail. The meat was handed over to charities.²⁴

January 24, 2017

Botucatu, São Paulo State, Brazil

A 44-year-old man is suspected of poaching. At his home, the military police discovered firearms, munitions, and pictures of dead animals. In his freezer, they found game meat and freshwater fish. The man resisted arrest. He remains free under a 3000 reais (\$965 US) bail.²⁵



One trophy of the poacher: the skin of a cobra, framed like a photo.

February 3, 2017

Patos de Minas, Minas Gerais, Brazil

The military and highway police did a traffic control stop. 134 vehicles were searched. Seizure of 2 lowland pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III), 12 birds, and hunting and fishing gear. Four arrests.²⁶

February 13, 2017

Acre, Brazil

There was a highway patrol operation on routes AC-40 and BR-317. Seizure of 45 kg of wild animal meat, among which included collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), Central American agouti (*Dasyprocta punctate*, Appendix III), armadillo, monkey, and deer. The meat was being given to the Chico Mendes zoo in Rio Branco to feed the carnivores. One arrest.²⁷

February 17, 2017

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

The police seized 15 South American yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulate*, Appendix II) in a private residence. Destined for sale, they were being kept in a courtyard shared with neighbors. One of the neighbors had a robust capuchin monkey (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II). The police spotted and subsequently seized the monkey as well.²⁸



February 25-26, 2017

Araguaina, State of Tocantins, Brazil

- Seizure of a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and firearms in the trunk of a car stopped during a patrol on the BR-153. The driver admitted to having shot him in a hunting enclosure. He received a 500 reais (\$170 US) fine.



- Two men were arrested for the poaching of a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II). They were carrying firearms and ammunition.²⁹



March 3, 2017

Unaí, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of 15 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), 2 parrots, fish, some of which were the catfish called pira (*Conorhynchus conirostris*), and 2 firearms. The fisherman-hunter is being held in custody.

Pira are endemic to the Rio Sao Francisco. They can reach 53 cm long for 13 kg. Some scientists believe that they are under threat of extinction.³⁰



Conorhynchus conirostris

March 6, 2017

Praia Grande, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

OPERATION BEM-TE-VI

After a 2-month investigation, the operation succeeded in the seizure of 40 animals, including a rainbow boa (*Epicrates cenchria assisi*, Appendix II), a North American snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III in the United States of America), 10 tegus (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissoni*), and buffy-fronted seedeaters (*Sporophila frontalis*). Four were arrested, one was an ex-soldier.³¹

March 9, 2017

Pirapora, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of 4 white-headed marmosets (*Callithrix geoffroyi*, Appendix II), 4 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), and a peach-fronted conure (*Eupsittula aurea*, Appendix II).³²

March 2017

State of Ceará, Brazil

A military operation took place over 6 days and spanned 5 municipalities of the State. The results: 96 animals were seized, of which includes a green-winged macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), various birds, a grey brocket (*Mazama gouazoubira*), and an armadillo. The soldiers also seized 16 firearms, 140 weapons, and giblets. Four arrests.³³



March 22, 2017

Caseara, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Seizure at night of 8 kg of white lipped peccary meat (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), a central American agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras), a nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), and 13 kg of barred catfish (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*). The booty was found in the back of a pick-up truck. The driver received a total fine of 6,260 reais (\$2,000 US). The fish were given to charities.³⁴



CANADA

January 30 to February 19, 2017

Canada

Seizure of polar bear skins (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II), elephant and walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) ivory, and shark meat.³⁵



March 6, 2017

Richmond, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Sentencing of Ms. Xiu Mei Cui to a \$75,000 CA (\$57,169 US) fine – of which \$70,000 CA will go to the Environmental Damages Fund – for the attempted illegal importation of jewelry. They were decorated with Asian and African elephant ivory, white rhinoceros horn, lion teeth or claws, and hawksbill sea turtle scutes. The seizure took place at the Vancouver Airport on October 17, 2014. Besides, she has to pay \$70,000 CA to the Environmental Damages Fund. The facts were serious and clear. Justice was slow.³⁶



COSTA RICA

January 1, 2017

Costa Rica

Costa Rica has over 77,000 visitors in its national parks during the celebrations at the end of the year, from December 23 to January 1. This crowd disturbs the fauna, damages the flora, and favors traffickers. The National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) published its numbers: 485 wild animals were seized during this period on visitors in 9 National Parks.³⁷

ECUADOR

January 20, 2017

Jipijapa, Manabi Province, Ecuador

Seizure of a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) and an Ecuadorian capuchin (*Cebus albifrons aequatoriali*, Appendix II). They were held on a farm. The owner had been turned into the police. The bird and the monkey were transferred to a refuge in the view to be released in the wild.³⁸

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 22, 2017

San Francisco, California State, United States

Cicely Ann Hansen, owner of Decades of Fashion, was charged with the intent to sell 150 articles of clothing and accessories in jaguar skin (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), ocelot skin (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), snow leopard skin (*Uncia uncia*, Appendix I), python skin (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and turtle shell (*Cheloniidae* spp., Appendix I). An ocelot coat was sold for \$850 US, a jaguar coat for \$4500 US.³⁹



68 years old, Ms. Hansen presents herself as a historian of fashion. She says she's a vegetarian. "I would rather die before I'd kill an animal."

February 1, 2017

Las Vegas, Nevada State, United States

Nearly 25,000 hunters gathered at the Safari Club International annual Convention. Permits to kill and export their trophies were auctioned off:

- A Canadian polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) valued at \$72,000 US, to be caught during a 10-day hunt. Worth noting that everything is arranged so that the tracking would take 10 days so as to not shorten the pleasure and the performance.
- 2 Namibian elephants valued at \$35,000 US and \$25,000 US each.
- 8 leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), hunts valued from \$16,500 to \$81,400 US each, further knowing that the hunter would be able to gun or to shoot with a bow impalas and black antelopes.
- 3 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), hunts valued from \$21,500 to \$25,000 US, to kill by bow and arrow or gun.
- A South African crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendixes I and II) valued at \$13,500 US for a 10-day rifle hunt.

Trophy Hunters, the organizer of these auctions, comes across as a nonprofit organization that finances wildlife protection programs and outdoor education.

Two African organizations that were present in Las Vegas, Thaba Mmoyo Safaris and Melody Safaris, "offer" hunts with dogs for \$15,000-\$20,000 US. The hunted stands no chance against the hunter. In "hounding", felines are chased in an enclosed area until they fall from exhaustion and are then shot at short range.⁴⁰

MEXICO

Mid January, 2017

Atoyac, State of Jalisco, Mexico

The animal theme park "Isla Grande" was inspected and got pinched. Four American bison (*Bison bison*), 2 zebras, 7 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), a llama, a fallow deer (*Dama dama*), 4 ostriches (genus *Struthio*), a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamidae* family), an emu (*Dromaiidae* family), and 2 camels are under writ of sequestration. The identification papers menagerie is being questioned.⁴¹

January 25, 2017

Tijuana, State of Baja California, Mexico

Seizure of 149 specimens of unknown origin in the pet shop "Baja Reptiles y Exóticos" – reptiles, amphibians, and spiders. In this prison, there were 13 milk snakes (*Lampropeltis triangulum*), 3 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 2 rosy boas (*Lichanura trivirgata*, Appendix II), an eastern kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula*), a common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), 2 Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I), 2 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 8 Horsfield's Tortoises (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II), an African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), 4 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II), 4 carpet pythons (*Morelia spilota*, Appendix II), 2 emerald tree boas (*Corallus caninus*, Appendix II), 13 panther chameleons (*Chamaeleo pardalis*, Appendix II), a flap-necked chameleon (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Appendix II), 22 veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II), 2 mountain dwarf chameleons (*Chamaeleo ellioti*, Appendix II), 3 northern savannah monitors (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II), 2 Nile monitors (*Varanus niloticus*, Appendix II), a Mali uromastix (*Uromastix maliensis*, Appendix II), 2 Amazonian poison frogs (*Ranitomeya ventrimaculata*, Appendix II), a tomato frog (*Dyscophus antongilii*, Appendix II), and 4 red-eyed leaf frogs (*Agalychnis callidryas*, Appendix II).⁴²



Agalychnis callidryas

End of January

San Juan de los Lagos, Jalisco State, Mexico

Rescue of 2 bobcats (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), one Lady Amherst's pheasant (*Chrysolophus amherstiae*), one caracara (*Caracara* spp.), one Guatemalan screech-owl (*Megascops guatemalae*, Appendix II), one red cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), 2 Northern mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*), and a red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II). They were discarded on a vacant lot and present signs of malnutrition.⁴³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 3, 2017

Acapulco, State of Guerrero, Mexico

The report of a joint operation by the federal police and the Profepa:

- Seizure of live animals– 40 Magdalena river turtles (*Podocnemis lewyana*, Appendix II), an American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I), and 2 orange-fronted parakeets (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) –of taxidermy animals – 22 armadillos, a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 2 cascabels (*Crotalus durissus*, Appendix III), and a marsupial – and of dead animals – 74 starfish and 33 corals.

- Arrest of a man offering tourists souvenir photos on the beach with an American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I).⁴⁴

March 22, 2017

Zapopan and Tonalá, State of Jalisco, Mexico

- Although her owner had the appropriate papers for the young lioness (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), the conditions she was held in were not up to standard and she was under writ of sequestration.

- Voluntary release of a spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II).

- Seizure of another spider monkey in a garage. He was chained to a metal bar.⁴⁵

March 26, 2017

Tekax, State of Yucatan, Mexico

Writ of sequestration of 3 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), and 3 hamadryas baboons (*Papio hamadryas*, Appendix II) from the “Golden Bross Circus”. Not only could the owners present origin papers for the animals, but irregularities were found in the care and treatment: the 3 tigers’ claws were cut and the lion had erythemas and inflammations.⁴⁶

ASIA

CAMBODGE

February 14, 2017

Stoeng Treng, Stoeng Treng Province, Cambodia

Forest butchery. 170 kg of meat and stomachs from the poaching and cutting up of monkeys (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II), red mutjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), sambar (*Cervus unicolor*) and 5 porcupine stomachs (*Hystricidae* spp.) Stoeng Treng is targeted by veterinary and forest services allied with the intervention force of the Wildlife Alliance. The rotted meat was burned in a trench by the Forestry Administration. As for the vendors, they fled. Some restaurant owners had the poached meat on their menus. They were arrested and released after having signed a commitment to renounce the trafficking.⁴⁷

Stoeng Treng, see “On the Trail” n°9 p. 99, n°10 p. 78, n°12 p. 107

February 24, 2017

Memot District, Tbong Khmum Province, Cambodia

A 28-year-old man was intercepted on National Route 7 getting off a bus. The turtles and tortoises (*Amyda cartilaginea*, Appendix II and *Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and the Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), all-alive, were handed over to the Phnom Tamao zoo.⁴⁸

CHINA

January 2, 2017

Jiangmen, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of a postal parcel containing 20 frogs (*Limnonectes malesianus*), a species whose range covers Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore, 4 scorpions and 22 aquatic gastropods or “freshwater snails”. Most of them are dead.⁴⁹



January 2017

Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province, China

Sentencing of Chen X Kun, 36 years old, to 2 years in prison, 3 years suspended sentence and a fine of 50,000 yuans (\$7270 US) for the illegal importation of 11 ivory items (2,81 kg) and a bag made of leopard skin. The man left China more than 20 years ago and now has Dutch nationality. He bought the “merchandise” at a flea market in London. Mixed in with coffee and chocolate, he had sent everything by packages to Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province in China.⁵⁰



January 2017

Erenhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China

Seizure by the customs at the port of entry with the Mongolian border of 30 Siberian musk deer preputial glands (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II), 7 deer tails, and 4 brown bear paws (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I). The commercial value of all this is 200,000 yuans, or \$30,000 US.

Nonsense: Siberian musk deer glands are invigorating, aphrodisiacal, and anti-inflammatory. Baking brown bear paws cures joints pains like deer tails known as “Lok Mei Pa” strengthen the knees, drain the liver, and erase fatigue.⁵¹

February 10, 2017

Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure in 30 different locations by the Forestry Department of 2 pangolins (*Manis* spp., Appendix I), 21 geckos, a civet and other frozen wild animals, and a Chinese giant salamander (*Andrias davidianus*, Appendix I). One arrest.⁵²

February 10, 2017

Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Arrest of a trafficker by the Forestry Department. From October 2014 to July 2016 on the social media site Weibo, he put up for sale skins and other parts of snow leopards (*Uncia uncia*, Appendix I), antlers of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), ivory and other parts of elephants, black gibbons (*Nomascus concolor*, Appendix I), and live Malabar pied-hornbills (*Anthracoceros coronatus*, Appendix II). These birds originate from India and Sri Lanka.⁵³



End of February 2017

Zhuji, Zhejiang Province, China

After a year-long investigation across China and the examination of thousands of Internet messages and a few coded account books -where the pangolins were called frozen balloons-a network of poaching and consumption of protected animals has been dismantled. On the menu were monitor lizards, snakes, owls, bear paws, tiger bone wine -genuine or adulterated. The members of the network played hard ball. When a supplier ran out of tiger bones, he flogged to his client lion bones at high price (16,000 yuans per kilo, or US \$ 2,300). The same for meat. Thirty poachers, suppliers, distributors and restaurant owners were sentenced to prison terms ranging from one year and 10 months suspended sentence to 11 years imprisonment with a fine of 50,000 yuans (US \$ 7270). The network had ramifications in 8 provinces and megacities like Shanghai.⁵⁴



REPEATED OFFENSE

February 26 and 28, 2017

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

-Fangchenggang. Arrest of 7 suspects by the border police. In a house, there were a number of bags, each containing 3 to 5 turtles. Upon widening their search, the police found elsewhere in the neighborhood 33 kilograms of ivory and at least 70 other giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II).⁵⁵



-Dongxing. In Dongxing, another city along the Vietnamese border, the police entered a house. There, they found 8.26 kilograms of ivory, 4.51 kg of rhinoceros horns, 48 g of antelope horns, 2.74 kg of

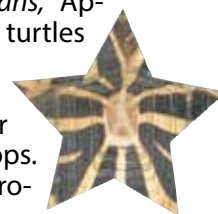
elephant skin, 417 g of tiger teeth, 8.11 kg of tiger bones, 5.47 kg of pangolin scales, 1.86 kg of frozen pangolin, 145 g of bear gallbladders, and 160 g of mink hide. A bribe of 300,000 yuans (\$46,623 US) was offered to the police, but they rightly declined. Arrest of 4 suspects. One of them already had an extensive judicial record.⁵⁶



March 12, 2017

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 165 turtles (protected under CITES) and 71 scorpions. Among the victims, 42 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), 15 spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I), 75 star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) and one keel-backed turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II). The van driver said he received 900 yuans (\$130 US) to deliver the animals to number pet shops. They were alive and held in styro-foam boxes.⁵⁷

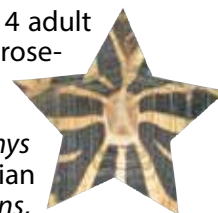


INDIA

January 4, 2017

Crawford Market, Mumbai, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure in 12 boxes of fledglings, 4 adult parakeets (*Psittacidae* family), 5 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) one of which was dead, 6 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) and 9 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II). Three arrests, Mr Gulab Khan, Fayyaz M Shaikh and Sandip More, with the help of the NGO PAWS-Mumbai.⁵⁸



REPEATED OFFENSE

February 5, 2017

State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Arrest of two men who've been in the game for a long time and have learned the tricks of the trade. These seasoned poachers have a glorious past. In 1989, Raghuvir was found with 100 bear and tiger skins in his home. In 2001, Shamim was caught with 24 leopard skins, a tiger skin, and 10 claws as a bonus. In 2004, it began again with 456 tiger and leopard claws. These two fine specimens were reported by the people of Bhirukhedi and Narsingharh. They were caught redhanded transporting hyena tails, boas with 2 heads, and traps. While in custody, Shamim gave up some information. He employed a dozen pangolin collectors in the forests of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Together, they killed 15 to 20 pangolins each day. The scales were gathered in Kanpur and sent by post to Kolkata before being exported to West Bengal, Manipur, or other States in northeast India. The Indian post, according to Shamim, is "secure". The postal department has no control, as the "contents of the parcels are not verified or scanned". "More over we regularly changed post offices and used fake names and addresses." "The gang had earlier used private courier services, but they started asking questions about the contents."⁵⁹

February 20, 2017

Kaggalipura, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure on a farm of 2 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II), an Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II), a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III), 2 parakeets, and 50 kilograms of red sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Appendix II). One arrest. There's a superstition stuck to jackal. Even now, in barbershops, there are photos of them with the slogan "Look at me and you will succeed in business". Posters of jackals are sold next to Buddhist temples. Worst of all, in well-to-do neighborhoods, it's a good omen to have a jackal in captivity in your home. According to the first confession from Swamy, the animal caretaker in custody, the remote pet shop was frequently visited by notables, magistrates, and high-ranking police officers. The animals were for sales. The owner of the place, a lawyer, was not aware of the trafficking.⁶⁰



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March 3, 2017

Delhi, India

Destruction of 30 kg of bones and 5 tiger skins, 100 leopard skins, 2 lion skins, 1451 snakeskins, 10 sculpted ivory tusks, and shahtoosh Tibetan antelope wool scarves (*Pantholops hodgsonii*, Appendix I) in the zoo's incinerator. The burning will last for 3 days, will be watched by sworn officials, and will consume a ton of fuel. All the skins being burned came from 142 seizures by the Delhi Forest and Wildlife Services. The Prime Minister of India, Mr. Anil Madhav Dave announced at this occasion that the 2017-18 budget for the protection of tigers and elephants will receive a notable rise. It will reach \$80 million US compared to the \$73 million US for 2016-17 and the \$54 million US for 2015-16. The aim is to make sure the public knows that after indictments, the articles are not turned aside for decoration or entertainment. "Destroying seized items is not just a symbolic event, it also prevents them from entering the black market again."⁶¹

MALAYSIA

February 16, 2017

Kajan, State of Selangor, Malaysia

Sentencing of an engineer to 51 years and 4 months in prison and a fine of 550,000 ringgits (\$123,916 US) for illegal possession of a Malayan tiger (*Panthera tigris jacksoni*, Appendix I), a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), a mouse deer (*Tragulidae* family), a Schneider's smooth-fronted caiman (*Paleosuchus trigonatus*, Appendix II), and many birds, among which a raptor (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 white-crowned shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*), and a common hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II). The lawyer of Mohd Taha Abd Wahab pushed the unusual argument that his client be treated with mercy by the Court. He risked 5 years in prison. "My client does not engage in trafficking. He is a lover of animals. He suffers from cardiac problems and keeps animals as a type of therapy for himself." The fine is the highest that has ever been pronounced for the possession of protected wild animals according to Perhilitan, the Department for the management of wildlife in Malaysia.⁶²



February 20 and 23, 2017

Bandar Saujana Putra and Kanchong Darat, State of Selangor, Malaysia

Seizure in 2 homes of 4 eagles (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II) and a young female saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II). The owners were not home at the time of the search. The value of the 5 animals is estimated at 20,000 ringgits (\$4,506).⁶³



Late March 2017

Kuala Lumpur and Senawang Federal Territories, State of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

- Arrest of a 36-year-old woman and seizure at her home of 3 civets, 7 adult dusky leaf monkeys (*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II), and 6 leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I or II).

- Arrest of a Pakistani. He was transporting 2 cages full of baby dusky leaf monkeys by moped.

- Arrest of 5 men, ages 21 to 25, in 2 cars. They were transporting 28 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) and 2 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II).⁶⁴



Trachypithecus obscurus



Phyllopteryx taeniolatus.
First price \$ 2000 US

NEPAL

January 2017

Nepal

Wildlife defenders are worried. The proposed amendment on the exploitation of wildlife is vague. At this stage, anything seems possible: breeding fur animals and bears, big and small zoos, farms to raise animals for their meat, animal experimentation, slaughterhouses. Nepal is a transit hub for wildlife traffickers between the Indian subcontinent and China. The development of a national wildlife industry would facilitate the movements of traffickers and cover the tracks. The amendment the way it is written encourages the fabrication, sale, and exportation of items made from wild animals.⁶⁵

PHILIPPINES

Friday January 13, 2017

Manila Harbor, Metropolitan Manila, Philippines

Seizure inside a truck of 7 crates holding 60 dead pangolins, 13 bags of dried sea horses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and a cardboard box of dried sea dragons. The cargo was registered as "plastic waste". The truck was aboard the ferry *MV St. Francis Xavier* that links Bacolod to Manilla under Cambodian flag after coming from Palawan island where pangolins are endemic. Two arrests, the driver Marjun Sueta and his assistant Benjio Estrella.



The 3 known species of sea dragons live along the Southern coasts of Australia and Tasmania: the common sea dragon or phyllopteryx sea dragon (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*), the leafy sea dragon or Glaucous sea dragon (*Phycodurus eques*) who as his name describes used plantlike lures and the ruby sea dragon (*Phyllopteryx dewysea*) discovered in 2015. Solitary, they camouflage themselves among algae to escape predators and can measure up to 45 cm long. They feed on small shrimp, plankton and small fish. The population status is unknown.⁶⁶ Unlike seahorses, sea dragons are unable to hang on to plants to resist currents. They often are washed onto shore.

Sea dragons are subjected to illegal trafficking destined to happy aquarium owners and to Asia where they are used in pseudo medicines. Divers also capture them to use as souvenirs to sell to tourists. They are dried then painted silver or gold. Sea dragons also suffer from industrial pollution and habitat destruction. Australia protects the species and it is listed as almost threatened in the IUCN endangered species Red List. Evidently, it would be needed to list the 3 species in Appendix I or II of CITES.

THAILAND

February 27, 2017

Don Mueang International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Seizure of 12 young otters (*Lutrinae* spp., Appendix I or II), 5 owls (*Strigiformes* spp., Appendix II), and 3 hawks (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II), destined for Japan. A 57-year-old Japanese man, Kazushi Yamamoto, is being held in custody. He lives in the subdivision of Fukushima.⁶⁷

VIET NAM

January 18, 2017

Phu Quoc, Kiên Giang Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a restaurant and release into the wild of 2 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix II) and a python (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II).⁶⁹

January 12, 2017

Huong Son District, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 26 frozen primates (*Primates* spp., Appendix II) and 21 honey badgers (*Mellivora capensis*). Some Asiatic brush-tailed porcupine (*Atherurus macrourus*) could be rescued.⁶⁸



Mellivora capensis

EUROPE

BELGIQUE

January 30 to February 19, 2017
Belgium

Seizure of java sparrows (*Lonchura oryzivora*, Appendix II), a Nubian flapshell turtle (*Cyclanorbis elegans*), ivory necklaces, 190 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), and pseudo-medicines made from Cape aloe (*Aloe ferox*, Appendix II).⁷⁰



SPAIN

January 31 to February 19, 2017
Spain

Seizure of 421 worked elephant and walrus ivories, one stuffed lion and 2 stuffed crocodiles, sharks jaws and teeth, 2 pangolins, 35 primates - including golden snub-nosed monkeys (*Rhinopithecus roxellana*, Appendix I) and Angolan talapoin (*Miopithecus talapoin*, Appendix II) -, New Zealand parakeets (*Cyanoramphus* spp, Appendix I or II) and Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), 2 kg of caviar, furniture and musical instruments in ebony and Bahia rosewood (*Dalbergia nigra*, Appendix I).⁷¹

OPERATION RHINO

March 14, 2017

Lorca, Monoprovincial Autonomous Community of Murcia, Spain

Seizure of 190 trophies of white rhino, elephant, hippo, lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), giraffe, zebra, American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) and several caprine species. The man was reselling them on the Internet in Spain and abroad.⁷²

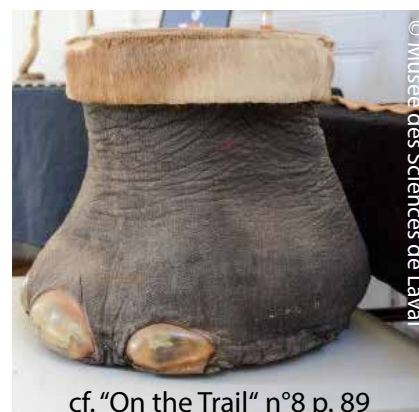


FRANCE

January 24, 2017

Laval, Department of Mayenne, France

A science museum or a grim cabinet of curiosities? French customs enrich the junk in this Science Museum. Already in 2014, the museum of Laval had received worked ivories and coral ornaments (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p. 59). This establishment should be called the "Museum of bad taste". What connection is there with science? Where is the legitimacy in offering these diverse seizures in Bretagne at a museum being used for commercial exploitation? When will the Science Museum of the Mayenne subdivision have a kilo of cocaine and counterfeit Louis Vuitton bags on display?⁷³



© Musée des Sciences de Laval

cf. "On the Trail" n°8 p. 89

CZECH REPUBLIC

2016
Czech Republic

"I poisoned you." Zimbabwe and southern Africa are not exclusive in the use of poison to slaughter animals. Here, the motives of killers are unclear. Trafficking is not the priority.

Chasing "pests" or simply disliking the "look" of an animal would be the principal motives. In 2016, 30 raptors were found dead with 12 adult white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I). Lynxes (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II) and otters (*Lutrinae* spp., Appendix I or II) were also targeted. Erik Geuss, head inspector for the Minister of the Environment, worries both for the fauna and the flora, which could suffer the detrimental effects of toxic bait, and for the children and families that go to the forests. There isn't a global strategy or specific procedures to fight against this invasive plague.⁷⁴



RUSSIA

Early February 2017 Primorsky Krai, Far Eastern Federal District, Russia



Sentencing of Evgeniy Romanov, 52, to a 9.3 million ruble (\$155,000 US) fine for poaching 6 Amur tigers (*Panthera tigris altaica*, Appendix I), 34 Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix II), a dozen brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), 4 Steller's sea-eagles (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*, Appendix I), a cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II), a mandarin duck (*Aix galericulata*), and 7 spotted deer (*Axis axis*) in April 2012. All of the skins were found at his home. The "honorable" businessman escaped prison thanks to a procedural error.⁷⁷



UNITED KINGDOM

January 16, 2017
Exeter, England, United Kingdom

Sentencing of a man to 6 months of prison for the trafficking of fauna. Daniel Stocks, 42 years old, kept a legal website selling tsantsas, shrunken ritual heads made in the olden days with human heads by certain South American tribes, and now for the most part, with monkey heads. He also sells through eBay other strange and in this case illegal horrors, under the name "Killer Curious UK". He was identified by the authorities thanks to the seizure of a stuffed veiled chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II) arriving from Philadelphia, destined to reach him (cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p. 103). The police search of his home led to macabre discoveries: a white-backed vulture (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), heads and brain of macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), tails and paws of monkeys (*Primates* spp. Appendix I or II). The investigation revealed that langurs (*Semnopithecus* spp., Appendix I), chlorocebus (*Chlorocebus sabaeus*, Appendix II), leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I or II), a tiger head (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), reptiles, ivory and hornbills had already been sold. He claimed to not be aware of CITES regulations. However, he made reference to them in his eBay posts.⁷⁵



March 6, 2017

Dalton-in-Furness, England, United Kingdom

The running permit for the "South Lakes Safari Zoo" was not renewed. Between January 2013 and September 2016, 486 animals died by accident, from malnutrition, or were executed. It's in particular the case of 6 lion cubs where the zoo made its biggest mistake. 182 of the 486 dead animals in the past 4 years were protected species. The zoo management has 28 days to make an appeal.⁷⁶

SWEDEN

January 30 to February 19, 2017
Stockholm, Stockholm County, Sweden

Seizure at the International Antiquities Fair of tiger teeth, wolf pelts, and a purse made from crocodile skin.⁷⁸

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Early March 2017

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Rugby player Martin Kennedy – suspended for doping in 2016 – has been involved in an international wildlife trafficking case. A lot of cash and a large number of snakes were found in his home by the police. Kennedy was also involved in the importation of 16 packages from Thailand containing over 200 animals – veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II), alligator snapping turtles (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix III in the United States), freshwater rays, sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), Chinese softshell turtles (*Pelodiscus sinensis*), and snakehead fish (*Channidae* family). Snakeheads are impressive predators. They eat everything: fish, frogs, and even birds and small land animals. Kennedy had also previously been involved, between July and October 2016, in the exportation of 6 packages containing 40 bobtail skinks (*Tiliqua rugosa*) to Sweden. These rare reptiles were captured in the Kimberley region (cf. "On the Trail" n°8 p. 106, n°15 p. 26), then sent by mail to Sydney where they were sold on the black market.⁷⁹



Channa argus

March 24, 2017

Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

Sentencing of Keerthi Eswaran to a 10-month suspended prison sentence for 365 charges for acquisition and possession of protected wildlife following a seizure in December 2016 of 1300 animals or parts of stuffed animals: brolga (*Grus rubicunda*, Appendix II), wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*, Appendix II), falcons (*Falconidae* spp., Appendix I or II), pelicans (*Pelecanidae* family), donkey heads (*Equus asinus*, Appendix I, or II, or not listed), bowerbirds (*Ptilonorhynchidae* family), blue-winged kookaburras (*Dacelo leachii*), flying foxes (*Pteropus* spp., Appendix I or II), monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), and a camel (genus *Camelus*). On the black market, the dead menagerie of this hunter-taxidermist would go for \$500,000 AUS (\$383,700 US). The Director of the Territorial National Parks regrets the suspension of the sentence and is looking for the means to revise the judgment.⁸⁰



Cruelties at zoos

Theft and death of a Humboldt penguin from the Mannheim zoo, Germany, see page 11

Cetacean prisons in China, see page 13

Three bullets in the head of one rhino at the Thoiry zoo near Paris, see page 72

Twelve elephants in a 700 m² enclosure at the Guiyang Forest Wildlife Zoo, China, see page 82

February 26, 2017

San Salvador National Zoological Park, San Salvador Department, El Salvador

The National Zoo can't escape the social violence. Some audacious visitors banged iron bars, punctured the eyes and ripped the mouth of the hippopotamus, star of the zoo.

Upon its arrival in 2004, 26,000 people attended its baptism by a diocese priest of the capital. The journalist Laura Solorzano confided that the zoo resembles a prison with its mistreatments and its waste, despite the citation of Gandhi that presides over the centre: "The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated".

There are a lot of contradictions concerning the circumstances of Gustavito's death. The autopsy report was not made public. Was the goal of the vandals to steal the ivory teeth worth \$200 US per kg on the black market? ¹



March 1, 2017

Belvedere Park, Tunis, Tunisia

The crocodile in its marigot filled with plastic rubbish was killed through stoning by some visitors. Hager Ben Cheikh, a journalist, reports that a seal was subjected to a similar fate a few months ago. "At the end of the day, without even paying the modest entrance fee (€0,5), some groups came ransacking and blowing off steam against animals", she added. Some fools sold peacock feathers and other animal parts inside the zoo.

According to multiple testimonies, the kids were not the last to harass the animals. The few zookeepers are overwhelmed, indifferent or in collusion. The law on the mistreatment or the torture of animals is never applied. The guilty are at risk of a maximum of 15 days in prison and a fine of 4500 dinars, or €1863.²

March 10, 2017

Jihlava Zoo Vysočina Region, Czech Republic¹

Three children aged 5, 6 and 8 stoned a pink flamingo of 16 years (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, Appendix II) to death. Another flamingo was injured.



Donkeys

The African wild ass *Equus africanus* is listed under CITES Appendix I. The domesticated form *Equus asinus* is excluded from this listing.

The Indian wild ass *Equus hemionus khur* and the Mongolian wild ass *Equus hemionus hemionus* are listed under CITES Appendix I. The kiang *Equus kiang* and the Asian wild ass *Equus hemionus* are listed under CITES Appendix II.



AFRICA

Robin des Bois wrote in January 2017 to 13 African Ministers for agriculture to know the status of donkey skin exports in each country. Only one, Kenya, responded and we thank them for it. From February to December 2016, Kenya exported 20,562 skins. In the sole month of January 2017, 9,806 skins. The surge is considerable. It is representative of a rush for donkeys in Africa, Asia, and in South America. The three approved slaughterhouses in Kenya are in the counties of Turkana, Nakuru, and Baringo. Exportation of the meat follows the same rhythm. In 2016, the Mogoitio slaughterhouse in the county of Baringo exported 165 tonnes of meat. In the sole month of January, it exported the same amount.

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid January 2017

Benoni, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Discovery of over 5000 donkey skins in a shed and in a container. An elderly woman living on a neighboring farm called the authorities because of a rank odor. Salted, the skins were carefully stacked and hidden behind furniture and gardening tools. Witnesses said that trucks loaded with skins arrived regularly and had Asian drivers. Two men that were on site said that they had nothing to do with the trafficking. They gave investigators receipts proving that a batch of skins had come from villages near Bochum in the Limpopo Province, about 400 km away. The origins of the vast majority of the skins is unknown. There are two licensed equine slaughterhouses in South Africa, and none of the 5000 skins carry their stamp.¹



Mid-January and 25, 2017

Northern Cape Province, South Africa

- **Olifantshoek.** A horrible discovery on a farm. Heinrich Smit and Dawid Pappie were arrested and released on bail. The SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) raided into the remote farm after receiving tips. "We are of the opinion that the government is doing very little to end this illegal practice." "Some donkeys were being skinned alive" underlines the NGO.

- **Hartswater.** Sale of 400 donkeys at an auction. Jonathan Sherwin was able to purchase 136, plus 26 horses destined for the slaughterhouse. They were transported to the Karoo Donkey Sanctuary. Jonathan Sherwin organized a collection of donations on Facebook. He has been dedicated to saving donkeys for 3 years. He estimates that South Africa has exported 3 million donkey skins in recent years and that the majority are declared as cow and other bovine animal skins. An SPCA spokesperson recalled that the law only authorizes one slaughter of a donkey or horse every 15 days in a licensed slaughterhouse, and that it is only for personal or familial consumption.²

January 2017

Northwest Province, South Africa

The Northwest Province wanted to promote the breeding and slaughtering of donkeys to satisfy a Chinese demand for skins. The idea surfaced in September 2016 when, during an official visit to China, the Province delegation taken by its Prime

Minister Supra Mahumapelo visited a melter factory of ejiao, the asinine gelatin and met makers of ejiao bars, syrups, tonics, and sweets.

The politicians of the South African Province appropriate the marketing slogans that the gelatin extracted from the donkeys skin cured colds and insomnia and slowed menopause.

Chinese statistics state that in the past 20 years, the national donkey population declined from 11 million to 6 million.

The general director of agriculture in the South Africa's Northwest Province wanted this new practice of breeding and slaughter to give a new momentum to business in rural communes, townships, and the agricultural sector in general. "So the idea is to organize the farmers, in terms of capacity building to ensure that they are trained. We will be getting some of the Chinese people to come to talk to issues of production, breeding techniques, feeding, and all those things that go with the comprehensive picture of what goes into production."

To produce the maximum amount of skins and meat to export to China that has been envisioned, the Northwest Province considered importing American and Corsican donkeys, considered to be taller than the Abyssinian species (*Equus africanus*), from which domestic African donkeys are descendants.³

January 27, 2017

Twin Springs, Underberg, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Discovery of 35 donkeys skinned and scattered in a secret slaughterhouse. According to the SCPA, the donkeys were immobilized with a screwdriver and skinned quickly. The day before, around a hundred donkeys arrived by truck from Nkandla, 300 km to the north. Investigators were in search of them. A man and a woman, both Chinese were arrested. The request for their release on bail was rejected. The SCPA collected a number of witnesses to similar occurrences in the Northern Cape, Gauteng, and Free State provinces.⁴

February 15, 2017

Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport, South Africa

Seizure of 300 donkey skins, headed for Hong Kong. The customs officers, in association with the HHCU (Highveld Horse Care Unit), opened a package that stunk. The skins were covered with grass and earth. The sender was a Chinese businessman, already involved in the traffic of 5000 skins on January 16, 2017 (see previous page).⁶

February 19, 2017

Randfontein, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

The hangar stunk. The police entered without been protected by masks. Inside, there were many tonnes of donkey skins, totaling a value of \$175,000 US. The tenant of the place, an expatriate whose identity has not been revealed, has fled. An investigation is ongoing for breaking the Stock Theft Act of 1959, the Meat Safety Act of 2000, both national laws that punish theft, possession of stolen goods, and the sale of uncontrolled meat. For any useful information: 0860010111.⁷

Late February 2017

South Africa

The classified ad website Gumtree will no longer sell donkey skins, at least in South Africa. The site directs to Alibaba.com, their Chinese competitor well-versed in the sale of first-class donkey skins. Gumtree's decision follows the request of the SPCA, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and Ban Animal Trading.⁸

March 1, 2017

Tosca, North West Province, South Africa

A farmer from Excelsior Lion Ranch was charged with animal cruelty, and breaking meat sanitation and livestock sale laws. A hundred skins were seized by the police after a search in the presence of representatives from SPCA.⁹

March 3, 2017

South Africa

Senzeni Zokwana, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing affirmed that South Africa had not yet examined a single file relating to the commercial breeding of donkeys and that South Africa has not signed a single sanitation certificate authorizing the exportation of donkey skins to any country. He made these comments in response to a parliamentary question.¹⁰

March 10, 2017

Vryburg, North West Province, South Africa

"Donkeys in the wake of rhinoceros?"

The question was posed by the African press. Thirty skins seized. The man had gotten it off his chest. "Other batches that are much more important are already exported to China."¹¹

BOTSWANA

February 2017

Boteti Sub district, Central Districtm Botswana

The gangrene of ejiao, this gelatinous extract from the melting of donkey skins can cure or prevent everything, according to Chinese propaganda is spreading like wildfire in southern Africa. 128 donkeys were shot outside the villages of Mopipi and Toromoja. The bodies were skinned and castrated. The Chinese company Y2K Holdings bought the

skins for \$53 US a piece. The average monthly revenue of Botswana is \$500 US. The small farmers get much less. A young man who is well established in the sector will serve as middleman and beater. He gets up to \$14 US per donkey. "I gather the donkeys and the Chinese come to kill them every Tuesday" said Mmoloki Baganetseng. According to him, nothing is wrong with all this. "Demand for donkey hides is uplifting people's livelihoods and would help control the donkey population, since they have been destroying fields." The traffic has been occurring for at least a month. The mystery remains as to their destination and the use of sexual organs.¹²



BURKINA FASO

January 9, 2017

Dédougou, Mouhoun Province, Burkina Faso

A tip-off was received that 899 donkey skins were found in a refrigerated truck, en route from Djibasso to Ouagadougou (270 km). They were accompanied by a bill of sanitation and a zoological pass. At Dédougou, a donkey-dealer could buy a skin for \$39 US and resell it for \$55 US. The skins were destined for China, even though exportation was illegal.¹³

EGYPT

Giza Governorate, Egypt

Early January 2017. Seizure of over 600 kg of donkey meat by the veterinary services. It had been distributed labeled as beef to restaurants in the region. The Minister of Agriculture learned that some meat had already been distributed to famous tables. The channel has been in use for many months, and many celebrated restaurants have, in full awareness or without their knowledge, taken part in this wrongdoing.

January 20, 2017. Exportation permits for 10,000 live donkeys to China was initially granted by a restricted scientific committee. It was cancelled by the Egyptian Government's General Organization of Veterinary Services. The ESPWWA (the Egyptian Society for the Protection and Welfare for Working Animals) is on the alert.¹⁴

KENYA

January 6, 2017

Nairobi, Kenya

Court appearance of 7 Cameroonians, one of whom was a woman, for swindling donkey skin and falsifying exportation documents. This affair opposed the plaintiff, Mr. Tuyen Huy Nguyen, director of the ghostly Sunway Holding Corp based in the United States, and 7 directors of Vickie Trading Limited based in Nairobi. The former had ordered and paid \$40,000 US for donkey skins from the latter. The skins had already been expedited to Viet Nam in October 2016.¹⁵

February 1, 2017

Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya

Theft of 20 donkeys in one week from water sellers.¹⁶

MALI

March 7, 2017

Banamba, Koulikoro Region, Mali

Seizure of bags full of donkey skins. Three arrests. They work at a slaughterhouse somewhere.¹⁷

NAMIBIA

Late February 2017

Outjo, Kunene Region, Namibia

Fu Hai Trading Enterprise wants to construct and operate a donkey slaughterhouse. The mayor of Outjo does not know a lot about the project. He does not know if the donkeys will be slaughtered for meat or skins or for both, or if the donkey products are destined for the domestic market or for export. He thinks he knows, however, that the Chinese plan is to exploit the donkeys of the country, as well as bring them from Botswana. The inhabitants are worried. They are to be consulted. A final decision is awaited sometime in March. It is leaning towards refusal. The SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), social networks, and certain trade unions say that the donkey population isn't sufficient in the countries and neighboring countries to "supply" a slaughterhouse. The business plan speaks of 100 donkeys per day.

A petition highlights that donkeys are indispensable to everyday life. It's true that the poorest populations do not drive like wildlife traffickers, in their all-terrain vehicles or BMWs.

The opposition of the project also relies on recent exportation bans to China of donkey skins from certain Sahelian African countries. It seems that in 2015, a project regarding a donkey slaughterhouse supported by Namibian and Chinese investors in Okahandja failed. The joint Chinese-Namibian venture is called Agrinature. Certain enlightened minds dread as well that, in this region where Chinese expatriates and poaching are hyperactive, legal donkey skins comes to cover the trafficking of pangolin scales, ivory, and rhino horns.¹⁸

NIGERIA

March 2017

Tarmuwa Local Government Area, Yobe State, Nigeria

From market to hypermarket.

Sale Babba Mai-jaki had worked there for 50 years. He had never seen such a rise in prices or offer. There have never been so many donkeys to sell, and the prices have risen to 40,000 to 50,000 nairas, \$129 to \$161 US. "When I started in the 1970s, the most expensive donkey sold for 5 nairas." Malam Adamu Jere confirmed that "we have never had a year like this." All the professionals are asking how the country's donkeys are escaping extinction. Some go-between are fetching donkeys as far as Niger. "We go there because we can get 7 to 8 donkeys for 100,000 nairas and resell them for 40,000 a piece." "There is good business to do in the north, where donkeys have skin with beautiful designs and pretty colors." More and more people who have no prior experience are joining the donkey market. The skins are gathered in Lagos by Chinese wholesalers, and the local populations, notably around Gombe, have begun to consume donkey meat.¹⁹

TANZANIA

Late February 2017

Tanzania

"Time has come for Tanzanian farmers to view donkeys as an economic venture, rather than as a working animal," said Osumo Kipisi, a legal officer in charge of livestock in Tanzania's capital Dodoma. "Donkey meat was not something important in the past, as people used to keep the animal for carrying cargo and farming. But now, things have changed. Farmers need to start venturing into rearing the animals, because the market is already there," adds Kipisi. In Tanzania, the number of donkeys is estimated to be about 250,000. A slaughterhouse in Dodoma kills between 150 and 200 donkeys per day for exportation to China and Turkey. A farmer can sell a donkey to a slaughterhouse or a middleman for \$200 US while the average monthly income for farmers in Tanzania is \$48 US. Turkey and China import donkey meat or skins because their livestock populations are falling. In fact, in Tanzania, promotion of donkeys' breeding has taken off.²⁰

ZIMBABWE

Late February 2017

Gwanda, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

As it says on Bulawayo24.com, the 88-year-old had the shock of her life when she discovered that at least 2 of her 7 missing donkeys, gone for 2 weeks, had been stabbed, dismembered, and skinned. Mrs. Gogo Alice Dube runs a small active transport business in her area of Gwanda. Her well-maintained vehicles are donkeys.²¹

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

February 16, 2017

Valledupar, Department of César, Colombia

"They are all destroyed. There are no more donkeys here," lamented a citizen of the municipality. Since the beginning of February, 25 donkeys have been killed. The skins are removed, but the meat is left. The citizens are inconsolable. Donkeys are used for transport of milk and other local products.²²

March 23, 2017

Barranquilla, Department of Atlantico, Colombia

Seizure of 120 donkey skins divided into 15 packages. They were hidden in a seagoing fertilizer shipment. Their value is estimated at 60 million pesos, or about \$21,000 US (\$175 US per skin).²⁴

VENEZUELA

February 21, 2017

Maracaibo, State of Zulia, Venezuela. Border with Colombia.

A 45-year-old Colombian was arrested at a bus terminal with 2 donkey skins, each weighing 5 kg. He confessed to buying the skins for 50,000 bolivars (\$73 US) a piece in Maracaibo and reselling them for 250,000 bolivars (\$360 US) in Maicao in Colombia. The donkeys from the States of Zulia and Falcon bear the costs of this market. Donkey skins are suspected to be the new trick used by narco rings to hide drugs.²³

ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

Early January 2017

Afghanistan

- **Kunduz, Kunduz Province.** A bus full of donkey skins was intercepted.

- **Sholgara, Sholgara District, Balkh Province.** The men had been selling donkey meat for a "long time".

The Afghan army garrisons were supplied with donkey meat, which arrived on donkey back.

Donkey bombs attacks are not rare in the country. The donkeys are carrying high explosive charges in their burdens that are detonated near the designated targets.²⁵



INDIA

January 2017

Mahajan, State of Rajasthan, India

50 complaints filed for the theft of donkeys. A first in this State.²⁶

UZBEKISTAN

January 24, 2017

Samarkand District, Samarkand Province, Uzbekistan

Sentencing of 5 people to a fine for the massacre of donkeys. After having cut them up, they threw the remains in a ravine. The skins were destined for exportation.²⁷



PAKISTAN

January 19, 2017

Pendjab Province, Pakistan

- **Sialkot District.** 39 donkeys were stolen and massacred for their skins. A number of farmers have demonstrated against the rise in donkey theft and for more severe sanctions. They are financially dependent on their animals.

- **Khanewal.** Theft and slaughter of 10 donkeys, the carcasses were found near the cemetery. Before the temporary exportation prohibition in September 2015, Pakistan exported over 141,000 donkey skins in 4 years, mainly to China. In 2010, its exportation was practically nonexistent.²⁸

February 1, 2017

Pasrur, Sialkot District and Mandu Bahauddin, Mandi Bahauddin District, Punjab Province, Pakistan

Theft and slaughter of 37 donkeys. This is not the first, 500 donkeys have been stolen and killed over the course of the last 2 years in the districts of Sialkot, Dalka, Sambrial, and Pasrur. No one has been apprehended.²⁹

GANG

March 16, 2017

Sialkot District, Punjab Province, Pakistan

Arrest of 12 people linked to the theft of donkeys. They confessed to having killed 90. They sold the skins for 5000 Pakistani rupees (\$47 US) each to a gang based in Lahore that exported them to China, Taiwan, Thailand, and Viet Nam for 20,000 Pakistani rupees (\$181 US) each.³⁰

TADJIKISTAN

January 2017

Tajikistan

Tajikistan has more than 186,000 donkeys. The price of a donkey recently quadrupled, going from 100 somonis (\$12 US) to 400 (\$50.77 US). In 2016, the government had refused Chinese and Russian business propositions to implement a donkey meat factory in their territory. China is desperately trying to increase its stocks in donkey skins. It is already importing them in huge quantities from the African continent. In the 1990s, China had 11 million donkeys, compared to the 6 million today. The donkey Chinese population falls by 300,000 per year.³¹



Advertising in "Les Merveilles du Monde", 1930

Sources

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°16 : January 2017, Tajikistan, chapter Donkeys, reference 31.

Institutions

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Non Governmental Organizations

African Conservation Foundation, ANCE Togo, Animals Lebanon, Animal Rights Watch, Annamiticus, Association Al Lark, Australian Rhino Project, Bhejane Trust, Big Life Foundation, Bornfree Foundation, Care for Wild Africa, Catalogue of Life (Species 2000 ITIS), Centre Athenas, Centre for Orangutan Protection, China Cetacean Alliance, Commission de protection des eaux, du patrimoine, de l'environnement, du sous-sol et des chiroptères (CPEPESC - France), Conservation Justice, Dauphin Libre (Belgique), The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, EAGLE Network, Earth Island Institute, Education for Nature Viet Nam (ENV), Elephant Aware Masai Mara, Elephant Action League, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Ferus, Fondation Franz Weber, Freeland Foundation, Friends of Maasai Mara, Game Rangers International -Elephant Orphanage Project, Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP-UNEP), Hands Off Our Elephants, Hong Kong for Elephants, Hotpinkdolphins, International Animal Rescue (IAR), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Iran Environment Wildlife Watch, Kenyans United Against Poaching, Laos Wildlife Rescue Center, Last Great Ape organization (LAGA), Legalità Organizzata (Italie), Limbe Wildlife Centre, Limpopo Rhino Security Group NPO, Lion Aid, Local Ocean Trust - Watamu Turtle Watch, Lwiro Primates, Mara Elephant Project-Escape Foundation, Mara Triangle, Marine Connection, Matusadona Anti Poaching Project, Neotropical Primate Conservation, Olarro Conservancy, Outraged SA Citizens Against Poaching, Painted Dog Protection Initiative (PDPI), Pams Foundation Tanzania, Pet e Dintorni, Peta, Pilanesberg National Park & Wildlife Trust, Profauna, Project Rhino KZN, Provet Wildlife Services, Pro Wildlife, Robin des Bois, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Save The Elephants, Save the Tiger, Save the Rhino Trust Namibia, Save Viet Nam's Wildlife, SA Rural Security, Saving The Survivors, Scorpion, Sea Around Us, Searching for Bonobo in Congo, Sea Shepherd, Shark Angels, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), SOS Elephants (Tchad), Southern African Fight for Rhinos, Southern Cardamom Forest Protection Program (SCFPP - Cambodia), Species Survival Network, Stop Illegal Fishing, Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Tikki Hywood Trust, Togo Application de la Loi sur la Faune et la Flore (TALFF Enforcement), Turtle Survival Alliance, TRAFFIC, Uganda Carnivore Program, Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature (UICN), Walk With Rangers, Wildlife Alliance, Wildlife At Risk (WAR), Wara Conservation Project, Whales and dolphins Conservation, Wildleaks, Wildlife Center of Texas, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Crime Hotline Cambodia, Wildlife Direct, Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand, Wildlife Trust of India, Wild Vet, Wolf Awareness, Wildlife Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Yankari, Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force.

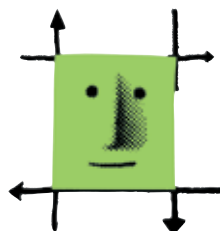
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