

ROBIN DES BOIS

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

**Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling**

n°17 / Events from the 1<sup>st</sup> April to the 30 of June 2017

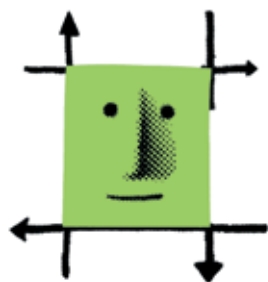
Published on July 31, 2017

Original version in French

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ROBIN DES BOIS

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

Carried out by Robin des Bois (Robin Hood)  
with the support of :



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## Previous issues

**n°16 / 1<sup>st</sup> January - 31<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

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## CITES APPENDICES

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

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

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

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



#### Judgment and sanction

Condemnation, acquittal, fine...



#### Human death

Guard, ranger, policeman, poacher... by firearm or other means.



#### Poisoning

By chemicals, pesticides and medicines: cyanide, Carbofuran, Diclofenac, M99 ...



#### Trapping

Poaching by jaw trap, snare ...



#### Full moon

Moonlight poaching

## ON<sup>the</sup> TRAIL n°17

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## Seahorses

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

### AMERICA

#### MEXICO

**April 17, 2017**

**Mexico city, Mexico**

Seizure in the Primera logistics area of 2 packages departing for China containing 16,000 dried seahorses, 3 totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) and other acoupas' swim bladders. The two parcels came from Mazatlán, State of Sinaloa, on the Pacific coast.<sup>1</sup>

### EUROPE

#### BELGIUM

**April 20 and June 8, 2017**

**Brussels, Belgium**

Three Chinese traffickers were sentenced by the correctional court in Brussels to 15 months in prison, half of which as a suspended jail sentence, for having attempted on April 20<sup>th</sup> to fraudulently pass through the Brussels Zaventem airport with a cargo of 2063 seahorses, an ivory bracelet and a dragon carved in ivory. The three men, aged 30, 48, and 52, came from Freetown, Sierra Leone and were in transit to Beijing. A sum of \$6350 US was found on them, also taken by the court who considered it a profit from illegal commerce.<sup>2</sup>



## Corals

"On the subject of corals, he had a bizarre personal theory. In his view, they were, as we said, sea creatures who, through a sort of judicious humility, pass for trees or plants so as to not be attacked or devoured by sharks." Joseph Roth (1894-1939). *Leviathan*. Sillage Editions, 1991.



### ASIA

#### CHINA

**April 21, 2017**

**Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province, China**

According to customs, during a crew changeover, there was a seizure of 5.6 kg of jewelry made from a coral species protected by CITES.<sup>1</sup>

## Abalones, Queen Conches, Horse's Hoof Clams and Trochus

Continuing sustained massive traffic between South Africa and China. A morgue and fake cargoes of plastic pellets testify of the creativity and nerve of the contraband industry. Penal and financial sanctions are heavy. The seizures value exceeds one million US\$. Sniffer dogs do their job.

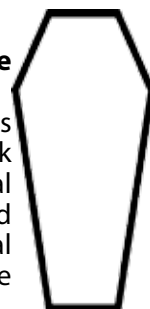
### AFRICA

#### SOUTH AFRICA

**May 18, 2017**

**Philippi, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

A 42-year-old man whose identity was not revealed was unloading a truck and filling the cold rooms of a funeral home with 260 bags of 20 kg filled with abalones (*Haliotis* spp.). The total value is R7.8 million (\$ 590,000 US). The truck is said to be stolen.<sup>1</sup>



#### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**May 30, 2017**

**Khayelitsha, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

**The Abalone Gang**

The Krugers, father and son, and Abri Felipe Bucchianeri were sentenced to 38 years in prison with a mandatory term of 18 to 23 years. Sentencing of Busonbenkosi Matera to 13 years in prison with a mandatory term of 10 years. Three Chinese accomplices are already serving a 3-year prison term. The Virdon Trading Company, the exporter, was fined 400,000 rands (\$30,400 US). All were found guilty of swindling, fraud, contraband, money laundering, and the capture, processing, and exportation of an endangered species.

Close to 100,000 abalones (*Haliotis* spp.) were seized from clandestine facilities. Fiscal services estimate the value of the seizure at 20 million rands (\$ 1,521,000 US).

A few days after the seizure, 2 containers, officially labeled as containing "plastic pellets", were called back while heading to Hong Kong full with abalones. The maritime company had received orders to retrieve the shipment of 3 containers in the Durban port. One container was "lost" en route. Probably not lost for everyone.

Hawks spokesman Captain Lloyd Ramovha said the sentencing was a boost to the unit's endeavors to get rid of syndicates that continue to plunder the country's precious living marine resources.<sup>2</sup>



**May 31, 2017**

**Summerstrand, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, South Africa**

Seizure of 500 abalones (*Haliotis* spp.) and diving gear. Three arrests.<sup>3</sup>



**June 5, 2017**

**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

"Blue," with one brown eye and one blue eye, is the abalone specialist (*Haliotis* spp.). Thanks to her, 5 new traffickers have been uncovered.<sup>4</sup>



**June 18, 2017**

**Beaufort West, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

In the early morning, the police intercepted a 5-ton truck filled with abalones (*Haliotis* spp.), totaling 20,000 dried specimens and 155 bags of frozen abalones. The 2 occupants of the truck, aged 37 and 33, were arrested and should be sued soon.<sup>5</sup>

**AMERICA**

**FRANCE**

**May 2017**

**Off Pointe-Noire, Department of Guadeloupe, France**

Seizure by the agents of the National Park of Guadeloupe and the maritime customs of Basse-Terre of 50 kg of giant conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) better known as queen conch or lambis.<sup>6</sup>

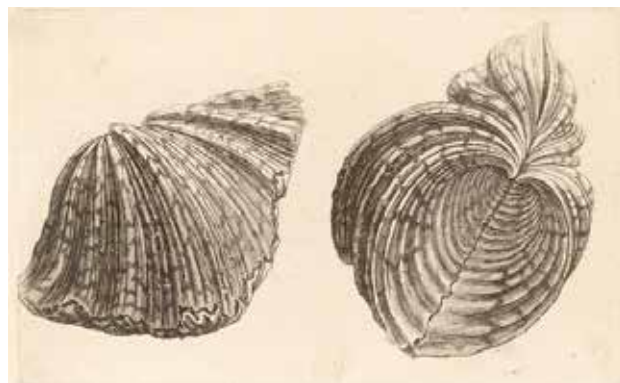
**ASIA**

**CHINA**

**June 10 2017**

**Province of Jiangsu, China**

While controlling the crew corridor of the airport, Customs seize the shell of a horse's hoof clam (*Hippopus hippopus*, Appendix II). The species is endemic to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. It owes its Latin name to the byssus in the form of a horseshoe with which it clings to sandy bottoms. It is sought after on national and international markets for food and crafts.<sup>7</sup>



**OCEANIA**

**AUSTRALIA**

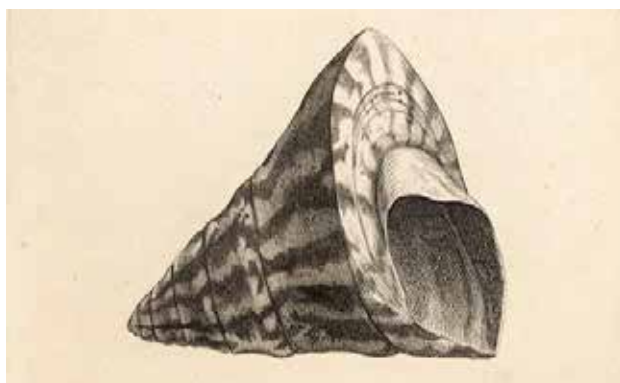
**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**April 27, 2017**

**Near Browse Island, Australia, Timor Sea**

280 nautical miles from Broome and near Browse Island, a large load of trochus shell (*Trochus* spp.) was seized from 6 fishermen aboard an Indonesian boat in very poor condition.

The men were transported on the patrol boat, *Bathurst*, but their boat was too antiquated to be towed and was sunk without decontamination. In Darwin, the captain was immediately issued a fine of 6,000 Australian dollar (\$4479 US), 3 of the fishermen fines of 2000 AU\$ and 2 repeat offenders were sentenced to prison along with fines of 3500 AU\$.<sup>8</sup>





# Sea Cucumbers

The rush on sea cucumbers is spreading across Europe. After Spain, it is now Sardinia and Italy. Traditional poaching spots in southern India, northern Sri Lanka, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Mexican-US border resist the vigilance of customs and maritime patrols. \$ 300 US per pound on the Chinese market.

Class Holothuroidea. *Isostichopus fuscus* is listed under CITES Appendix III in Ecuador.

See also "A Sea Cucumber Ending" in "On the Trail" n°4, p.107.

## AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 17, 2017

**San Diego, California, United States Of America**

The price of sea cucumbers continues to rise. They are more and more rare and sought after. They are not protected by CITES. They are priced at \$ 300 US per pound in China and Hong Kong.

The Mayorquins, father and son, have tapped into the market. Between 2010 and 2012, they admit having bought \$ 13 million US worth of poached sea cucumbers near the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, smuggling them onto Asian markets and reselling them for \$ 17.5 million US.

Ramon Torres Mayorquin and his son David could count on the connivance and the corruption of Mexican government officials. Bribes surpassed \$ 30,000 US for large shipments.<sup>1</sup>

Sea Cucumbers and Mexican-American trafficking, see "On the Trail" n°7 p. 3 and n°9, p.3.

### MEXICO

April 23, 2017

**Tijuana, State of Baja California, Mexico**

Seizure of 15,764 sea cucumbers of the species *Isostichopus fuscus*. They were about to be exported to the United States without a certificate of origin.<sup>2</sup>

April 26 2017

**Route between Sonoyta and San Luis Rio Colorado, State of Sonora, Mexico**

Seizure of 1540 processed sea cucumbers in a van. Obviously the vehicle, whose driver and passenger were of Chinese origin, sought to cross the border with the United States. The Mexican press recalls that sea cucumbers are useful seabed plowmen and produce the nitrogen, phosphorus and oxygen essential for other benthic communities.<sup>3</sup>

April 28, 2017

**Guaymas, State of Sonora, Mexico**

The municipal police seized two buckets full of sea cucumbers in the trunk of a taxi. The car was heading for the delphinarium.<sup>4</sup>



May 13, 2017

**Progreso, Yucatan State, Mexico**

Seizure of 800 kg of sea cucumbers near the harbour.<sup>5</sup>

May 18, 2017

**Celestun, Yucatan State, Mexico**

15,000 pesos (840 US \$) for the police silence. The bribe attempt did not work out. The pick-up truck stopped in the port area was loaded with 150 kg of sea cucumbers. Two arrests.<sup>6</sup>

May 22, 2017

**Dzilam de Bravo, Yucatan State, Mexico**

Five tons! This is the biggest seizure since the beginning of the year. It took place in a frozen food company. The prosecutor recalls that the species *Isostichopus fucus* is listed on Appendix III of CITES and that international trade is subject to restrictions. In addition, national regulations place sea cucumbers under special protection. Illegal capture and trafficking are punishable by 1 to 9 years in prison.<sup>7</sup>

June 15, 2017

**Isla Partida, State of Baja California, Mexico**

Seizure of 256 sea cucumbers from the species *Isostichopus fuscus*, they were found in 2 containers in a clandestine camp in the wildlife protected area of the "Valle de los Cirios ". The seizure was destroyed.<sup>8</sup>



**June 23, 2017**

**Campeche City, State of Campeche, Mexico**

Seizure of 212 kg of sea cucumbers in a Toyota Hiace.<sup>9</sup>

ASIA

**CHINA**

**April 20, 2017**

**Weihai, Shandong Province, China**

Theft during the night of 9 kg of sea cucumbers from a fish tank. Three people taken into custody.<sup>10</sup>

**INDIA**

**June 19, 2017**

**Sambai, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Maritime police seized at dawn about 200 kg of sea cucumbers on board a truck. The driver attempted to loose the patrol but was caught up with. He had got the animals from fishermen in the Thondi and Thirupalaikudi ports. A. Mohamed Nahim, 23 years old, intended to boil them, dry them, then offer them to his contacts. He was brought before justice and set in custody. Forest personnel destroyed the seized sea cucumbers on court order.<sup>11</sup>

**MALAYSIA**

**April 23, 2017**

**Malaysian Exclusive Economic Zone, South China Sea**

135 kg were discovered on a fishing boat boarded by the Malaysian coast guard after an hour-long pursuit. The boat had been spotted 45 nautical miles from the Kuala Kemaman port and 10 nautical miles from Tenggol Island, but it had tried to escape. According to the Lieutenant-Commander Mohd Marmizi Mohd Noor, maritime director of the Kemaman customs, the fishermen used a special net and crates to capture the cucumbers. For him, this type of illegal fishing could have a serious impact on the coral: "Many fishermen now turned to catching sea cucumbers instead of fish as they fetch a higher price in the market, RM 120 [\$ 27 US] per kilo." "Our checks revealed that the boat was only used to catch sea cucumbers, indicating that they could have been doing this for some time," he said. Sea cucumbers are protected on the East coast of Malaysia. The captain and 7 crew members have been jailed and the boat seized.<sup>12</sup>

**SRI LANKA**

**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Off the Mannar Coast, Northern Province, Sri Lanka**

Within national waters, an Indian fishing boat from Tamil Nadu was boarded; 5 men were on board, "poachers engaging in illegal activities". Maritime police are questioning them.<sup>13</sup>



**May 2 and 5, 2017**

**Trinquemalay, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka**



In the theppan, a traditional boat, diving equipment, 4 men and 57 sea cucumbers.

In the North, 7 fishermen were caught red-handed, blast fishing.<sup>14</sup>



**April 23, 25, 26 and May 7, 2017**

**Point Pedro, Northern Province, Sri Lanka**

There was 6 of them in the boat, with diving masks, flippers, oxygen tanks, diving torches and 280 sea cucumbers.

Fishermen in Sri Lanka are refractory.



In the East, a sea patrol found again 6 of them blast fishing.

In early April, the India patroller *Vaibhav* caught the Sri Lankan trawler *Kavisha Putha-III* fishing in Indian waters. The 7 fishermen spent 15 days in jail in Chennai. They were sent back to their home country on their ship, escorted by the Indian coast guard vessel *Adesh*, then by the Sri Lankan coast guard vessel *Edithara-II*.

Three wallams, traditional boats, were also boarded and revealed banned nets and 111 kg of undersize fish. The 9 fishermen were questioned by maritime police.<sup>15</sup>

## EUROPE

### ITALY

**April 22, 2017**

#### **Golfo Aranci, Sardinia, Italy**

Following a tip from residents in Golfo Aranci, police arrested a Chinese citizen living in Nuoro, identified by the initials H.X., who was in possession of 150 kg of Holothurians (sea cucumbers) who had been illegally caught. They were set free by the deputy prosecutor in Tiempo. 5000 sea cucumbers were already seized by the police in a clandestine processing shop. Traffic feeds Chinese restaurants on the island. It seems that in this particular case cucumbers are fished in the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>16</sup>

**June 2017**

### Italy

#### **The sea cucumber trend spreads in Europe!**

Seizure of 35 kg of dried sea cucumber in the luggage of an Albanian passenger disembarking from a car ferry in Bari coming from Durrës. They had been ordered by a Chinese restaurant in Riccione. In November, 235 kg of dried cucumbers had been seized in Genoa at the landing of a ferry from Tangier. The cargo would have fled to Tangier from China.<sup>17</sup>

## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

#### **REPEATED OFFENSE**

**April 10, 2017**

#### **Saumarez reef, Coral Sea, Australia**

The Vietnamese "blue boat" (see "On the Trail" n° 16 p. 6) had been located since April 6. It was boarded on the April 10. On board, there was a large catch of sea cucumbers. The crew were in full action, fishing near the Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve. After having been re-routed to Darwin Island, the ship was destroyed. The captain and 13 crewmembers were sentenced to suspended prison terms ranging from 2 to 4 months. A repeat offender was sentenced to 5 months in jail.<sup>18</sup>



## Fishes

#### **Three fish attract attention.**

- For the first time in our survey since 2013, a traffic of arapaïmas, the large fish of the Amazon basin, is reported between Brazil and Peru.
- In Mexico, the totoabeiros are prosperous. The totoaba swim bladders sell up to \$ 60,000 US per kilo on the Chinese market.
- European glass eels fly to Asia by millions, as evidenced by several seizures at European and Chinese airports.

## AFRICA

### GUINEA

**Beginning of April 2017**

#### **Guinea**

Seizure of shark fins, hammerhead shark carcasses (Family Sphyrnidae, *Sphyrna lewini*, *Sphyrna mokarran* and *Sphyrna zygaena* from Appendix II) and Manta Rays (*Manta* spp., Appendix II) during the inspection of 12 ships. The owners of 2 Chinese fishing boats, the *Lian Run 34* and the *Lian Run 47* found to have the shark fins on board, were condemned to fines of \$ 280,000 US each. The owner of the *Fu Yuan Yu 379*, using non-compliant nets and fishing prohibited species was condemned to a fine of \$ 390,000 US.<sup>1</sup>



*Lian Run 34*

### SENEGAL

**June 9, 2017**

#### **Offshore of the Casamance Region, Senegal**

Patrols boarded and inspected 7 Chinese trawlers in the act of illegal fishing. The crews were from China, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau.<sup>2</sup>

### SIERRA LEONE

**April 20, 2017**

#### **Freetown, Western Region, Sierra Leone**

Two boardings by Greenpeace and Sierra Leone's fisheries inspectors:

- A Korean boat with a Chinese and Korean command and West African sailors, the *Cona*, 21 m long, 21 crew members, a real social and housing hell with illegal gillnets aboard.



- A Chinese ship, the *Fu Hai Yu 1111*, with 70 bags of shark carcasses in the cold room. The identity papers of the crews were confiscated and the 2 ships were diverted to Freetown for complete inspection.<sup>3</sup>



Cona

## TUNISIA

**June 17, 2017**

**Mahdia, Mahdia Governorate, Tunisia**

Tunisia continues to respect its commitments made to ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas). Following a court ruling, 6 tons of Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), over-quota and related to acts of sea pillaging, were destroyed. The fish were seized in the Mahdia harbor. The authorities' independence from public opinion deserves recognition. In Al Hoceima in Morocco, the destruction of swordfish, another species regulated by ICCAT, sparked riots and social troubles. The tunny had been caught in violation of the quotas issued by ICCAT for Morocco.<sup>4</sup>

## AMERICA

## BRAZIL

**April 11, 2017**

**Port of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil**

Seizure of 1.5 tons of pirarucu (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix I). A woman who was aboard the boat is heard by the police.<sup>5</sup>



© PM

**May 2, 2017**

**Port of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil**

New seizure of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) in prohibited fishing time zone. Three tons. Arrest on the boat of 2 men. The fish were donated to charities.<sup>6</sup>



© PM

## OPERATION POSEIDON

**Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil**

**May 23, 2017**

Seizure of aquariums, of plastic bags and crates, basins, nets, oxygen tanks, diving gear and other equipment to capture decorative fish and make them survive. Seizure of weapons, foreign currencies, laptops and cell phones.

The fish were captured in the Xingu, a tributary of the Amazon, further regrouped in Altamira. The gang has a team in Itaituba and Santarem. Ocellate river stingray (*Potamotrygon motoro*) are among the targeted species.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> DIP (Distrito Integrado de Policia) carried out 10 arrests in Manaus, Altamira and Itaituba. The specimens were bought from "independent" poachers for 5 to 10 real (1,5 to 3 US\$) and sold for 1000 real (300 US\$) to international brokers (see "On the Trail" n°5 p. 111).<sup>7</sup>



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**June 2, 2017**

**Cristalândia, State of Tocantins, Brazil**

Seizure by night of 95 kg of giant arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and Cichlals. Fine of 3000 real (\$ 920 US).<sup>8</sup>



## OPERATION SENTINELA

June 18, 2017

### Tabatinga, Amazonas State, Brazil

Two tons of giant arapaimas fillets (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) were seized on Solimões river, at the border lines between Brazil, Peru, and Colombia. According to the police the stock had to be cleared in the Peruvian market. The seizure was given to the parish of Tabatinga.<sup>10</sup>

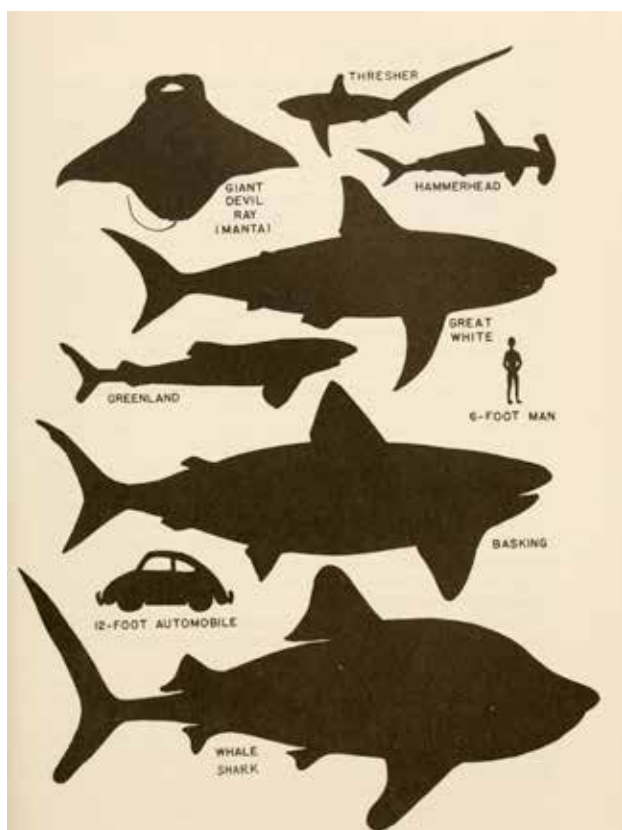


## CANADA

April 27, 2017

### Toronto, Province of Ontario, Canada

Canada is making small steps towards a ban on shark fin imports. Following 17 other cities, the Toronto City council voted 38 to 4 in favor of a motion in support of the federal law instigated by the senator Michael MacDonald. Chinese businesses are against this project. They sell a lot of shark fin soup.<sup>11</sup>



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 5, 2017

### Norfolk, Virginia, United States of America

Court appearance for Tommy Water Zhou, accused of trafficking American glass eels (*Anguilla rostrata*). Tommy "Water" Zhou pleaded guilty to using his seafood distribution company, Wilson Group Sea Trading LLC, to engage in illegal trafficking of glass eels since 2013. Covered by strict glass eel marketing authorization in Maine, he supplied himself in eels in Virginia where glass eel fishing is illegal, and distributed them outside of Maine, in the State of New York, where Zhou's company is very active. The trial in July will reveal more.<sup>12</sup>

## OPERATION BROKEN GLASS

April 14, 2017

### Norfolk, Virginia, United States of America

Richard Austin pleaded guilty. As a fisherman in Maine, he extended his span of action to Virginia and Massachusetts. Between 2013 and 2015, his glass eel trafficking was worth \$ 190,000 US. He sold the glass eels (*Anguilla rostrata*) to wholesalers in Illinois and in the State of New York, who in turn exported them to Asia.

Glass eel catches are authorized in Maine and South Carolina. Nowhere else.

So far, Broken Glass has led to the prosecution of 12 people, whose cumulative trafficking amounted to nearly \$ 3 million US. No fewer than 20 institutions are involved in the operation.<sup>13</sup>

## MEXICO

April 3, 2017

### San Felipe, State of Baja California, Mexico

PROFEPA (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) and SEMAR (Secretaría de Marina) unfastened 20 dead totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) entangled in a pirate net laid in an area where any gill net is prohibited. This prohibition meets an emergency of 30 to 50 years, the rescue of the vaquitas (*Phocoena sinus*, Appendix I). Failing to save the vaquitas, there is still time to avoid the extinction of the totoabas whose swim bladders are appreciated and bought higher than caviar by the Asian communities living in the United States or fraudulently exported to Asia.<sup>15</sup>





**April 5, 2017**

**Mexico city, Mexico**

Seizure at the bus station north of the city of several suspect coffee bags spotted by the canine brigade. They contained shark fins. Two arrests.<sup>16</sup>



**April 13, 2017**

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

Removal in the Sea of Cortez of 25 km of nets in the prohibited fishing zone. Four totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) in decomposition were entangled in the mesh. According to El Universal, since the beginning of 2016, 1500 meters of nets

have been removed from the vaquitas sanctuary, where sharks, loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I), a whale and several dolphins were entangled.<sup>17</sup>

**April 19, 2017**

**Puerto Mexicali San Felipe, Sea of Cortez, Baja California, Mexico**

The totoabeiros have struck again. The *Jade* was caught fishing in the safeguard area of vaquitas. The *Jade* and 7 totoaba were seized, the police questioned the 4 fishermen. At the same time, Puerto Mexicali inhabitants said to the press and to federal authorities that fishermen and police are getting along. It interferes with the government and NGO's actions.<sup>18</sup>

**June 4, 2017**

**Mexico City, Federal District, Mexico**

Nineteen kilos of Sciaenidae swim bladders and 9 kg of totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) were seized in the bus terminal of Del Norte. The traveller came from Mazatlán.<sup>19</sup>

See also page 1, April 17, 2017, Mexico (ref. 1)

## Requiem for the Vaquitas

The smallest marine mammal in the world is dying out even though no one knows its reproductive and lactating patterns accurately. The vaquitas (*Phocoena sinus*, Appendix I) with grey back and white belly have the misfortune to be faithful, too faithful to the Sea of Cortez and to have as sea companions totoabas also called acupas of Macdonald (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I), which because of a Chinese fad are sought after by poachers and selling more and more expensive as they disappear. The totoaba's swim bladder is a buoyancy regulator for the fish. For charlatans, it is a remedy for fertility, blood and dermatological problems.

The vaquitas and totoabas are the 2 martyrs of the Sea of Cortez. Vaquitas are caught in the gillnets of fishermen shunning all forms of prohibition or fishing restriction for the totoabas fishing and helped by local complicities. The totoaberos will have the skin of the vaquitas.



They were 600 vaquitas 20 years ago, they are around 30 today.

The Mexican government and the association of zoos and aquariums of the United States of America announce that they intend to invest as early as October 3 million US\$ for a last chance plan. It begins with the capture of a few individuals, males and females, continues with breeding in a bay and end with repopulation in the species's unique natural environment.

It is striking to see the human race developing treasures of ingenuity and vanity to save a species after taking it to extinction when inflicting beforehand 20 years imprisonment and seizure of all possessions to the totoaba mafia could have avoided the tragedy.<sup>14</sup>



## CHINA

**April 10, 2017****Pudong International Airport, Shanghai, China**

Seizure of 68 bags of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) "coming from the European Atlantic coast".<sup>21</sup>

**April 30, 2017****Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China**

Seizure of 6 plastic bags full of water containing 200 kg of European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), i.e. millions of glass eels. A European glass eel weighs only a few grams.<sup>22</sup>



## INDONESIA

**April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017****Indonesia**

81 illegal fishing boats destroyed by explosives.



Since 2014, 317 ships have been scuttled. The latest operations took place in 12 different places. All the ships that were sunk had been caught in the act of non-authorized fishing in Indonesian waters. The Minister of maritime affairs and fishing attended the fireworks in Ambon, a small island with a surface area of 775 km<sup>2</sup>, situated in the Maluku Islands. She estimates that each year the country loses the equivalent of \$ 20 million US because of the pillage of marine resources in the country's Exclusive Economic Zone.

The repression of illegal fishing in the south Chinese

Sea contributes to a general climate of territorial tension between Viet Nam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan, and the Republic of China. Indonesia got involved in this quarrel over maritime boundaries a year ago, when Beijing announced that the Natunas islands, which are in the Indonesian EEZ, were part of "traditional Chinese fishing grounds."

The crews are said to be sent back thanks to the intervention of the consulates and the shipowners or their representatives who pay for their repatriation. The fishing boats that were captured and destroyed were, in descending order, Vietnamese, Filipino, Malaysian, and Chinese. Indonesia should take advantage of this opportunity to open non-polluting wreck shipyards.<sup>23</sup>

**April 25, 2017****Bali Strait, Indonesia**

The Bali maritime police boarded a fishing boat in the Indonesian waters between Java and Bali. On the vessel, they found a net containing 300 kg of dead sharks, mainly young specimens belonging to various species. Shark oil and fishing poles were also seized.

The crew was unable to present fishing permits, nor even a boat license. The ship had sailed from the Muncar Harbor, on the East coast of Java, and was heading towards Kedonganan, on the South-West coast of Bali. It was re-routed to Benoa Harbor, in Bali, where the captain and the 5 crew members were charged.<sup>24</sup>

## JAPAN

**June 2017****Japan**

The Fishing Agency's report is purely statistical. The permitted global capture of glass eels in the 24 prefectures of the country, between November 2016 and April 2017 was 8.4 tons. The stock of glass eels in farms was 19.5 tons, and 4.1 tons were imported from Hong Kong. The origin of 7 tons is unknown. Two hypotheses have been proposed to explain this major surplus that corresponds to nearly half of the stock: illegal capture in Japanese Waters or contraband practices from Taiwan. Why not contraband from the EU? The European networks are well organized. There was no genetic screening in the Japanese fisheries or sorting between *Anguilla japonica* and the European *Anguilla anguilla*. *Anguilla japonica* is not listed under CITES, whereas *Anguilla anguilla* appears in Appendix II.<sup>25</sup>

## EUROPE

### FRANCE

**May 16, 2017**

#### **Off the coast of Fos-sur-Mer, France**

The Marseille maritime State patrol made a good catch: two boaters from Provence who were on board in illegal possession of a Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) weighing 26.8 kg and a dentex (*Dentex dentex*) weighing 5.4 kg. They were fishing outside of the legal fishing season and did not have proper licence to fish for bluefin tuna, and the dentex was not marked according to regulations: the lower part of the tail fin must be cut with scissors as soon as it is taken from the water. The fish and fishing materials of considerable value (6 fishing rods and 6 reels estimated at nearly 4000€, or \$ 4560 US) were taken. Two reports have been drawn and legal proceedings may be taken against the two men.<sup>26</sup>

**May 31, 2017**

#### **Port of Saint-Mandrier-sur-Mer, Var Department, France**

The case has been referred to the public prosecutor. The Mediterranean spearfish (*Tetrapturus belone*) is one of the fish species that has the attention of the ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tunas). Till now there aren't any quotas for this species. It is forbidden to use a spear gun aboard the fishing boats.<sup>27</sup>

### NETHERLANDS

#### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**April 17, 2017**

#### **Schiphol International Airport, Amsterdam, Netherlands**

A Chinese couple was intercepted with 6 suitcases containing 72 kg of live European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, appendix II) as they were about to board a flight to China. The fish were packaged in 36 plastic bags filled with water. According to the Dutch food and consumer product safety authority (NVWA), this batch of glass eels could have been sold in China for about 115.000 € (\$ 123,500 US), i.e. nearly 1600 € (about \$ 1700 US) per kilo.<sup>28</sup>



## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

#### **REPEATED OFFENSE**

**May 24, 2017**

#### **Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia**

An Indonesian boat captain was fined 15,000 Australian dollar (\$ 11,200 US). He was a repeat offender. A second member of the crew was fined 3,000 A (\$2240 US). On March 1, air patrol spotted the boat with sharks on the bridge (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 11).<sup>29</sup>



## Marine Mammals

**Big concern about marine mammals. Because of illegal fishing of totoabas, the vaquitas will soon belong to History books. Japan passed a new pro-whaling law planning the construction of a new factory ship. «If they do that, we'll suffer for 40 more years» worries Charlotte Nithart, "On the Trail" chief editor. The killing of Taiji will diversify and French dolphinariums operators attack the Mrs. Segolène Royal's order before the State Council.**

## AMERICA

Vaquita cf. page 11.

### BRAZIL

**April-May 2017**

#### **Brazil**

Richard Rasmussen, broadcaster of the "Fantastico" TV program in Brazil focused on the wonders and dramas of wildlife gets a boomerang in the face. The documentary "A rivers below" premiered at the Tribeca festival in New York presents Rasmussen in an unfavorable light. Hurried by time and budget constraints, he would have paid fishermen to catch an Amazon dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis* Appendix II) to slice and use as a bait for piracatingas (*Calophysus macropterus*). The sacrificed dolphin whose exact origin is not known was in gestation, the fetus was also chopped up. All the faces on the scene of the Fantastico documentary are blurred.

Following this documentary broadcast in 2014, the Brazilian government suspended piracatingas fishing in the Amazon for 5 years, which put some local fishing communities in difficulty but is a good thing from a sanitary point of view since the flesh of the carnivorous piracatingas contains high levels of mercury.<sup>1</sup>

## CANADA

**May 15 and June 26, 2017**

### **Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada**

The City of Vancouver has decided to ban cetacean captivity. This ban includes dolphins that ground ashore. The decision directly affects the Stanley Park Aquarium that has a false killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*, Appendix II), and a Pacific white-sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*, Appendix II). In November 2016, a white whale and her calf (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II) died in the aquarium because of the violent effect of an unidentified toxin or poison. The director of the amusement park has decided to contest this decision through legal recourse even though one of his last residents, one 9-year-old harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*, Appendix II) has just died of lung disease.<sup>2</sup>

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**April 20, 2017**

### **Point Hope, State of Alaska, United States of America**

Four young men, including 2 brothers aged 21 and 27, were sentenced to 3 years on probation for having killed 24 walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) and cut off their tusks over the course of 2 separate expeditions (see "On the Trail" n°14 p.11). The culprits were also required to pay \$ 1000 US to support walrus conservation projects on Alaskan National Wildlife Refuges, to perform 500 hours of community work in Point Hope, publicly apologize to the Native population and to make 12 public presentations in Point Hope and other coastal villages on hunting ethics. They are also banned from walrus hunting for a year and, for as long as the probation lasts, to hunt only for the subsistence needs of the Point Hope elders. The facts date back to 2015.<sup>3</sup>



## SAINT LUCIA

**May 2017**

### **National Pigeon Park Island, Gros-Islet District, Saint Lucia**

Although it originally said yes, the government has stated that it is willing to review its position on a Mexican company's project to set up a dolphinarium on Pigeon Island, a strategic point for pirates and battles between the English and the French, which then became a whaling station between 1909 and 1952. An access road was built in 1972, turning the island into a peninsula. It was declared a national Park in 1979. The developers refuse to give any specific information on the dolphins' origin, species or number. The size of the aquarium tanks remains vague and no one knows if the dolphins will be used for their entire lifetime and if breeding will

be attempted, or whether they would be released after a certain amount of time in captivity.

Hostility to the project is growing, including from the tourism industry. Virgin Holidays and TripAdvisor have expressed their reservations. The Catholic Church is firmly against it. A building project for the colonization of the Maria Isles is even more controversial. This archipelago is a sanctuary for snakes, Monitor lizards and for sea turtles. If the project, sold under the name "Pearl of the Caribbean", was carried out, it would be a disaster for the environment.<sup>4</sup>

## ASIA

## CHINA

**April 24, 2017**

### **Zhuhai, Province of Guangdong, China**

The report published today by the Administration of Ocean and Fisheries of Guangdong province confirms that the animal butchered in the street in Zhuhai on March 30<sup>th</sup> was indeed a Chinese white dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*, Appendix I).



Three fishermen were arrested following publication on the social network Weibo of pictures showing them cutting up a dolphin and selling the pieces in small crates on the sidewalk. Arriving belatedly to the scene, police were only able to seize a few bones and some flesh. The meat was sold for 10 yuan (\$ 1.45 US) a pound, the leftovers had been eaten by the fishermen themselves. They claim they found the dolphin dead at sea and hauled it onto their ship. They may be telling the truth, but they will be prosecuted nevertheless because the purchase and sale of pieces of an endangered species are just as illegal as capturing a specimen. The Chinese white dolphin is nicknamed the "water panda" in China thus marking their particularly protected status.<sup>5</sup>



## JAPAN

**May 2017**

### **Taiji Bay, Region of Kansai, Japan**

The next dolphin drive and kill in Taiji Bay near Osaka will include 2 new species, rough-toothed dolphins (*Steno bredanensis*, Appendix II) and melon-headed whales (*Peponocephala electra*, Appendix II). The Japanese Fisheries Agency believes that the yearly takings by fishermen in the Wakayama and Okinawa districts will not endanger the species survival in the next 100 years. Melon-headed whales are not actually dolphins. They are similar to pilot whales. Little is yet known of their way of life. Chances of survival in captivity are unpredictable.

The Taiji killing is famous worldwide for the red waters in the bay. Meat is no longer the economic reason for this campaign in which dolphin herds are diverted into the bay between September and April. Dolphins and other odontocetes are selected by age, sex and species for marine amusement parks, mostly in China, bringing in a lot of money for the fishing cooperatives (See "On the Trail" n°16 p. 13).<sup>6</sup>



*Peponocephala electra*

**June - November 2017**

### **Japan / Western North Pacific**

1 – Issuance to the Association for the Community Based Whaling in Fukuoka by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of a special permit to catch from 2017 June 9 to November 30 off Abashiri in Hokkaido, Sea of Okhotsk 47 Minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I) and 80 Minke whales in the coastal waters of the Western North Pacific by means of 5 sampling ships *Koue Maru* n°8, *Taisho Maru* n°3, *Seiwa Maru*, *Katsu Maru* n°7 and *Sumitomo Maru* n°51 owned by Toba Hoge Ltd. The scientific purpose is to optimize the establishment of a sustainable catch limit for Minke whales in the coastal waters of Japan.

2 – Issuance to the Institute of Cetacean Research based in Tokyo by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of a special permit to catch 43 Minke whales and 134 Sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*, Appendix I) from 2017 June 15 to October 31 in the North Pacific by means of *Nisshin Maru*, *Yushin Maru*, *Yushin Maru* n°3 owned by Kyodo Senpaku Ltd and of a special permit to collect biopsy samples from gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*, Appendix I), right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*, Appendix I), blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*, Appendix I), fin whale, Sei whale, Bryde whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*, Annexe

I), Minke whale, humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*, Appendix I), sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), killer whale (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix II) and bowhead whale (*Balaena mysticetus*, Appendix I).

Lethal catch will be made by the means of explosive grenade harpoon. As a last resort, rifles may be used if necessary to shorten the agony of the targeted cetacean.

Sales periods of any byproducts from the research will not last more than one year from the first sale. At the end of the 12 months allowed, the sales licence could be renewed for a year. After selling all of the whaling meat, the balance sheet will be reported to the fisheries Agency with all necessary information such as whale species, number of animals, amount by species and sales period by species.

A new pro whaling law has just come to be approved by the Parliament. Its purpose is to strengthen the economical viability of fisheries through expanding the commercial whaling, assure the pluriannual financing of the scientific research on whales with public funds, plan the building of a new whaling factory ship to take the place of the *Nisshin Maru*, lift up the border controls of the pro whales activists and protect Japan from the anti whaling global public opinion.<sup>7</sup>

## SRI LANKA

**April 9, 2017**

### **Oluthuduwai, North Province, Sri Lanka**

Seizure of 82 kg of dugong meat (*Dugong dugon*, Appendix I) at Oluthuduwai by the North Central Naval Command. The 2 arrested traffickers were also in possession of three knives. They, along with the meat, were handed over to the Wildlife Department, which will pursue the investigation.<sup>8</sup>



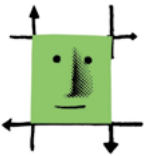
## EUROPE

### DENMARK

**May 22, 2017**

**Bøur Bay, Vágar Island, Faroe Islands, Denmark**  
Slaughter of 84 long-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala melas*, Appendix II) on Vágar Island.<sup>9</sup>

### FRANCE



#### Dolphins and Killer Whales

Press release, Mai 9, 2017

ROBIN DES BOIS

The order on May 3, 2017 setting the general guidelines and operating rules for establishments that present living specimens of cetaceans to the public is an important step in the process of closing dolphinariums, a 35-year-old battle. Robin des Bois will ensure that the future government strictly defends the application of this law cosigned by Madam Royal as Minister of the Environment and by the Minister of Agriculture.

Article 30 paragraph III of the new decree expressly demands that the managers of the establishment lodging cetaceans take all measures to prevent flooding of their establishments and its consequences on the animals. In the short run, the Antibes sea park is doomed to close. Antibes has been classified as being in a state of natural catastrophe 28 times since 1987 due to floods and mudslides. The sea park was repeatedly flooded. Preventive evacuation of all of the animals, and of the marine mammals in particular, before the waves of torrential flooding typical of the Mediterranean basin is unrealistic.

**July 2017: the dolphinariums challenged the order before the Council of State (French supreme administrative court).**

## OCEANIA

### FIJI

**May 29, 2017**

#### Fiji

One hundred forty eight teeth of sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), known in the archipelago as Tabua, were returned to the local authorities by the government of New Zealand. They had been seized for failing to produce CITES certifications. They are part of the cultural and social heritage of the Fiji Islands (see The Strong Currency of Sperm Whale Teeth, in "On the Trail" n°2, page 77).<sup>10</sup>

## Marine Turtles

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

## AFRICA

### COMOROS

**April 7, 2017**

#### Itsamia, Island of Moheli, Comoros

The beaches of Moheli, the smallest Island of the archipelago, harbours one of the largest populations of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I) in the world. Around the fishermen's village up to 3500 female turtles can be counted during the laying season. Mass laying, also called arribadas, also attract poachers. Founding of the Moheli Marine Park in 2001 was strongly supported by the population exasperated from finding rotting turtle carcasses piling up on the coast. The Park is managed by a partnership with the Association for Social and Economic development of Itsamia (ADSEI), which trains volunteers to be lookouts against turtle poaching in support of the eco-guards. A group of poachers was chased away. They left behind their boat where there were already 5 green turtles. One of the accomplices was arrested. They would have come from the neighbour Island of Anjouan, where turtle meat is still eaten despite it being forbidden in the Comoros. The inhabitants and eco-guards are worried: they note an increase in violence from the poachers who now don't hesitate to come armed and ready to shoot.<sup>1</sup>

### FRANCE

**June 24-25, 2017**

#### Mayotte Department, France

Volunteers from REMMAT (Réseau d'Echouage Mahorais de MAMmifères marins et de Tortues marines, see "On the Trail" n°9 p. 9), enrolled under the Sea Shepherd banner interrupted the poachers as they decapitated the marine turtles climbing on shore to lay. Four other turtle heads buried under stones were uncovered with the falling tide.<sup>2</sup>

## GAMBIA

**May 22, 2017**

### **Bolong Fenyo Reserve, Gunjur, Kombo South District, West Coast Division, Gambia Alert in Gunjur.**

The Bolong Fenyo Wildlife Reserve is in bad shape. In the early morning, the villagers found the water red stained or invaded by a reddish and toxic plankton. The crocodiles have gone away. Dead fish washing up on the beaches repulse tourists and drive fishermen to despair. For a year now, the last of the leatherback turtles that chose the beaches of Gunjur as their favorite egg laying site have also disappeared. Local environmentalists working as the GEPADG (Gunjur Environment Protection and Development Group) have denounced the Chinese Golden Lead Factory, a giant factory that transforms fish into fertilizer and flour. Several more or less authorized pipes spew their uncontrolled and poorly identified wastewater into lagoons and onto the beaches. Organization of the first protests is underway.<sup>3</sup>



## AMERICA

## COLOMBIA

**May 2, 2017**

### **Tuluá, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia**

Seizure of several hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) and loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I) shells and swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) in a commercial center.<sup>4</sup>

## CUBA

### **REPEATED OFFENSE**

**April 14, 2017**

### **Havana, Holguín, Cuba**

Fine of 2000 Cuban pesos, or \$ 81 US, for each of the 5 offenders caught selling fans made of hawksbill turtle shells.<sup>5</sup>



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Avril 2017**

### **Miami-Dade County, State of Florida, United States of America**

Angler and poultry vendor, John Hazzard, was already known for having posted pictures of himself on Instagram with turtles and alligators. Other photos show him with a loggerhead turtle in one hand and a hawksbill sea turtle in the other. A small alligator is exhibited inside an aquarium, in a private



swimming pool and on a table next to a Miller Lite beer bottle. Police with a search warrant finally got their hands on 2 marine turtle skulls and shells, found in his home.<sup>6</sup>

## MEXICO

**April 7, 2017**

### **Tecpan de Galeana, Guerrero, Mexico**

Seizure of about 700 marine turtle eggs and 261,000 pesos in cash, equal to \$ 15,000 US, in a white Nissan pick-up truck. Three men in the truck. The eggs were hidden in mango crates.<sup>7</sup>



**April 7, 2017**

### **El Migriño, State of Baja California Sur, Mexico**

The quad bikes harm the green sea turtles. Numerous witnesses have alerted the police. The quads travelled at high speed on the beaches during nesting season, without worrying about the turtles or their eggs buried in the sand.<sup>8 bis</sup>



**June 26, 2017**

### **Santa María Tonameca Beach, Oaxaca State, Mexico**

930 eggs of olive Ridley sea turtles seized. After checking the good condition of the eggs, and considering that they were not out of the sand more than 4 hours, the Profepa officers put them back in place.<sup>8</sup>

## PERU

**April 19, 2017**

### **Between Piura and Sullana, Piura Region, Peru**

Seizure of 29 young giant Galapagos tortoises (*Chelonoidis niger*, Appendix I) from Ecuador. They were wrapped up in tape in the baggage compartment of a bus on the road from Piura to Sullana. Two turtles died. The driver and the bus company are under investigation. It is suspected that the trade was destined for Europe. Adult giant Galapagos tortoises weigh between 200 and 400 kg.<sup>9</sup>



## SURINAME

**April 29, 2017**

**Galibi, Marowijne District, Suriname. French Guinea border**

32,000 leatherback turtle eggs in 64 bags on a boat. The nature Reserve is in the the Maroni river mouth which separates Suriname and French Guinea. Two men were arrested. A third jumped in the water and was not found in the dark of the night. He may have lost his life. He and his accomplices risk a fine of \$ 0.66 US per egg, totaling \$ 20,600 US.<sup>10</sup>

ASIA

## SRI LANKA

**April 19, 2017**

**Cod Bay, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka**

During inspection of a trawler anchored in Cod Bay harbour, the Sri Lankan coast guard found 13.2 kg of dried turtle meat. The meat and fishing gear were seized. Six suspects were arrested and turned over to the Assistant Fisheries Directorate in Trincomalee that will decide what legal action must be taken.<sup>11</sup>

## VIET NAM

**May 5, 2017**

**Phu Yen Province, Viet Nam**

Police raid at the home of a trafficker who had posted pictures on Facebook. A hawksbill turtle was saved.<sup>12</sup>

facebook

**May 18 and 23, 2017**

**Tien Giang and Kien Giang Provinces, Viet Nam**

-Release of a green sea turtle weighing 1.6 kg. It was posted on Facebook on sale for 2 million dong (\$ 88 US).<sup>13</sup>  
-Release into the ocean of several young green sea turtles freed from a restaurant while destined for the soup pot.<sup>14</sup>

facebook

**June 13, 2017**

**Ho-Chi-Minh-City, Viet Nam**

Pinned by ENV, a man was selling a green sea turtle on Facebook. He was taken in by the police at the Hoc Mon market, following a phony meeting set-up. For now, he is at the police station, with the turtle! She will be freed very soon.<sup>15</sup>

facebook

**End of June 2017**

**Vung Tau, Province of Ba Ria Vung Tau, Viet Nam**

A shop exhibited a turtle hung on the wall. The trophy was confiscated after a tip-off.<sup>16</sup>

## Various Marine Species

ASIA

## CHINA

**June 27, 2017**

**Nanmushan, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam.**

Seizure of 2 hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) and one ton of shark skins.<sup>1</sup>

EUROPE

## FRANCE

**Early May 2017**

**Lyon-Saint-Exupéry Airport, Rhône, France**

Seizure of 12 ornament sets from Solomon Islands in the suitcases of a passenger. The Kap Kap are composed of hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) or green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I) and giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II).



Used as a frontal ornament and not as a pendant, the Kap Kap sometimes exceeds 20 cm in diameter. The Kap Kap were used as a bargaining currency or as an offering to call for abundance of crops or fisheries. The patterns are never identical and can be inspired by the sun but also by birds.<sup>2</sup>



**June 2017**

**Hohhot, Inner Mongolia Region, China**

How did Magellanic penguins (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) arrive in the Wanda Plaza shopping center belonging to China's richest billionaire Wang Jianlin? They were exhibited and molested during the sales to attract customers and children. Hohhot is more than 20,000 km from the Straits of Magellan as the crow flies and penguins do not fly.



Cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p. 11

# Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

**Turtle turmoil in the world. In 3 months, April to June, "On the Trail" adds up the seizure of nearly 4,000 live individuals from about 20 different species, without speaking of tonnes of shells and a number of suitcases, crates and bags full up with tortoises in bulk. The most critical connection is between Madagascar and Asia. For traffickers, tortoises are stones. They are bandaged, tied up, taped, slipped in socks and pillowcases.**

## AFRICA

### GUINEA

**April 13, 2017**

**Conakry, Conakry Region, Guinea**

In March, Djibril Conté was caught red-handed, holding a bag filled with 40 tortoises (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 17). The tortoises were protected under national law and the international CITES Convention, with which Guinea is having some issues (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 96). Attentive to the general attorney's requests, the Mafanco First Instance Court sentenced Conté to 3 months in prison, a fine of 90,000 Guinean Francs (\$ 10 US) and 3 million Guinean Francs in damages (\$ 320 US).<sup>1</sup>



### MADAGASCAR

**April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Mamory Ivato Airport, Tananarive, Madagascar**

While searching packages intended for Hong-Kong, airport customs stumbled on 32 turtles of undetermined species wrapped in carbon paper, supposedly to avoid x-ray detection, and hidden among table placemats. There have been no arrests, investigations continue.<sup>2</sup>



©Midi Madagasikara

**June 21, 2017**

**Isotry, Antananarivo, Province of Antananarivo, Analamanga Region, Madagascar**

Seizure on a man from the Indian subcontinent of 104 radiated turtles (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I).<sup>3</sup>

**June 26, 2017**

**Ivato International Airport, Region of Analamanga, Madagascar**

Again bound for Asia. This time it's a Malagasy citizen attempting to pass through 370 radiated turtles (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and 2 Madagascar angulated tortoises (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I). They were wrapped in baby diapers, taped together and hidden in backpacks. The passer was heading for Viet Nam with a stop in Kenya. There would be less than 400 Madagascar angulated tortoises in the wild, while over 2000 mope captive in peoples' homes in Thailand.<sup>4</sup>

## AMERICA

### BRAZIL

**April 9, 2017**

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

Taken on Saturday: 18 birds, 3 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II). They have all been moved to INEA (National Institute for the Environment).<sup>5</sup>



© Mark Yokoyama

**May 8, 2017**

**Teotonio Viela, State of Alagoas, Brazil**

Denunciation: turtle sale on Facebook. Police were astonished by the number of people interested in. Alert Number: 98833-5879 or 3315-4325.<sup>6</sup>



### OPERATION CANTÃO

**May 15, 2017**

**Caseara, State of Tocantins, Brazil**

Three days. From Friday the 12 to Sunday the 14, in the Cantao Park. It was directed by the State. Seizure of 40 giant South American turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II), firearms and prohibited fishing gear in a canoe. Four people were ordered to pay a total of 4000 real (1500\$) in fines.<sup>7</sup>



## OPERATION CANTÃO

June 24, 2017

### Pium, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Seizure of 396 giant south american turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II) and fishing gear on the Araguaia riverbank, an affluent of Tocantins. Global fine of 1,8 millions of real (\$ 564,600 US) for the 2 men.<sup>8</sup>



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 27, 2017

### State of Texas, United States of America

Alligator snapping turtles (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix III) can weigh up to 90 kg and live up to 100 years. In Texas, they are considered an endangered species. That didn't stop 4 men from catching about 70 of them in Texas and putting them on sale from their property in Sulphur, Louisiana. In July 2016, agents from the US Fish and Wildlife Service seized 30 of these turtles in artificial pools. The 4 men have just been indicted. One of them, Travis Leger, is also suspected of having destroyed evidence during the search in Sulphur. The average price of an alligator snapping turtle on the pet market is between 200 and \$ 400 US. Another trafficker in alligator snapping turtles, a certain Montaro Williams, was also indicted for breach of the Lacey Act for having caught 2 in Texas to be sold in Louisiana. The Lacey Act, enacted in 1900, is the first federal law designed to protect wildlife.<sup>9</sup>



May 9, 2017

### Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

#### The Los Angeles Connection

A package heading for China with no known sender was opened. Inside, inspectors found socks, and inside the socks were 100 spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II) and 70 eastern box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II). Paul Gibbons, member of a NGO for the protection of turtles in Venture County (Behler Chelonian Center), is worried about this new trend. "This case signals a new and distressing trend: poachers in the US willing to swap our own wildlife for a few dollar from Chinese collectors."<sup>10</sup>

## ASIA

## CHINA

May 10, 2017

### Pingxiang, Province of Guangxi, Border to Viet Nam

One after the other, customs stopped 2 vehicles licensed in Viet Nam and a third licensed in China. They respectively were transporting 325 kg and 2450 kg of turtle shells registered officially "frangipani seeds".<sup>12</sup>

## INDIA

April 23, 2017

### Lakkireddipalle, Kadapa District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

They were wrapping up the 105 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) in small packages before transporting them to Mumbai, Chennai or Kolkata. In a separate case, but in the same area, forest rangers got their hands on 6 hunters and trappers of wild goats and deer, and set about ten of them on the run.<sup>13</sup>



May 3, 2017

### Katihar, State of Bihar, India

100 turtles on the express train. The "mule" had received 300 rupee (5 US \$) to transport them to West Bengal.<sup>14</sup>

May 9, 2017

### Chaddamipur, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

100 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) found dead in a pond. Voluntary poisoning or pollution, that is the question.<sup>15</sup>

June 16, 2017

### Chitrakonda, State of Odisha, India

An auto rickshaw with 3 men on board transporting 376 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) in 8 bags was stopped by the Chitrakonda forest guards. The traffickers had left Pithapuram, in the State of Andhra Pradesh, and were heading towards Malkangiri, State of Odisha. Only 270 were still alive. They were set free in the Chitrakonda reservoir lake, upstream from the Balimela hydroelectric dam. The 3 men, Les 3 hommes, Sheikh Rafi (25 years old), Karim Sheikh (30 years old), and Shaktibabu Cherikutti (30 years old), were presented to court and their scooter was seized. Indian softshell turtles can be sold depending on their size between 10,000 and 100,000 rupee (between 155 and 1550 US\$) on the international market.<sup>16</sup>



**June 19, 2017**

**State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Seizure of 190 live turtles, Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II) and Indian roof turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I). A roadside check stopped the trafficker's journey to Rajasthan, Haryana and Nepal where these rare turtles sell for more money than in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>17</sup>

**June 24, 2017**

**Barasat, District of North 24 Parganas, State of West Bengal, India**

Seizure of 270 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). Three arrests. As usual they were going to be sold to wholesalers who feed the local fish markets. The Criminal Investigation Office of the State gave a severe blow to the turtle gang. Thirty people were arrested. "There will be more. They risk 7 years in prison," said the police spokesman.<sup>18</sup>

**MALAYSIA**

**April 27, 2017**

**Kota Kinabalu, State of Sabah, Malaysia**

They were caught red-handed in possession of over 1300 Malaysian Box Turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II) on a boat near the Mengalum Island (see "On the Trail" n° 15 p. 20). The 6 men, 2 Malaysians and 4 Filipinos, were sentenced to 6 months in prison and a fine of 30,000 rupee (\$ 460 US), each with an additional 30 days in prison in case of nonpayment.

Abdul Karim Dakog, representing the Department for Wildlife, was in favor of a severe penalty. The court was relatively unmoved to the arguments of the defense attorney, representing the accused, aged 23 to 44. "They are poor, they deserve a second chance." They could have faced up to 3 years in prison.<sup>19</sup>

**OPERATION WILD NET**

**May 11, 2017**

**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

Fakruddin Ali Ahmad Habib, an Indian National from Chennai in Tamil Nadu, was arrested in Kuala Lumpur by the Malaysian police with 55 living turtles for an estimated value of \$1200 US, smuggled from India. The man was under surveillance by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) in India in the frame of Operation Wild Net which aims at identifying wildlife traffickers on social networks and trading sites. The Indian investigators accumulated information for several months and pretended to be potential buyers before beginning operations on the ground on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Fakruddin Ali Ahmad Habib had been contacted but he preferred to find buyers in Malaysia who offered a higher price.



India thus informed Malaysia whose police nabbed Habib with several endangered turtle species: red crowned roof turtles (*Batagur kachuga*, Appendix II), dhongoka turtles (*Batagur dhongoka*, Appendix II), Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II), and spotted black terrapins (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I). The Kuala Lumpur police are looking to evaluate the scale of the traffic and make contact with the Tamil Nadu authorities in order to get complementary information. For Tilotama Verma, director of the Indian WCCB, "Our first priority right now is to ensure the return to their natural habitat of the living turtles that were traded in contraband."<sup>20</sup>

**May 14, 2017**

**Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia**

They were all still alive, although not in good health. Madagascar angulated tortoises (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I) and radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) are only found in Madagascar. They arrived through Etihad Airways (see "On the Trail" n°8 p.79, n°14 p. 95) from Antananarivo. They were in boxes, 5, officially containing "stones". The price per unit is more than \$ 1000 US.<sup>21</sup>



**SRI LANKA**

**June 17, 2017**

**Off the Kalpitiya coast, North West Province, Sri Lanka**

Two traffickers in possession of 2089 live Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) were arrested by the Sri Lankan marine. They crossed the Mannar Gulf on their canoe, between India and Sri Lanka, at least 70 nautical miles.<sup>22</sup>



## THAILAND

**May 4, 2017**

### **Bangkok-Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Thailand**

An Indian poacher about to return to his home in Chennai was stopped with 6 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) and 3 young meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*) in his bags. The meerkat is of the mongoose family. The meerkats and the leopard tortoises are pets that are victim to international trafficking. The two species are native to Africa.<sup>23</sup>



*Suricata suricatta*

**May 17, 2017**

### **Bangkok, Thailand**

Seized from a private residency: 39 bags of turtles, including Yellow-headed Temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), Asian box-turtles (*Cuora spp.*, Appendix II), Giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II), and a hundred lizards of undetermined species in 17 bags.<sup>24</sup>



## VIET NAM

**April 24, 2017**

### **Hue, Province of Thừa Thiên, Viet Nam**

A member of the NGO Education for Nature - Viet Nam discovered a keeled box turtle (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II) in an aquarium in a fish shop. The Forest Protection Department of Hue was notified, the turtle was seized and set free at the historical site of Chin Ham, in the Thien An forest.<sup>25</sup>

**May 8, 2017**

### **Da Nang, Region of South Central Coast, Viet Nam**

For sale: cute little turtle. 13 million dong (\$ 560 US), he said on Facebook. He was caught in the act by environmental police. He hadn't specified that they were Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora galbinifrons*, Appendix II). 29 individuals were found at his home.<sup>26</sup>



*Cuora galbinifrons*

**May 28, 2017**

### **Province of Nghe An, Viet Nam**

The environmental police assisted by a team of the Communist Youths arrest a car from Laos. Eleven live turtles including 2 keel-backed turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II) are seized. Purchased in Laos, they were destined for consumption.<sup>27</sup>

## EUROPE

## ITALY

**Mid-April 2017**

### **Crotone, Region of Calabria, Italy**

They sold little toys in front of the shopping mall "Le Spighe". If one looked closer, one noticed that they were turtles, and not just any turtles. Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), 17 of them, were found at their home. They were in decent condition. They are going to be released into the scrubland as required by the prosecutor. The 2 traffickers aged 26 and 65 years old will no doubt also be released into their habitat after being questioned by the judge.<sup>28</sup>





# Snakes

## AFRICA

### TOGO

#### GANG

**April 19, 2017**

**Lomé, Togo**

Three traffickers, including a wildlife tycoon in Togo, were arrested in a hotel in Lomé by the Central Office for the Repression of Illegal Trafficking of Drugs and Money Laundering (the "l'Office Central de Répression du Trafic Illicite des Drogues et du Blanchiment" - OCRTIDB), as they were just about to deliver 783 ball python skins (*Python regius*, Appendix II) inside 3 brand new suitcases. A raid at one of their homes also revealed a large African rock python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) skin. This is the largest number of python skins ever discovered in the country. Yet it supposedly only corresponds to a week's worth of business for the trafficking boss, Alhaji Amadou Mohamed (on the right on the picture). All of the skins were destined to Nigeria.<sup>1</sup>



© Eagle Togo

## ASIA

### INDIA

**May 11, 2017**

**Mumbai Metropolitan Region, State of Maharashtra, India**

The criminal police arrested a taxi driver, Vipul Joshi (28), who was in possession of an Indian Sand boa (*Eryx Johnii*, Appendix II) enclosed in a bag. The investigators were informed of a meeting near the Reay Road station. They laid a trap for him. The buyer was not identified. According to the police, the boa was worth 2.5 million rupee (\$ 39,000 US). The Indian Sand boa is unfortunate enough to be known for its medical virtues and for its use in black magic rituals.<sup>2</sup>

**Mid-May 2017**

**Kochi, Ernakulam District, Kerala District, India**

All three came from Tamil Nadu. They were looking to sell a sand boa (*Eryx spp.*, Appendix II). The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the agents of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau were faster.<sup>3</sup>

## EUROPE

### GERMANY

**June 2017**

**Munich, Bavaria, Germany**

No need for any sniffer dogs.

A parcel coming from Zambia immediately attracted custom's olfactory attention. It contained boa heads (*Boidae spp.*, Appendix I or II). They were urgently incinerated to avoid risking any infectious contamination. The parcel also contained dried caterpillars (*Gonimbrasia belina*) commonly eaten in southern Africa.<sup>4</sup>

### FRANCE

**April 27, 2017**

**Avignon, Vaucluse, France**

Seizure in a shisha bar, the "Key success", of a boa (*Boa spp.*, Appendix I or II) in a vivarium dug in the ground and of another snake 1.60 m long found free in the back kitchen.<sup>5</sup>

**June 29, 2017**

**Bergerac, Dordogne, France**

A ball python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) is captured in a residence. Discarded or escaped, it had been wandering for 3 months in the pipes and dividing walls inside the building. It has been entrusted to the Aquarium of Périgord Noir in Bugue sur Vézère.<sup>6</sup>



### ITALY

**End of April 2017**

**Burggrafenamt District, Trentino-Alto Adige Region, Italy**

A 2-meter-long reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) was confiscated from a teenager.<sup>7</sup>



© Adige



## Sauria

This is the innovation of the quarter. Hemipenes, the “two-headed” sexual organ of the varan lizards, are the new talismans of the upper classes in India. Dried, they bring happiness, prosperity and boost masculine vigour.



© Dr. Vijay Anand Ismail

### AMERICA

#### CANADA

June 8, 2017

Fredericton, New Brunswick Province, Canada

The provincial court of Fredericton sentenced Grigori Zaharov, habitant of Thornhill in Ontario, to concurrently serve two three-month jail terms for having tried on September 17, 2016 to fraudulently import 2 Cuban iguanas (*Cyclura nubilia*, Appendix I).<sup>1</sup>



© Don Taylor

#### COLOMBIA

June 24, 2017

Medellín, Antioquia Department, Colombia

A female common iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) was seized.<sup>2</sup>

#### GUATEMALA

May 17, 2017

Department

Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

“Opportunity to be seized” : iguanas at the price of 75 Guatemalan quetzals (10 US \$). “There are only 3 left” said the advert on WhatsApp. The green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) were seized by the police but they were only 2. They were handed over to the National Council of Protected Areas. Two interpellations.<sup>3</sup>



### ASIA

#### INDIA

OPERATION

WILD NET

May 30, 2017

Bhubaneswar,

Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

210 dried Bengal monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) hemipeneses and those of yellow monitors (*Varanus flavescens*, Appendix I) were discovered at the home of Chintan Joshi in the Brahmeswarpatna quarter in Bhubaneswar. The prices vary from 400 to 14,000 rupee (\$6 to 220 US) depending on the size of the organ. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), the criminal police and the Department of Forests acted in conjunction to operate this seizure. Chintan Joshi was placed in detention. The investigators are now searching to go back to the poachers.

Monitor penises (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) are sold on Amazon, eBay, Etsi, Snapdeal, Alibaba, and other bazars in the place of hatha Jodi, roots used in Hindu religious ceremonies, tantric and black magic practices, and are so appreciated that they are becoming rare. Hatha Jodi come from plants in Madhya Pradesh and in Nepal. Some clever traffickers discovered that Hatha Jodi and the “two-headed” penis of the monitor look similar.

Experts from Wild Animal Protection discovered for the first time the trickery in the street markets and spiritual boutiques in India. The states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan are particularly demanding. The charms sell for up to \$250 US and more.

The range States of the 2 lizards species cover Iran, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Burma, Sri Lanka, and the basins of the Indus, the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

The real and fake Hatha Jodi markets are very inventive. The investigation of World Animal protection revealed that some hatha Jodi are not roots, nor dried penises, but plastic molds of the lizard penis.<sup>4</sup>

#### GANG

June 14, 2017

Pench Tiger Reserve, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Arrest of 3 guides then of 4 more for having poached 4 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), a mongoose (Herpestidae family) and a wild boar.<sup>6</sup>



© WAP

**June 17, 2017**

**Indore and Khargone, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Breaking up of a hemipenes gang. 68 reproductive organs of varans were seized.

Arrest of Lokesh Jagidar, priest of the famous Navagraha temple. He used to sell online drugs and talismans, including varan's hemipeneses (*Varanus* spp. Appendix I or II). Promising energy and vitality to customers, he got orders from the USA, Malaysia, Germany, Australia to name only a few countries.

Arrest of 3 traffickers.

Arrest of the supplier, Rajesh Porwal.

The varans victims of this new rumor were from Madhya Pradesh and the Thar Desert in Rajasthan.<sup>7</sup>

**June 22, 2017**

**Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Seizure of 25 hemipenes of monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), 25 jackal parts (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India), 24 sea fans, a sea snail (*Trochus* spp.), 6 strombus (*Strombus* spp.), 91 black cowries and white cowries (Cypraeidae family), 27 shells.

The ex-customs agent fired from the Force for passive corruption was named Baranwal. To service in international trade of magical objects via 106 sites including eBay, Quickr, Alibaba and Amazone and really fit the part of his new qualification of astrologer, he now calls himself Krishnan. The item he was promoting at the time of his arrest and searches of his 3 shops is of course the hemipenis. "The most important recovery in raid was reproductive organs of monitor lizards, which looks like two hands clasped in prayer and has been misinterpreted as a holy object which can bring prosperity," said assistant director of WCCB, Madam Tilottama Varma.<sup>8</sup>

**VIET NAM**

**Mid June 2017**

**Hô-Chi-Minh-City, Viet Nam**

A bird shop in the 2<sup>nd</sup> arrondissement of Hô-Chi-Minh-City offered for sale 3 clouded monitors (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I). The Forest Protection Department "persuaded" the shop keeper to give them up. They were transferred to the Cu Chi Rehabilitation Center.<sup>9</sup>

**OCEANIA**

**AUSTRALIA**

**May 24, 2017**

**Perth International Airport, State of Western Australia, Australia**

The Australian Border Force (ABF) spots something strange inside the suitcase with the x-ray. They contact the agents specialized in wildlife identification. The Japanese traveller's suitcase contained 7 adult blue-tongued skinks (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and 6 young. A blue-tongued skink can be sold for \$ 10,000 US. Their bite can be severe. They often have ticks in their ears and under their scales. Contagion to man is not to be excluded. It feeds on plants and small slow moving animals. It is eaten by falcons, big snakes and stray dogs.<sup>10</sup>

## Crocodilians

**Quarter's best shot: the US Fish and Wildlife starts a fake breeding farm of true alligators and dismantles an egg thief gang in the marshes.**

**To mask the introduction of wild crocodiles in the breedings, the sexual performances of farmed crocodiles are inflated. Same for frogs.**

**AFRICA**

**KENYA**

**April 6, 2017**

**Kenya**

A poacher was arrested while attempting to sell a crocodile skin (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II). He had been baited, probably with a hook hidden inside meat and tied to a rope. This operation was a success thanks to cooperation between KWS, the Big Life Foundation and the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust.<sup>1</sup>

**June 6, 2017**

**Malindi, Kilifi County, Coastal Province, Kenya**

Arrest of 2 men. They came in the night and stole 3 crocodiles from a breeder. One of them was already dead from suffocation in the bag. The 2 kidnappers were employees of the breeder.<sup>2</sup>

**AMERICA**

**ARGENTINA**

**April 27, 2017**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina**

Abandonment in the town center of 2 dead crocodiles (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II) on a motorcycle-cab. The two suspects ran away as the police approached.<sup>3</sup>

**BRAZIL**

**April 11, 2017**

**Três Lagoas, Mato Grosso State, Brazil**

Death of a Broad-nosed Caiman (*Caiman latirostris*, Appendix I), 1.5 m long. He was found with a bullet in his head. The tail had been cut off. A flight of vultures attracted the attention of passersby.<sup>4</sup>





## COLOMBIA

**April 8, 2017**

### **El Paso, Cesar Department, Colombia**

Seizure of 217 baby brown spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus fuscus*, Appendix II). They measured 30 cm in length. They were hidden under a blue tarp. The police had been following the small boat on the Ariguani river. The crew is on the run.<sup>5</sup>

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **GANG**

**May 24, 2017**

### **Arcadia, State of Florida, United States of America**

In Florida, the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) business is mainly destined for luxury European leatherwork and is worth millions of dollars. The meat has been consumed for a long time in the southern United States, in Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, and is beginning to be exported to new destinations in China and Viet Nam, as well as to Europe. Since alligators do not reproduce well in captivity, the 90 known breeders in Florida renew their livestock by capturing wild eggs. A strict law requires identified nests to be marked, specifies that a certified biologist must be present if eggs are taken, and imposes payment of a tax to the State. The cost of an alligator egg varies from 50 to \$ 60 US per egg. A nest can contain 20 to 50 eggs. For several years, poaching gangs have become specialized in pillaging eggs in the wild to sell them to breeding farms. In order to fix this evil, the Florida US Fish and Wildlife Service decided to use Hollywood methods: the entirely fabricated creation of an alligator farm in Arcadia, the "Sunshine Alligator Farm". The land was rented, authorizations obtained, the alligators bought from other farms in the region, and for two years the officers raised them and sold their skins on the official market to gain the trust of traffickers. Then they made it known that they were looking for wild eggs. More than 10,000 eggs were offered to the Sunshine Alligator Farm, often presented as having been bought from members of the Seminole Indian tribe that live in the swamps of Florida. After having taken the time to film their contacts and the transactions, the police brought down a network of 9 men, aged 22 to 73, and made a total of 44 charges against them. Aggravating circumstance in an "organized crime," rarely used in matters pertaining to the protection of fauna, has been applied to Robert Kelly Albritton, Robert Thomas Beasley, Carl Wayne Pickle Jr., Christopher Lee Briscall, Jacob Oliver Bustin-Pitts, Matthew Edward Evors, David Wentworth Nellis, Isaiah Joseph Romano, and Wayne Andrew Nichols. The last was also charged with slaughtering a white ibis (*Eudocimus albus*): in middle of a barbecue infiltrated with agents for the protection of fauna, he killed and grilled the ibis.<sup>6</sup>



*Alligator mississippiensis*

## MEXICO

**May 3, 2017**

### **Ensenada, State of Baja California, Mexico**

Seizure of a Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II) in a house. The police suspects a clandestine breeding farm.<sup>7</sup>

**May 9, 2017**

### **Acepetahua, State of Chiapas, Mexico**

Last minute rescue by the PROFEPA of an American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I). He was going to be stoned by some villagers.<sup>8</sup>

## ASIA

## CHINA

**Early May 2017**

### **Tianjin International Airport, China**

Seizure of a stuffed baby crocodile (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II) in the luggage of a Chinese passenger from Australia.<sup>9</sup>

**May 21, 2017**

### **Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China**

After having paraded a crocodile (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II) around town in a harness, his mouth held shut by adhesive tape, and after having forced him to walk on his hind legs in front of thousands of onlookers, the skewer's seller then put the crocodile to death and cut it in pieces for people to taste (see "On the Trail" n°6, p. 24). The reptile was 1.5 m long and came from a farm, according to his executioner. China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan import 85% of crocodile bred in Africa.<sup>10</sup>



## EUROPE

## SPAIN

**June 14, 2017**

### **Guime, Las Palmas Province, Spain**

A crocodile of 1.31 m stolen in a bankrupted zoo was seized at an individual house.<sup>11</sup>



# Various Reptile Species

## AMERICA

### MEXICO

**April 30, 2017**

**Mexico city, Mexico**

Seizure in a car heading towards Mexico city of 256 parts and byproducts of animal species protected by the law, including 41 skins of green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 7 skins of Mexican spiny-tailed iguana (*Ctenosaura pectinata*), an American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I), a Manta ray (*Manta birostris*, Appendix II), 191 iguana eggs and a ready-to-cook omelet of iguana eggs in a Tupperware can.<sup>1</sup>

**May 11, 2017**

**Toluca, State of Mexico, Mexico**

Seizure in a bus of 25 longtail alpine garter snakes (*Thamnophis scalaris*), 3 Mexican gartersnakes (*Thamnophis eques*), 3 Mexican pine snakes (*Pituophis deppei*), 102 Mexican Plateau horned lizards (*Phrynosoma orbiculare*) and 20 Wiegmann's Crevice Swift iguanas (*Sceloporus torquatus*). They were packed and hidden in pillow cases, cardboard boxes and backpacks.<sup>2</sup>

**June 23 - 25, 2017**

**Mexico city, Federal District, Mexico**

Operation "Madreperla" in partnership with Interpol.

Seizure of 131 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 31 narrow-bridged musk turtles (*Chelonia angustatus*), 5 Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), 5 Mexican musk turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*), and one Central American river turtle. One arrest.<sup>3</sup>



## ASIA

### INDONESIA

#### REPEATED OFFENSE

**May 18, 2017**

**Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta, Indonesia**

253 reptiles taken from Naito Katsuhide's 4 suitcases: lizards, snakes, pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II). The impassive man tried to get through security at Terminal 3. International trafficker, he had already been caught by Australian customs with 39 reptiles in his suitcases. He came from Singapore via Thailand.<sup>4</sup>

## EUROPE

### FRANCE

**Mid June 2017**

**Tournay, Hautes-Pyrénées Department, France**

About thirty snakes, boas (*Boa* spp., Appendix I or II), pythons, anacondas (*Eunectes* spp, Appendix II) and a crocodile (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II) were seized by constables from the Tournay brigade with the help agents from the National Office for Hunting and Wildlife (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage -ONCFS). The animals were held by swindlers who exhibited them from town to town in "shows" with hazardous safety measures and no accreditation.<sup>5</sup>

### Sexual Statistics for Farm Frogs And Crocodiles Are Totally Rigged

**June 2017**

**Indonesia**

The CBPP (Captive Breeding Production Plan), scheduled for 2016 production of over 4.2 million farmed mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

The bluff reaches its summits with the white-lipped tree frog (*Nyctimystes infrafrenatus*) whose reproductive capacity in a closed environment is claimed 67 times higher than in the wild.

The female red-eyed crocodile skinks (*Tribolonotus gracilis*) for her part would lay in captivity 10 to 24 eggs per year instead of the 6 eggs that the entire scientific bibliography grants her. Sincerity of all breeding farms of species protected under CITES in Indonesia, Asia and everywhere else has been questioned for several years. The farms are regularly replenished with specimens taken from the wild. The secretariat of CITES and its technical supports finally admit the imposture. In Indonesia alone, breeding farms described as alternatives to human predation in natural habitats apply to 75 species protected under CITES.<sup>6</sup>

## Amphibians

### AMERICA

#### CHILI

**June 14, 2017**

**Laraquete, Arauco Province, Chile**

Seizure of 15 Chilean toads (*Calyptocephalella gayi*, Appendix III) in a restaurant. They were about to be cooked under the worldwide appellation of "local dish".<sup>1</sup>



### ASIA

#### INDIA

**May 31, 2017**

**Margao, Southern Goa District, State of Goa, India**

It's frog season in Goa. Like every year, a brigade of forest rangers targeted hunters of Indian bullfrogs (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*, Appendix II) and thereby headed off 3 men in the paddy fields near the Arlem-Raia Eastern Bypass. They were in possession of 11 live frogs. A panchanama has been opened against Menino Pereira (29), Denzil Soares (25), and Dylan Noronha (18). A panchanama is a form of Indian judiciary procedure in which the observations or acts of inquiry from the police are attested to by the presence of moral witnesses, the panchas. The 3 young men were freed for 10,000 rupee (\$ 155 US) bail each.<sup>2</sup>



## Insects and Arachnids

### ASIA

#### CHINA

**April 25, 2017**

**Canton, Guangdong Province, China**

Six living spiders as big as the palm of the hand were in an internationally shipped package, each one of them in a plastic bottle with holes drilled.<sup>1</sup> Spiders and scorpions in China, see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 3, p. 20, p. 118, n°13 p. 23, n°15 p. 21, n°16 p. 100, p. 102.



### EUROPE

#### UNITED KINGDOM

**Beginning of April 2017**  
**Bristol, England, United Kingdom**

Phillip Cullen received a 6-month suspended sentence and 250 hours of community service work for having captured rare butterflies, particularly large blues (*Maculinea arion*) (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 27). He has been banned for 5 years from entering reserves where the species threatened by extinction since 1970, are making a come-back thanks to entomologists, scientists, volunteers, and central and local government efforts. Large blues caught recently, but presented as specimens from the Victorian era are worth 300 pounds (\$ 390 US). Cullen's butterfly collection has been confiscated and will be given to museums.<sup>2</sup>



# Birds

The poles of the traffic are South America, Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. But Southern Europe and North Africa are not spared. There the goldfinch war is raging : the pretty little singing bird is not yet protected by CITES. 15 million victims are reported to be caged in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

## AFRICA

**April 24, 2017**  
**Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia**



The price of a goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) is equal to one third of the average monthly income in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. So the capture, smuggling and sale of goldfinches have become trades.

The time of glue and selective capture when goldfinches are gathering is gone for those who embark on the goldfinch economy and live on it. Now has come the time of nets and in-flight catches of multiple species. Bycatch of migratory passerines or residents and other bird families widens the supply of traffickers, masks the rarity of goldfinches and stimulates consumer demand. For caged birds like ready-made clothes, the more colors, the better sales. There are 15 million of caged goldfinches in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. In 26 years, the goldfinch has lost 57% of its range in the Maghreb. After poaching, forest fires are responsible for this lightning loss of territory.

The more goldfinches become scarce, the more they acquire fame and the more people want to have them at home. Goldfinches sold on the markets in Algeria come from Morocco and are smuggled across the border. Between 2008 and 2010, 18,569 goldfinches were seized by Algerian customs.

The physical and penal risks of goldfinch poaching are insignificant compared to the risks associated with poaching of the tuna family, coral, sea turtles or macaques. Goldfinches are not protected by international conventions.

The scientific document prepared and written by 7 academics (see sources) confirms the great hecatomb of goldfinches and other Afro-Palearctic passerines.<sup>1</sup>

## AMERICA

### ARGENTINA

**May 11, 2017**

**Department of Rio Segundo, Province of Córdoba, Argentina**

It was a bird's Sing-Sing that the police entered. Among others, 3 golden-billed saltator (*Saltator aurantirostris*), 3 ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), a red-crested cardinal (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II) and a passerine of the genus *Sporophila* were released. The guard was armed.<sup>2</sup>

**May 12 2017**

**Province of Mendoza, Argentina**

Seizure of 2 red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II) and 2 blue and gold macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). Red-and-green macaws are considered to be seriously endangered in the country. After a period of quarantine, they will be released in the natural Reserve of Corrientes. Other residual populations are in northern Bolivia and south-eastern Paraguay and in the States of Mato Grosso do Sul and Parana in Brazil 300 km from Corrientes.<sup>3</sup>



**May 18, 2017**

**Palmira, State of Mendoza, Argentina**

Seizure in a house of 2 firearms, 100 cages and traps and 130 birds including parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II). Ten birds were plucked and frozen. The survivors are in quarantine. Three interpellations.<sup>4</sup>

**May 22, 2017**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina**

159 birds were seized *manu militari* from 4 pet shops where they were shown and sold covertly. A yellow cardinal (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II) was standing in the middle of the songbirds. Only 50 specimens are estimated to remain on the 2.8 million square kilometers of the country.<sup>5</sup>



*Gubernatrix cristata*



**May 23, 2017**

**Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina**

Seizure of 92 birds in a Ford Ranger: red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), Puerto Rican spindalis (*Spindalis portoricensis*), rufous-browed peppershrikes (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*), plush-crested jays (*Cyanocorax chrysops*), yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II). They were released and the cages were burned.<sup>6</sup>

**June 9, 2017**

**San Basilio, Cordoba Province, Argentina**

Seizure of 36 red crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II) and of 4 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II). Wildlife emergency services: 08007770220.<sup>7</sup>

**BRAZIL**

**April 5, 2017**

**Brazil**

Repatriation of an indigo macaw (*Anodorhynchus leari*, Appendix I) captured in 2007 in Argentina. The indigo macaw is part of the cultural heritage of Brazil.<sup>8</sup>

(See "On the Trail" n°8, p. 24, n°13 p. 26.)

**April 8, 2017**

**Planaltina, Federal District, Brazil**

Seizure on Saturday: 14 birds, including 3 parrots (*Psittacidae* spp. Appendix I or II), 12 cages and 2 traps. Four people arrested.<sup>9</sup>

**April 15, 2017**

**Itapoã, Federal District, Brazil**

Night seizure of a blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) at an individual's house. He confesses to having exchanged a bike for the macaw.<sup>10</sup>

**April 17, 2017**

**Gurupi, State of Tocantins, Brazil**

Seizure of 14 birds, including a yellow-fronted amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II). The bird thief, age 57, escaped before coming back. He will have to pay a fine of 7000 real (\$ 2100 US). Twelve birds were freed. The last 2 are still in convalescence.<sup>11</sup>



**April 18, 2017**

**Guanhães, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil**

Capture of 54 birds including a Vinaceous parrot (*Amazona vinacea*, Appendix II) and a blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). The occupant of the premises had a license to raise birds, but the species seized were not allowed. Fine of \$ 19,000 US. The birds were conveyed to the Belo Horizonte CETAS, a refuge for mishandled birds.<sup>12</sup>



**April 19, 2017**

**Pedro II, Piauí State, Brazil**

A short-tailed parrot (*Graydidascalus brachyurus*, Appendix II) for sale on the Facebook page "Storeroom bazaar", with a ridiculously low going price of 10 real (\$ 3.25 US). The page is used to sell and barter all types of things. It has more than 13,000 followers, women for the most part. The bird is threatened by deforestation. Even though it is in decline and information on the population are scarce, the IUCN gave it the status of "least concern species."<sup>13</sup>



**April 22, 2017**

**Irauçuba, State of Ceara, Brazil**

Seizure on Sunday: 10 cactus conures (*Eupsittula cactorum*, Appendix II). The two men were selling the birds on the side of the road. When the police approached, they escaped into the forest leaving the conures in a cardboard box. The IBAMA took them under its wing.<sup>14</sup>

**April 29, 2017**

**Uberlandia, State of Parana, Brazil**

Arrest of a 39-year-old hunter for shooting a noble macaw (*Ara nobilis*, Appendix II) on the street. An anonymous call allowed to spot him. During the search at his home, the police found the gun, a 5.5 rifle, and ammunition.<sup>15</sup>

**May 6, 2017**

**Assis, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure on Saturday of a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) at an individual's house. He was transferred to APASS, an association for the protection of wild animals in Assis.<sup>16</sup>

**May 6, 2017**

**Bocaiuva, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil**

Seizure of 8 birds including a yellow-naped amazon (*Amazona auropalliata*, Appendix I) at an individual's house.<sup>17</sup>



**May 10, 2017**

**Fernandopolis, State of São Paulo, Brazil**

Prosecutor's complaint against a farmer. He detained one macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) and two traps.<sup>18</sup>

**May 11, 2017**

**Luján de Cuyo, Province of Mendoza, Brazil**

Seizure at home of 2 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), 2 blue and yellow macaws (*Ara araarauna*, Appendix II), one adult and one young, 3 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 2 turtles and 6 birds.<sup>19</sup>



**May 12, 2017**

**Recife, State of Pernambuco, Brazil**

Seizure in 2 private homes of 30 birds including blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*), *Thraupis* genus birds, *Sporophila* passerines, white-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila leucoptera*), chestnut-capped blackbirds (*Chrysomus ruficapillus*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), and red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*).<sup>20</sup>

**May 23, 2017**

**Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil**

A 36-year-old housewife stole 17 birds in the nearby Reserve. The police arrived at her home after several anonymous calls. On the spot, they found only 2 plain parakeets (*Brotogeris tirica*, Appendix II). "They had their wings cut off and were showing signs of abuse. It is likely that the other birds were sold" says the superintendent.<sup>21</sup>

**June 5 2017**

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

Two aras (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), one yellow-fronted amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), 2 toucans, 10 canaries, birds of prey, and 5 cats, were seized. The little domestic felines were kept in a bathtub. The neighbors started complaining because of their miaowings. They were supposed the food for the birds of prey.<sup>22</sup>



**GANG**

**June 5, 2017**

**Eldorado, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure of 5 spot-billed toucanets (*Selenidera maculirostris*, Appendix III in Argentina), 5 other ready-to-eat birds, 4 caliber 28 firearms, 80 ammunition, a speedboat engine and an aluminum boat. Two men managed to escape. Two others are charged with poaching in conspiracy.<sup>23</sup>

The spot-billed toucanet is named after the black markings on its beak. The males and females are easily distinguished, the males wear a black head and breast while the female's are chestnut-red. They feed on fruits, insects and small vertebrates.



**June 12, 2017**

**Cariré, State of Ceara, Brazil**

Three conures (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) were seized. Two arrests. A man was accused of corruption attempt. He offered policemen \$ 300 US for them to be tongue-tied.<sup>24</sup>

**June 13, 2017**

**Recife, State of Pernambuco, Brazil**

Joint mission with CIPOMA (Companhia Independente de Policiamento do Meio Ambiente) and the Agência Nacional do Meio Ambiente. Thirty-two birds were seized and one turquoise-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) was among them.<sup>25</sup>

**June 16, 2017**

**Bocaiuva, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil**

Fourteen birds were seized in a house, among them a white-winged parakeet (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II) and a firearm. The birds were in cages hanging on a tree.<sup>26</sup>

**June 25, 2017**

**Cruzeiro, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

A white-eyed conure was seized among other birds and a trap. Fine of 20,000 real (\$ 6120 US).<sup>27</sup>



**COLOMBIA**

**Barbosa, Santander Department, Colombia**

**May 12, 2017**

Let them free! That is the plead formed by Jean Lizcano, head of environmental police of the town. The information campaign has started to harvest its fruit. Three families spontaneously turned in to the regional Society for the protection of animals in Santander a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 yellow fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) and 2 turtles.

As soon as possible the 5 survivors will be back to nature.<sup>28</sup>

**May 24, 2017**

**Patia, Cauca Department, Colombia**

Seizure by the police in a blue box aboard a car of an eagle, legs tied, worth 25 million Peso (\$ 8,300 US). Arrest of a young man aged 25.<sup>29</sup>

**COSTA RICA**

**June 7, 2017**

**Pococí, Limón Province, Costa Rica**

Fine of 852,000 Costa Rican Colón (\$ 1491 US) for keeping 2 red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II).<sup>30</sup>



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**GANG**

**April 24, 2017**

**Rapid City, Pennington Country, State of South Dakota, United States of America**



© Pat Gaines

Fifteen individuals from Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado have been charged with trafficking eagle parts, claws, heads, wings, bones, and beaks and trinkets made from their feathers. More than 200 eagles have been killed and other birds of prey are also involved, such as the ferruginous hawk (*Buteo*

*regalis*, Appendix II) and the rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*, Appendix II). Most of the buyers are in Los Angeles. The vendors are of Native American descent. Some are a part of a traditional dance group, the Buffalo Dreamers. Others are a part of the Sioux tribes of Yankton, Oglala, or Arapaho. Fans made with eagle feathers and bear claw pendants are part of the illegal craft.

A pair of wings can be sold on the black market for \$ 250 US, and an entire carcass goes for 1000 to \$ 2000 US. The South Dakotan prosecutor highlights that this traffic is in no way related to any kind of historical cultural, spirituality or ritual. The eagles and other birds were shot. The investigation lasted 2 years. A spokesperson for the US Fish and Wildlife Services thinks that the trial is going lead to the largest affair of this type ever revealed.

The feathers and other trinkets made from bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) can be only used in authentic ceremonies inspired by Native American heritage. There is a central storage facility in Colorado where eagle feathers and ceremonial objects can be borrowed (see "On the Trail" n°5, p.33-34).<sup>31</sup>

**April 25, 2017**

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

facebook

Robert and Vanessa Burgos have

been convicted for having fraudulently imported 12 Fischer's lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*, Appendix II). To cover their tracks, the Burgos had the birds transit through Madrid under the false name of Rosy-faced lovebirds (*Agapornis roseicollis*), before redirecting them to New York through the Kennedy Airport. The official destination of the birds was the company Aviary La Familia, based in Avon Park in Florida and owned by the 2 accused. Put in quarantine by the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture), the birds were carefully examined and were revealed to be Fischer's lovebirds (Appendix II), whereas the Rosy-faced lovebird is not registered under CITES. The couple had gone personally to Indonesia to choose and buy the lovebirds to bring back to the United State, having coordinated the smuggling using Facebook and cooperation from the Indonesian breeders. The package arrived at Kennedy Airport in June 2015.<sup>32</sup>



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**May 2, 2017**

**Los Angeles, California, United States of America**

Kurtis Law has been accused of fraudulently importing on 93 birds on a flight from Viet Nam on March 24, 2017. The birds were Rothschild's Mynas (*Leucopsar rothschildi*, Appendix I), Melodious laughing thrush (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II), Silver-eared mesas (*Leiothrix argentauris*, Appendix II), and red-billed leiothrix (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II). They were all tied up inside a suitcase, and all except 8 were dead. Kurtis Law is 49 years old. He has two places of residence, one in Viet Nam and one in the United States. Theoretically, he risks a maximum if 20 years in prison.<sup>33</sup>



© U.S. Attorney's office



**May 23, 2017**  
**Gainesville, State of Florida,**  
**United States of America**



The trial of Heinrich "Henry" Springer (cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p.28), a famous ornithologist specializing in rare birds was held in Gainesville, Florida. He pleads guilty for the crimes of illegally transporting wild animals and criminal conspiracy. His trial has been split from that of his principle partner, Anthony Gilyard, resident of Williston (Florida), sentenced in February 2016 to a fine of \$ 20,000 US for the same crimes. The two men, who like dead animals, made up a team that procured protected foreign birds, by traveling to hunt them, ordering them to agents or on eBay. Anthony Gilyard had been under surveillance since October 2011. In October 2014, after having put together multiple pieces of evidence in his implication in the rare birds traffic, agents of the US Fish and Wildlife Service performed a raid of his house where numerous stuffed specimens were seized. The inspection of his computer revealed a link with Heinrich Springer.

Springer is a fanatic collector of dead birds: 5000 stuffed specimens have been discovered at his house in Anchorage, Alaska. To complete his stock, he has taken part in hunting, trading, and exchanges with experts from all over the world. He also carried out journeys to multiple destinations: Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Australia, Siberia, Africa... In Peru in 2013, Springer and Gilyard ordered rare birds from a safari organizer, then they drove there to capture the birds themselves or buy their remains. They came back with 70 dead specimens that they imported to the United States by falsifying their customs declarations.

Springer was a specialist in national and international legislation concerning protected animals: as at associate researcher for the Ornithological Department of the Museum of Alaska, in Fairbanks, he was perfectly aware of all measures of international protection, and inquired by the best sources to know the local laws and the ways to get around them including pretending that certain specimens were destined for scientific research. The Gainesville court in front of which he appeared finally brought 6 charges against him, including the illegal importation of a red siskin (*Spinus cucullatus*, Appendix I) bought from a merchant in Malta. The verdict is expected on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August. <sup>34</sup>

## GUATEMALA

**April 14, 2017**  
**Sayaxché, Petén Department, Guatemala**

A chestnut-eared aracari (*Pteroglossus castanotis*, Appendix III in Agentina) was the victim of a hunter in the Rosario National Park. It was found on the ground, killed by a gun shot.

Chestnut-eared aracari eat mostly fruit and insects during nesting season. The IUCN still lists the species as "common," although the information available on the distribution range and threats is dated and insufficient. <sup>35</sup>



## MEXICO

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**April 1, 2017**

**Santa María Huatulco, State of Oaxaca, Mexico**

On the road to the market in Tehuacán, in the State of Puebla, seizure of 489 orange-fronted parakeets (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) and 12 white fronted parakeets (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II) in the car of a couple on route 175. Thirteen died. The survivors were transferred to Iguanario Coopalytan UMA (Wild Life Conservation Unit). <sup>36</sup>

**April 13, 2017**

**Between Sonoyta and San Luis Río, State of Sonora, Mexico**

Seizure of 50 chicks of various species: 8 yellow-naped amazons (*Amazona auropalliata*, Appendix I), 38 orange-fronted parakeets (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) and 4 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*). The traffickers had forsaken them in cardboard boxes on the side of the road just before a police barrier. <sup>37</sup>



**April 13, 2017**

**San Luis Potosí, State of San Luis Potosí, Mexico**

Rescue of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II). Her wings were cut and she had a copper bracelet around her paw. She was brought to the Tangamanga Zoological Park. <sup>38</sup>



**April 16, 2017**

**Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, State of Jalisco, Mexico**

Anonymous denunciation: seizure of a red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II), 2 northern crested caracaras (*Caracara cheriway*, Appendix II) and 4 military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I) at an individual's house. They are all in bad condition or mutilated.<sup>39</sup>

**April 27, 2017**

**Culiacan, State of Sinaloa, Mexico**

Seizure of 5 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) for sale on Facebook.<sup>40</sup>



**May 13, 2017**

**State of Baja California, Mexico**

On the road from Mexicali to Tijuana, the black Wolswagen Golf was carrying 28 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and 20 red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II). In the trunk, they were about to die from the heat. They were temporarily entrusted to the children's zoo of Ensenada.<sup>41</sup>

**May 22, 2017**

**State of Chiapas, Mexico**

Seizure in a car on the Tonalá-Arriaga road of 3 collared araçarís (*Pteroglossus torquatus*), a white-fronted amazon (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), a yellow-naped amazon (*Amazona auropalliata*, Appendix I) and 3 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II).<sup>42</sup>

**May 25, 2017**

**San Ignacio, State of Baja California, Mexico**

Seizure on a road check of 25 young birds, orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), white-fronted amazon (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II) and lilac-crowned amazons (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I). They found a temporary shelter in Mazatlán.<sup>43</sup>

**June 3, 2017**

**San Luis Acatlán, State of Guerrero, Mexico**

Three orange-fronted parakeets (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), one thick-billed parrot (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*, Appendix I) and one lilac-crowned parrot (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I) were seized during the celebration of San Isidro.<sup>44</sup>



*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*

**June 9, 2017**

**State of Quintana Roo, Mexico**

Eight scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) seized in a Wildlife Management Unit (UMA), the activities have been temporally stopped. Birds are from suspicious origins. They were obviously hidden outside the approved management plan of the SEMARNAT (Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales).<sup>45</sup>

**June 14, 2017**

**San Luis Potosí, State of San Luis Potosí, Mexico**

Two yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and one red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) were seized in the backpack of a peddler.<sup>46</sup>



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**June 19, 2017**

**Durango, State of Durango, Mexico**

Three lilac-crowned amazons (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I), 2 white-fronted amazons (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II) and 3 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) were seized.<sup>47</sup>

**PERU**

**April 15, 2017**

**Iquitos, Loreto Region, Peru**

Capture of a yellow and blue macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 3 yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) and a blue-headed parrot (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II) in the "Mercado modelo" market. When the traffickers saw the police, they ran away, abandoning the birds in wire mesh boxes.<sup>48</sup>



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*Pionus menstruus*

**May 2, 2017**

**Tarapoto, San Martín Region, Peru**

Liberation in the Andes cordillera of 12 canary-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II). They had been seized in checks on Tarapoto / Yuri Maguas road and quarantined. "The road checks will continue" announces the ARA (Autoridad Regional Ambiental) of the region of San Martín.<sup>49</sup>



**May 11, 2017**

**Arequipa, Arequipa, Peru**

Rescue of a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II). He was prostrated on pipes hanging from the walls of the street 2nd of May. After a monkey and a snake, it is the 3rd discarded pet that the SERFOR (Servicio Forestal nacional y de fauna silvestre) and the municipal police save and place in specialized refuges since the beginning of the year.<sup>50</sup>

**ASIA**

**CHINA**

**May 2, 2017**

**China**



A drop of 90% in 33 years. Like the ortolans in the south-west of France, the yellow-breasted buntings (*Emberiza aureola*) are endangered in the south of China due to outdated rituals and beliefs. In France, the ortolans are captured on the edge of forests, in corn fields and gardens. In China, the yellow-breasted buntings are captured in rice paddies and their edges. Populations have been diminishing at dizzying rates. Chinese ornithologists estimate that between 1980 and 2013, the population has dropped nine-fold. Everyone knows that eating buntings boosts sexuality and eliminates toxins. A ready-to-eat yellow-breasted bunting sells for \$ 80 HK or \$ 10 US. Ortolans (*Emberiza hortulana*) and yellow-breasted buntings are cousins, both a part of the *Emberiza* genus.<sup>51</sup>

**May 2017**

**Yanhe Tujia Autonomous County, Province of Guizhou, China**

Three convictions to 6 and 7 months prison and 3000 yuan (\$ 435 US) for having captured singing passerines intended to be sold as pets.<sup>52</sup>



**May 4, 2017**

**Jieyang Chaoshan International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**

Bis! Fischer's Lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*, Appendix II) are sought after throughout the entire world. 70 specimens were seized at the airport in a departure terminal and another 13 at the home of the sender. Investigation in progress.<sup>53</sup>

**May 9, 2017**

**Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China**

Social media campaign for the release of a trafficker of chicks. Sentenced to 5 years in prison for the sale of parrots, Wang and his 2 lawyers are fighting like mad men, sending tweet after tweet to alert the public about the injustice of the justice system. Five years in prison for a parrot! The public is outraged. "Five years! Isn't that too long for having raised birds in his own home?" Or of course, the inevitable, "Do the judges have nothing better to do than to occupy themselves with animals?"

Fortunately, other people have kept cool and Traffic China was surprised that a couple of prolific and chimeric parrots produced 50 chicks of 3 different species in one year. In fact, the humble factory worker in Shenzhen and his spouse worked hard at trafficking protected birds and selling them for \$ 70 US each. The facts go back to May 2016, the sentence to March 2017. In the same period, a student trafficking falcons and stealing chicks was condemned to 10 years and 5 months in prison. The young man was a member of a local club specializing in the observation and protection of birds of prey.<sup>54</sup>

**Beginning May, 2017**

**Ürümqi, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China**



The broken body of a gorgeous little white-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*, Appendix II) has just been found by the lake.

The "white bird Lake" is loosing their white-headed ducks. There are only 8 left, 3 males and 5 females. There were 47 in 2012. The lake is 10 km from Ürümqi, population 2 million. Despite the patrols assured by guards and volunteers, there are many disruptions. In the summer, the banks are invaded with barbecues and smokes. Baby white-headed ducks sometimes suck into slicks of oil or petrol. White-headed ducks are shy and fly away when human predators approach their nests to steal the eggs. The white-headed duck is said to be the one who inspired Walt Disney's Donald Duck. Yan Xi and Da Xiang, 2 volunteers, succeed during their weekend in stopping the thieves but most of the eggs will not survive because the hatching was interrupted. It also happens that poachers throw them into the lake to make the evidence disappear. In the range that spreads from Morocco to Russia and from Sweden to India, the remaining population is less than 10,000, maybe even only 5,000 individuals.<sup>55</sup>



**May 2017**

**Baisha li Autonomous County, Province of Hainan, China**

China just can't go without grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). Listing of the "Jaco" in Appendix I entered into force 2 January 2017. Since then, there is a ban on international trade. Except that international trade from breeding farms based in Singapore since 1991 and miraculously accredited by CITES beginning of April 2017 remains legal.<sup>56</sup>

**INDIA**

**April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Hudapara, Nadia District, State of West Bengal, India. On the border with Bangladesh.**



© Leslie Flint

Acting on a tip off, Border Security Forces at the Maluapara outpost seized 49 scarlet-fronted parakeets (*Aratinga wagleri*, Appendix II) inside an abandoned house. No trafficker was arrested. Scarlet-fronted conure parrots live in the Andes forests, at

altitudes of up to 3000 m, from Venezuela to Peru. The birds were handed over to the Kolkata zoo. According to Naveen Chouhan, Deputy Commandant General of South Bengal frontier, this is the second seizure of parrots in 2017.<sup>57</sup>

**April 11, 2017**

**Bombay, State of Maharashtra, India**

In 20 years, 8,000 birds were seized on the Crawford market. The main species concerned are the rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) and the vernal hanging parrot (*Loriculus vernalis*, Appendix II).

In case of police raids, sellers run away to escape the 25,000 rupee (\$ 400 US) fine and then restock in the vicinity of Vashi, Pune, Nashik.

Anjali Mehra, who defends animal rights, denounces the cruelty of this business.

The way birds are caught is barbaric. The trappers wound a chick and leave it in the open on the side of a path. Hearing the cries, other parrots (or parakeets) come to his rescue and are immediately caught by nets. They are then taken to Bombay in small cages. Many die during the journey due to lack of air and water. The High Court of Bombay orders the government of the State and the metropolis of Bombay to close all the illegal stalls of Crawford Market and to ensure that they do not reopen.<sup>58</sup>

**May 8, 2017**

**Vannur, Belgaum District, State of Karnataka, India**

Seizure of 30 eagle-owls (*Bubo bubo bengalensis*, Appendix II) in a house. Chandrappa Mallappa Mirji ran away. For at least 2 years, he has been capturing chicks from nests, raising them at his house, and then selling them in Goa for black magic practices, which require night birds to be tortured and killed. In a few of days, the survivors will be given to the assistant keeper of the Forests of Belagavi.<sup>59</sup>



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**May 17, 2017**

**Kapsethi, Varanasi District (Sitajur), Uttar Pradesh State, India**

Seed poisoning of 6 peacocks. They are hunted for their feathers, for their flesh and for their oil.



Three species living in India are listed in CITES: the green peafowl (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II), the grey peacock-pheasant *Polyplectron bicalcaratum*, Appendix II) and the Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p.35, 92, n°7 pp.25-26, n°8 p.25, n°9 p.16, n°11 pp. 24, 26, 34, n°12 p. 30, n°14 p. 20.<sup>60</sup>



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*Pavo muticus*

**May 21, 2017**

**Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India**

Confiscation of a pair of vernal hanging-parrots (*Loriculus vernalis*, Appendix II) on a Sunday market, selling for 5,000 rupee (\$ 78 US). The vendor faces a fine of 25,000 rupee (\$ 390 US). The birds will be given to the children's Park in Guindy.<sup>61</sup>



**June 12, 2017**

**Chennai, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Seizure of 20 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) on the Marina Beach and arrest of 13 fortune tellers. Birds with wings cut are in small cages except when they "work" from afternoon to after midnight. They are trained to draw with the beak cards thrown on a garment or a rubber carpet. The beach "astrologers" then make their client's horoscope and ask the bird backed in his cage to pray for good things to happen and bad things to move away. There are a hundred fortune tellers on the beaches of Chennai to exercise this profession. In the absence of birds, they use guinea pigs.<sup>62</sup>

**June 14, 2017**

**Dera Bassi, State of Punjab India**

Arrest of Sonu, a young man of 18, for poaching peacock by poisoning. He uses bird's feathers to make magic potions and sells them in his charlatan shop. He also sells to colleagues.<sup>63</sup>



**INDONESIA**

**May 19, 2017**

**Medan, Northern Sumatra Province, Indonesia**

The luxury hotel attracted clients with birds of prey. They were captured by Belawan fishers and are offered / sold to the hotel. Scorpions and BBKSDA intervened.<sup>64</sup>



**End of June, 2017**

**Papua Province, Indonesia**

Birds of paradise (Paradisaeidae family, Appendix II) can sleep with one eye closed. The governor of the province has sent out a circular to all services aiming to ban sale of feathers in souvenir shops and use in traditional and family ceremonies, parades and carnivals.

But those known under the local name Cendrawasih will still sleep with one eye open. It is Papua's turn to be invaded by the palm oil industry, 30,000 hectares of paradise for birds of paradise have been turned into hell by the agribusiness. 900 fires caused by land-clearing have polluted the air since 2013. NGOs denounce Korindo practices, an Indonesian/ Korean conglomerate.<sup>65</sup>

**PHILIPPINES**

**April 2017**

**Bulacain Province, Philippines**

Seizure at a public market of 112 birds, blue-naped parrots (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*, Appendix II), budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*), ring-necked doves (*Streptopelia capicola*), and common hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II).

All of the birds have been entrusted to a Quezon refuge, managed by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Five vendors have been arrested. Charges are being pressed by the Malolos Prosecutor.<sup>66</sup>

**THAILAND**

**April 23, 2017**

**Koh Yao District, Phang Nga Province, Thailand**

Hornbill chicks sell for 3000 to 5000 Baht for a pair (90 to \$150 US) on the market. Thefts from nests are multiplying. The mothers are generally killed during the theft.



This individual is a survivor of the pillage. He is in the good care of a bird shelter in Phang Nga National Park.<sup>67</sup>



## VIET NAM

**April 17, 2017**

### **Hô-Chi-Minh-City, Viet Nam**

A pigeon hawk (*Falco colombarius*, Appendix II) was seized in front of a beer pub, chained to an advertising sign. The hawk had been spotted by a member of ENV, who warned the Hô-Chi-Minh-City Forest Protection Department. After their services intervened, the owner accepted to turn the bird over to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Center.<sup>68</sup>



*Falco colombarius*

## EUROPE

## SPAIN

**April 30, 2017**

### **Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain**

They did not hesitate to staple poisonous pesticide capsules banned in the European Union on bird legs attached to a 50 m long thread. Several raptors, including the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) were trapped and died poisoned. The facts happened between 2014 and 2015. They were sentenced to 10 months in prison. Their goal to eradicate birds of prey in the area to have a clear sky for their race pigeons during the training flights.<sup>69</sup> Cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 31



## FRANCE

**April 13, 2017**

### **Dax, Department of Landes, France**

Thirteen poachers of ortolans and finches who violently attacked activists from the LPO (League for the Protection of Birds) on November 9, 2015 (see "On the Trail" n°11 p.28) were sentenced to € 800 fines and costs of proceedings. In addition, they must pay € 3,000 in damages to Allain Bougrain-Dubourg, president of the LPO, who was personally targeted by the brutality. Poachers have been fined, some of them suspended. All the defendants escaped prison sentence, even suspended. The man with the shovel decided to appeal the damages he must pay to the LPO's leader.<sup>70</sup>



**June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

### **Fonroque, Dordogne Department, France**

In Fonroque, a shamanistic festival takes place around a sacred fire and "discovery" workshops. A trafficker hastened there to sell 561 feathers taken from scarlet macaws (*Aramacoo*, Appendix I), falcons (*Falconidae* Family, Appendix I or II), sea eagles (*Haliaeetus* spp., Appendix I or II), eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), snowy owls (*Bubo scandiacus*, Appendix II), barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), Eurasian buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), bay-winged hawks (*Parabuteo unicinctus*, Appendix II), and cockatoos (*Cacatuidae* spp., Appendix I or II). The suspect claims to have gathered all of these trophies in the wild, which would mean that she roamed the Arctic, North America, South America, and Northern Europe.<sup>71</sup>





## ITALY

### OPERATION ADORNO

**May 2017**

#### **Catona, Reggio de Calabre Province, Italy**

The anti-poaching mission is on alert in the area. A house search led to the seizure of several arms and ammunition, powder and several stuffed animals, including a black stork (*Ciconia nigra*, Appendix II). The man, known only as L.S., is free and awaiting trial.<sup>72</sup>



**May 25, 2017**

#### **Misilmeri, Palermo Province, Italy**

The 27-year-old young man kept 42 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) in the storeroom of a cafeteria. The living conditions were indefensible. The birds were destined to be sold on the Sunday Ballaro market in Palermo. Three hours after the seizure, they were released in the Villa d'Orleans Park in Palermo.<sup>73</sup>

**May 2017**

#### **Arzano, Campania Region, Italy**

The man used social media to offer to buy falcons (*Falconidae* spp., Appendix I or II). He fell into a trap set by the municipal police and by Agriambiente agents.<sup>74</sup>

**June 2017**

#### **Bari, Puglia Region, Italy**

Seizure of a monk parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II) and a golden-mantled rosella (*Platycercus eximius*, Appendix II) at a Chinese store in the city center.

It has been noted for some time that both species tend to settle north of Bari. Specimens would have escaped from a breeding farm.<sup>75</sup>

## NETHERLANDS

**April 2, 2017**

#### **Artis Zoo, Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

One or more thieves broke into the Artis Zoo one night and stole 10 of the 14 eggs. One of the 48 Pink pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) broke a leg and died from the injury. The entire flock was disturbed in the middle of nesting season. The zoo has pressed charges for cruelty to animals, theft and vandalism. No suspects have been arrested and the surveillance cameras did not record anything. According to the zoo director, the eggs could still hatch if they are handled carefully. Is there a plan out there somewhere to start a Pink pelican breeding farm?<sup>76</sup>



## UNITED KINGDOM

**April 10, 2017**

#### **Sheffield, South Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom**

Dwaine Tavernor, 34, has been sentenced to 25 days of community service, court costs of £ 85 (\$ 100 US) and has been banned from owning animals for 2 years, except for aquarium fish, for having illegally owned a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II), captured in the wild and initially ringed as a "legal" barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) raised in captivity (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.36).<sup>77</sup>



**May 31, 2017**

#### **County of Shropshire, United Kingdom**

Poisoning of a pair of peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and rescue of the 3 chicks thanks to the intervention of a mountaineer of the group Adventures Are Us in spite of the rain. The operation was coordinated by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).<sup>78</sup>



# Pangolins

Entered into force on January 2017, the listing of pangolins in CITES Appendix I and the strengthened sanctions on traffic have had no immediate effects. Police and customs continue to seize in Hong Kong, Viet Nam, Malaysia. Small scattered traffic is often associated with ivory and smuggling arrangements are sometimes unexpected. Pangolin scales and raw ivory pieces were found in frozen salmon bellies.

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°17

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

Continent	Country	US\$/animal	Réf.
Africa	Uganda	550	5
	Zimbabwe	5000	6

## "On the Trail " n°17

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Réf.
Asia	China	720	2
	China	290	7
	China (Hong Kong)	82	8
	Malaysia	2950	14
	Malaysia	2970	17

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### Beginning of May 2017

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

Seizure of a live pangolin thanks to the intervention of the K9 canine brigade in the Lifestyle shopping center. <sup>1</sup>

## BENIN

#### April 26, 2017

##### Dassa-Zoumé, Collines Department, Benin

Depending on the source, 2 or 3 traffickers have been arrested. There were 2 live pangolins in a hotel room, hidden in a box. *L'Informateur*, a Beninese media source, cites a release from the French Press Agency, saying 500 g of pangolin meat sells for 500 yuan (\$ 72 US) on the markets in the Chinese province of Guangdong and a kilogram of scales sells for 5000 yuan (\$ 720 US) in dens. <sup>2</sup>

## CAMEROON

#### April 14, 2017

##### Messamena, Haut-Nyong Department, East Region, Cameroon

A "notorious" trafficker according to local press, semi-wholesaler with a shop in Massamena, was arrested during a joint operation led by the Forest and Hunting Control office and the police, with technical support provided by The Last Great Ape Organization. Several investigations were under way on this 37-year-old man whose trade network spread all the way to Yaoundé and Douala, where he would sell poached species and in exchange bought goods for his shop. 118 kg of pangolin scales were seized. Now in custody, the trafficker faces up to 3 years in prison. <sup>3</sup>

## KENYA

#### June 19, 2017

##### Kishushe, Makueni County, Kenya

Specimen in custody. Court date for the suspect. <sup>4</sup>

## UGANDA

#### End of April , 2017

##### Abim District, Northern Region, Uganda

Three men, including Felix Orebo, a 44-year-old police officer and Omara Sylvester, a 45-year-old nursing aid, were tricked by the police and by a team from the NRCN (Natural Resource Conservation Network). The arrest took place at Angelina's guesthouse. The three men wanted to sell a live pangolin and 2 skinned pangolins for a total weight of 10.1 kg for 6 million Ugandan shilling (\$ 1660 US). <sup>5</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

**April 1 and 20, 2017**

### **Chipinge, Province of Manicaland, Zimbabwe**

In his Jeep Cherokee, the former Minister of Energy, Hubert Nyanhongo, had a pangolin that weighed close to 10 kg and was worth \$ 5,000 US on the black market. Three weeks after his arrest, he was freed on bail for \$ 200 US and required to go to the police station in Chipinge every week. His passport was confiscated to reduce the risks of escaping. The ex-minister was given away by an agent in the Savé Valley Conservancy who had introduced himself to the Minister as a potential buyer.<sup>6</sup>

## ASIA

## CHINA

**Mid-May 2017**

### **Jiaoling County, Guangdong Province, China**

Conviction to 10 months jail suspended and to 10,000 yuan (\$ 1500 US) fine for having bought 73 kg of scales of pangolins for 2000 yuan (\$ 290 US) per kilo.<sup>7</sup>



**May 29, 2017**

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

7.2 tons of scales taken in Hong Kong, this time in the container terminal at the harbor. The catch was worth an estimated \$ 4,600,000 HK (\$ 590,000 US) and is one of the biggest in the recent history of the Territory. The 20-foot long container came from Nigeria, and was declared as "wood charcoal." It contained nothing but bags of scales. The loot discovered by the customs officers of the port represents an estimated 21,600 killed pangolins.<sup>8</sup>

**May 31, 2017**  
**China**

He was selling a mother pangolin and her babies on WeChat. Disturbed by police, he boasts having "raised" 30 specimens. "Raised" is no doubt the wrong word. As many others have done, he bought them on the black market and force fed them for weeks to the point that the fattest weighed 14 kg. Pangolins are sold by the kilo to restaurants.<sup>9</sup>



## GANG

**June 3, 2017**

### **Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province and Fangcheng, Nanning, Dongxing, and Wuzhou Districts, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China**

Simultaneous raids at dawn. Arrest of 46 suspects. Seizure of 200 turtles, a Komodo dragon, 16 kg of pangolin scales, 26 living pangolins and culinary specialties, and 90 million yuan in cash (\$ 13,269,000 US). The Chinese press has published reminders that pangolin scales and meat have no medical effect, but living pangolins have a real ecological effect. An adult pangolin eliminates the "termite

threat" in 250 hectares of forest. The network supply came from Vietnamese sources, transported by river. The Beilun river crosses the border. Since June 2016, 5000 animals, mostly pangolins, have been illegally imported.<sup>10</sup>



## INDIA

**Beginning of May 2017**

### **State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Nandal Mongia was arrested by the Special Task Force of the wildlife wing of Madhya Pradesh. That makes the 129<sup>th</sup> arrest of a pangolin scale trafficker in the country. Nandal Mongia may also be a member of a network that is dealing with red-crowned roofed turtles (*Batagur kachuga*, Appendix I), freshwater tortoises captured in the Chambal river in the north of India.<sup>11</sup>

## INDONESIA

**April 29, 2017**

### **Riau sector, Pekanbaru, Sumatra, Indonesia**

A man, only referred to by police as T.H., was arrested at home this Saturday evening, caught in possession of a skin and scales weighing a total of 6.5 kg. The "goods" seized are assumed to be from Bengkalis Island, near Sumatra across from Malaysia. Pangolin skin makes expensive leather. It can also be used to make bulletproof vests.<sup>12</sup>

**June 13, 2017**

### **Belawan, Island of Sumatra, Northern Sumatra Province, Indonesia**

Discovery in a warehouse of 23 living pangolins, 24 frozen pangolins and several dozen kilos of scales. The place served as a collection center, slaughterhouse, and scale extraction workshop. The total capture is estimated to be worth about \$ 190,000 US. The 2 arrested suspects are small players in a large network that exports to peninsular Malaysia. Final destination China.<sup>13</sup> Belawan, cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p.117, n°11 p. 32





## MALAYSIA

### Beginning of May, 2017

#### Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Sepang, Selangor, Malaysia

Seized in 2 instances in the cargo section in the airport:

- Eight bags with 408 kg of scales from Ghana, transited through Dubai

- Ten sacks with 304 kg of scales from Kinshasa, Republic of Congo, transited through Nairobi (Kenya) and Dubai (United Arab Emirates).

The total value is estimated by the authorities to be 9.2 million ringgit (\$ 2.1 million US), or \$ 2950 US per kg. The scales were declared as "general products" and "dry herbs".<sup>14</sup>

### May 23, 2017

#### Kedah State, Malaysia

The Chinese occupants were not there. Seven police officers and National Park agents laid their hands on 141 living pangolins. They will soon be released into the wild, if the judge gives the order. If not, the unfortunate pangolins will become pieces of evidence and will die one after another in a shelter.<sup>15</sup>

### June 9, 2017

#### Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Selangor State, Malaysia

It is the third of the month. Confiscation of 288 kg of scales. The Turkish Airlines plane came from Accra, once again.<sup>16</sup>

### June 15, 2017

#### Kuala Lumpur International Airport, State of Selangor, Malaysia

Seizure of 393.5 kg of scales registered as "oyster shells" coming from Ghana via Istanbul on a Turkish Airlines flight. Total value: 5 million RM (1,168,000 US\$ i.e. \$ 2970 US/kg).<sup>17</sup>



## NEPAL

### June 6 and 7, 2017

#### Central Development Region, Nepal

Successive arrest of 2 small players in a network. The first, 43 years old, had 930 g of scales on him. The second, 39 years old, had 307 g on him.<sup>18</sup>

## PHILIPPINES

### Mid April 2017

#### Puerto Princesa, Palawan Province, Philippines

Locally, they are called "balintogs." William Lee, 32, of Taiwanese nationality, who runs a seafood business, is suspected to selling them. The police discovered two pangolins in freezers. Lee was denounced by one of his employees. The Chief Inspector, Mark Allen Palacio, says that selling pangolins is a common business practice for Lee, who could get 12 years in prison and a fine of a million Philippine pesos, \$ 20,000 US.<sup>19</sup>

## VIET NAM

### April 4, 2017

#### Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Two seizures adding up to 511 kg of scales. The two packages came from Ghana. They had left Accra on 27 February 2017. These last 10 years, 54.8 tons of frozen pangolins and 14.7 t of scales were seized in the country.<sup>20</sup>

## GANG

### April 5, 2017

#### Lac Thinh town, Yen Thuy District, Province of Hoa Binh, Viet Nam

A patrol that was checking vehicles on Hồ-Chi-Minh Road, at kilometre 492, chased a minibus several tens of kilometres after it smashed 2 police cars breaking through the barrage. After shooting several bullets at the wheels, police forces finally used a rifle to stop it. Two of the occupants managed to escape, but the driver, Phan Xuan Bao, was arrested. Inside the minibus were 118 pangolins - total weight 550 kg - stuffed into bags. Five were dead. The survivors were given for care to the NGO Save Viet Nam's Wildlife to be, if possible, nursed back to health and set free in the forest. Those who survived were released between April 28 and May 6 in the Cuc Phong National Park.<sup>21</sup>



### May 14, 2017

#### Thanh Hóa, Thanh Hóa Province, Viet Nam

Capture in a vehicle of 31 pangolins weighing a total of 122.3 kg, averaging 4 kg per individual.<sup>22</sup>

### May 28, 2017

#### Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

The environmental police assisted by a team of Communist Youth stops a car coming from Laos. A 3.7 kg pangolin is seized. Bought in Laos, he was going to be sold in Viet Nam to "make profit."<sup>23</sup>

# Pangolins and Elephants



## AFRICA

### GABON

**May 10, 2017**

#### **Near Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

Interception of Zhang Guanzheng, worker for the public works company CRBC in Lambaréné with in his luggage an elephant tusk cut in 4 sections, a civet skin and pangolin scales.<sup>1</sup>

### UGANDA

**May 2, 2017**

#### **Uganda**

The special status of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) is the source of many problems. UWA is authorized to develop its own financial resources, to establish budgetary priorities, and to make decisions on its expenses. Since its creation in 2000, UWA has been the target of many investigations on wildlife management and on financial irregularities. In a letter addressed to Irene Mulyagonja, Inspectorate General of Government, President Yoweri Museveni asked for an investigation on the numerous instances of corruption and trafficking of endangered species involving UWA.

-The President, in his letter, brought up a litigious permit for the exportation of 7.3 tons of pangolin scales to Laos. The permit was attributed in 2015 by the UWA to Smith Ewa Maku, owner of the SmicoSkin Craft Industries Ltd (see "On the Trail" n°8 p.42, n°9 p. 30).

-The President also evoked the 2014 disappearance of 1335 kg of Ivory – worth an estimated 3 million Ugandan shilling (\$ 1,193,000 US at the time) from the UWA warehouses (see "On the Trail" n°7 p. 82, n°8, p. 73 and p. 94)

-The President cites shady behavior on the part of the director of the UWA. He allegedly asked for bribes from several banks, threatening to transfer the UWA accounts to other establishments. Extravagant travel expenses were also mentioned in the letter.



-The President asked for an explanation of the purchase of a software program that tracks gorillas. Its purchase and use were not part of planned procedures.

-The President's request created a diplomatic incident. Yoweri Museveni was talking about an ivory traffic in which 2 diplomats from the Chinese embassy in Kampala, Li Weijin and Yinzhi, were involved. They are suspected of being members of a network that uses Uganda as a transit point and organization center for ivory poached in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and in South Sudan. The Chinese diplomats are suspected of having benefitted from the connivance of the UWA. The spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry of China qualified these accusations as "completely unfounded," although the Chinese ambassador in Uganda, Zheng Zhuqiang, nonchalantly declared, "It is all totally wrong; no one at the embassy is known by such names. I think The President needs to check his sources of information"

As a result, to preserve good relations with Beijing, the government was forced to contradict the President. In a communiqué from June 12, the Foreign Affairs Ministry said that an error had been made and that Li Weijin and Yinzhi had never worked with the Chinese Embassy.<sup>2</sup>

## ASIA

### VIET NAM

**May 4, 2017**

#### **Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Hô-Chi-Minh-City, Viet Nam**

Customs found more than 4 kg of bracelets, various jewellery and pieces of African elephant ivory and 200 g of pangolin scales in a 34-year-old woman's suitcase, a Vietnamese woman coming from Angola. The objects were wrapped in plastic sheets and hidden inside powdered milk boxes and inside the bellies of frozen salmon. The value of the lot is estimated worth 250 million VND (about \$ 11,000 US).<sup>3</sup>



# Primates

The main trafficking hotbeds are South America, Central and West Africa, Indonesia and Indochinese peninsula. Contrasting with the avalanche of cruelties and the devastating effects of deforestation, there are flashes of humaneness and phased releases into the wild for gibbons, orangutans and lorises.

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

June 30, 2017

**Douala International Airport, Littoral Region, Cameroon**

Aborted attempt to export 2 female chimpanzees about 20 years old. A 56 year old man is being questioned by police. He is somewhat famous in the trafficking milieu. He had held captive the 2 great apes for 2 decades and took the chance of a "good deal" to sell them internationally. The case has just opened. The buyer's identity is still unknown. The man and his accomplice will appear before the public prosecutor beginning of July. The 2 chimps were taken to the Limbe shelter.<sup>1</sup>

### COTE D'IVOIRE

#### FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 9 and 28, 2017

**Côte d'Ivoire**

Two traffickers of baby chimpanzees were sentenced to 6 months in prison. Ibrahima and Mohamed Traore were arrested in December 2016 by the police and Interpol. Caught in the act, they were trying to sell a baby chimpanzee a few months old to a BBC journalist pretending to be a representative for a rich Asian buyer. The Traore brothers boasted about selling each baby for around \$ 1400 US and supplying false export permits, in this particular case supposedly from the National Park services of Liberia. The baby chimpanzee is staying in the Abidjan zoo. His caretakers and veterinarians are worried. He drinks from the bottle but remains sickly.



Because he is so young, he cannot be put in with the other chimpanzees and he is bored.

Today, the Traores are free and nothing indicates that they will stop their horrible trafficking. Lamine Faye, lawyer for the Côte d'Ivoire's government, would have liked a more dissuasive penalty. "We are required to work within the framework of a law that dates from 1965." More than 50 years later, a new law is in the works.

Latest news, the baby chimp died.<sup>2</sup>

### GUINEA

#### FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 14, 2017

**Kaloum, Conakry Region, Guinea**

They might not be behind bars for much longer (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 96). The Sidibés, father and son, involved in an international trade in chimpanzees, gorillas, and manatees, have only been sentenced to a year and 4 months in prison, of which 9 months were suspended for one, and 2 months for the other. They were also required to pay a "symbolic 1 franc" for damages inflicted on the Guinean State. The Sidibés made their fortune thanks to wildlife trafficking. Their bank statements were presented in court and show money transfers of \$ 450,000 US via Western Union. The prosecutor and the Minister of the environment are appealing.<sup>3</sup>



### MALAWI

May 2017

**Malawi**

Three convictions with 30 months long sentences. The sentences run concurrently.

-Thirty months for unauthorised entry into the Nyika National Park.

-Thirty months with forced labor for transporting into the Park 37 metal traps and a knife.

-Thirty months with forced labor for having killed 2 monkeys inside the Park.

The prosecutor insisted on the wild animal population decline in the Park because of poaching, on the subsequent disinterest of tourists and therefore loss of revenue for the Park administration.<sup>4</sup>





**May 20, 2017**

**Nyika National Park, North Region, Malawi**

Max the Blue is free! It has been years now since this young orphaned blue monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis*, Appendix II) has been removed from the clutches of a roadside wildlife vendor. He is now an adult and for ages has been eagerly squeaking inside the training pen where he was to re-learn life in the wild. He was carefully placed inside the Park in a patch with tall trees and a small river crossing. It wasn't long before his early life instincts come back to him.<sup>5</sup>

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

**April 21, 2017**

**Lwiro, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Since the start of the Lwiro shelter, there has never been such an influx of arrivals, all of them war orphans and survivors of trafficking.

The female chimpanzee and the baby owl-faced monkey (*Cercopithecus hamlyni*, Appendix II) come from Shabunda.<sup>6</sup>



**May 22, 2017**

**Lwiro, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Two months. A weak orphan. Drinking powdered milk. Rescued in the nick of time in Lwiro.<sup>7</sup>

**June 12-14, 2017**

**Virunga National Park, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Rescue by the Gorilla Doctors of Senkwekwe, the jungle clinic, of a young female mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*, Appendix I) dehydrated, infected, on the brink of death, kept for several days, may be a week, in the trap laid by a poacher. On the spot, there was no choice but to amputate a foot, just before dark. From June 14, she began accepting to eat again. Another good sign, she bit her caretakers twice. This renewed energy is not enough to guarantee a favorable outcome.<sup>8</sup>



**ARGENTINA**

**May 19, 2017**

**Salsipuedes, Province of Córdoba, Argentina**

As part of a robbery investigation, the police returned from the raid with sticks of dynamite, weapons and a black howler (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II) taken to the howler monkeys sanctuary in La Cumbre.<sup>9</sup>

**June 29, 2017**

**Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina**

After 5 years of captivity and a chain around his neck, the black howler (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II) was wandering from roof to roof in the neighborhood of Quilmes. The rescuers had enormous difficulties to catch him and put him in a safe place. When he was on a tree at the corner of General Belgrano's avenue and the 347th street, they even introduced him a female to lure him. But he did not move. They had to anesthetize him and get him back with a net.<sup>10</sup>

**BRAZIL**

**April 30, 2017**

**Ponta Porã, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil**

Seizure and rescue of a white throated capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II). He was chained around the waist to a wheelbarrow and mistreated by a 58-year-old woman. She says that "the monkey is her son." She claimed to have raised him since he was very young. A witness affirmed that she hit the frail animal.<sup>11</sup>

**May 5, 2017**

**Palmas, State of Tocantins, Brazil**

Voluntary hand over of a young black howler (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II). He had trouble adapting to his new diet. Held in captivity for 9 months, he was fed biscuits and lollipops.<sup>12</sup>

**19 juin 2017**

**Mirassol, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Seven marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), 11 black tufted capuchins (*Cebus nigratus*, Appendix II) and 2 parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) were seized. Three arrests.

Fine of 10,000 real (\$ 3060 US) for each one. The monkeys and the birds were captured in the forests near Bady Bassitt.<sup>13</sup>



## OPERATION BEETHOVEN 7

June 20, 2017

**Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil**

Seizure of a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II) abused in the home of a 25 years old woman.<sup>14</sup>

30 juin 2017

**Santos, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

A black howler (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II) of 4 years old was seized in a house.<sup>15</sup>



*Alouatta caraya*

## COLOMBIA

April 11-17, 2017

**Medellin, Antioquia Department, Colombia**

Theft of 4 pygmy marmosets (*Callithrix pygmaea*, Appendix II) from the Medellin Zoo, 2 adults and 2 babies. The thieves entered the facility at dawn and dodged the 32 cameras, 6 watchmen and electric fences. The director was very worried; it was the first pregnancy of the female. She was following a fortified diet. Fingerprints were taken. A few days later, the male was found thanks to his electronic chip and the female and her babies were found in a public park.<sup>16</sup>

June 25, 2017

**Puerto Boyacá, Boyacá Department, Colombia**

A suspect is being questioned. He was carrying a white-fronted capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*, Appendix II) on his back.<sup>17</sup>

## MEXICO

April 28, 2017

**Campeche, State of Campeche, Mexico**

Monchito, the young spider monkey (*Ateles spp.*, Appendix I or II) stolen a few days ago from an "ecological center" of the city was spotted atop a tree in the city and snatched from this precarious freedom by the firefighters who brought him back to his enclosure.<sup>18</sup>

## PANAMA

April 11, 2017

**Monagrillo, Herrera Province, Panama**

Seizure of a female Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II) in a circus.<sup>19</sup>

## PARAGUAY

May 25, 2017

**Itaugua, Central Department, Paraguay**

Rescue by the firefighters of a black howler (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II). He had fled from his prison and hid in a tree.<sup>20</sup>

## PERU



April 9, 2017

**Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport, Cusco, Cusco Province, Peru**

Seizure of a young tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II). He was about to fly to Lima. The scanner found the animal. He seemed very tired.<sup>21</sup>

ASIA

## CAMBODIA

June 10 and 12, 2017

**Province of Mondol Kiri, Cambodia**

"The stomach of black-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*, Appendix I) are sold on the market for medical treatments" says a WCS spokesperson. Charge on Touch Rath, 51, and Chhin Sreng, 40. In the Keo Seima wildlife sanctuary, they were carrying firearms and 2 dead black-shanked doucs. Between June 2016 and the end of May 2017, 157 poachers were charged in Keo Seima.<sup>22</sup>

## INDIA

June 14, 2017

**State of Assam, India**

Release in Kaziranga Park of 2 hoolock gibbons (*Bunopithecus hoolock*, Appendix I) rescued in a shelter since 2009 and 2013. Placed in a two-compartment cage at the top of a tree and constantly replenished with fruit, they started to sing and to call congeners after a few weeks. The doors were opened after a hundred days. After a period of observation, they went for adventure from branch to branch. The crucial point is food self-sufficiency. "For a while, food gathered in the forest will be left in the vicinity of the place of release in case they settle here" adds the veterinarian who monitors the rehabilitation for wildlife. The operation was coordinated by IFAW, the Wildtrust of India and the forestry services of Assam.<sup>23</sup>



## INDONESIA

### ORANGUTANS

**April 9, 2017**

**Kongbeng, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

The male orangutan was expelled from his home by a palm oil tree army. He has been displaced to a place said to be safer.<sup>24</sup>

**April 13, 2017**

**Lesten, Aceh Province, Indonesia**

The baby orangutan's manly name is Ahok. He had been in a cage for more than a year. The person who adopted him doesn't seem to be very good with morphology. Ahok is a female. She is now in the hands of caretakers who will nurse her back to health and prepare her for the outside world.<sup>25</sup>

**April 29, 2017**

**Tangerang, Kapuas Regency, Kalimantan Central Province, Indonesia**

Rescue of a female albino about 5 years old. She had been held in Tangerang for only a short time and still has her forest reflexes. Let's hope that she will be released quickly, instead of being showed in who-knows-what zoo or curiosity show.<sup>26</sup>



**May 3, 2017**

**Rabak, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Two years in there. At 4 years old, he should be with his mother, who would teach him how to climb to the top of trees and how to hang, build nests and to pick out fruit.<sup>27</sup>



**June 4, 2017**

**Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

He was named Rambo by his master Taufik. He ate rice, spicy dishes, drank soda. Taufik said that he "found" him in 2014, after a forest fire near Terantang. Rambo had burns on his hands when he was unchained and transferred to a transit center for the rehabilitation of wildlife.<sup>29</sup>



**May 23, 2017**

**Tanjung Puting National Park, South Kalimantan Province and Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park, Indonesia**

It's the celebration of the week!

Ten orangutans have returned to the forest. NGOs face two major challenges.

- The excessive number of refugees in their rehabilitation centers, where bears, gibbons, binturongs (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India) and southern cassowaries (*Casuarius casuarius*) are also waiting for freedom.

"We still have 400 orangutans locked up in our facility" says BOS's director. This year, Borneo Orangutan Survival aims to free 100 of them in the forests where they were born and to place 100 in the forests of an island, a passage in semi-freedom essential before letting them go in what remains of rainforest.

- The second difficulty is to find forests large and nourishing enough to welcome these new arrivals without them entering in social, food and territorial competition with the orangutans already living there.

The authorities of Central Kalimantan neighbouring Southern Kalimantan are being blamed for leaving the food industry expand on virgin territories still in 2017. The plots proposed for the release of orangutans are haunted by hunters and poachers.

Orangutan Foundation International, the other NGO that released 4 specimens the same week, is trying to find territorial partnership agreements with Sinar Mas and Pt Rimba Raya that operate tens of thousands of acres of oil palms.<sup>28</sup>



Male, 16 year-old, 79 kg



Female, 14 year-old, 37 kg



Carmen



Suzan, 13 year-old, 40,4 kg



**June 8, 2017**

**Kecamatan of Besitang, Langkat Regency, Northern Sumatra Province, Indonesia**

Exfiltration of a mother and her 2-year-old son. They were confined in a palm oil plantation. After a medical check up, they were released into the Leuser National Park.<sup>30</sup>

**June 9, 2017**

**Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park, Western Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Freed after several years in captivity.

-Amin, the male, was rescued in March 2013. He was in the hands of a worker at the PT Karya Utama Tambang bauxite mine (KUT). He was attached at the neck by a chain and his body was covered in wounds.

-Shila, the female, was 7 years old. Abandoned, she was roaming on the outskirts of the Monterado village. Misfortune seemed inevitable. As a precaution, she was captured by agents of the province and naturalists.

They were both readjusted to life in the wild. Climbing, gathering, eating fruit, making nests in the tops of trees to sleep in. Before being placed in the open forests, they were placed in a batch of trees. Nothing abnormal was observed in their behavior. A green light for the jungle. The trip for the orangutans and their carriers took 17 hours on the road, one hour by boat and 4 hours on foot.<sup>31</sup>

**June 15, 2017**

**Ujung pandang, Bakongan Kecamatan, Southern Aceh Kabupaten, Aceh Province, Indonesia**

A 35-year-old female was successfully rescued in the middle of Ramadan and after 6 hours of work. She was shut up and in danger inside a palm oil plantation. After anesthesia, awakening and a health check up, she was transferred to Gunung Leuser National Park.<sup>32</sup>

**June 2017**

**Kapuas Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Conviction of the main culprit of the massacre of an orangutan in an oil palm plantation (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.43) to 2 years and 9 months in prison.<sup>33</sup>



**April 9, 2017**

**Manonjaya, Province of Western Java, Indonesia**

14 Javan slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) were confiscated from a trafficker by the Agency for Conservation of Natural Resources (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam – BKSDA) and police, and were taken in pitiful condition to a veterinary centre run by the NGO International Animal Rescue (IAR). The 6 females, 7 males and a young individual whose sex has not been determined were locked in small and filthy cages. They suffered from dehydration and diarrhoea, and some had wounds from fights due to overcrowding. Luckily their teeth had not yet been broken, a usual practice used by sellers to prevent them from biting their jailor or the buyer.

"Once the legal process is completed and their health is restored, they will be released back into the wild," declared Nur Purba Priambada, vet at IAR's Centre for Rescue and Rehabilitation of macaques and lorises, near Bogor (Western Java).

According to Karmele Llano Sanchez, program director for IAR Indonesia, "Hundreds of these protected primates are sold each year in seven big markets in four major cities across Indonesia. An average of three slow lorises are taken from the wild each day to supply the illegal pet trade." During the search, 2 live falcons and an eagle foot (species not specified) were also seized.<sup>34</sup>

**April 13, 2017**

**Temajuk Village, Province of Kalimantan, Borneo, Indonesia**

Acting on information according to which 17 slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) were being held in a tourist resort for the clients' entertainment, 3 BKSDA agents along with a team from International Animal Rescue visited Camar Bulan hamlet. Only 10 lorises were found inside the hotel, 3 of which lay dead among their companions. The bodies were rotting. The lorises were kept outdoors, fenced in by a 50-cm high enclosure surrounding a 48 m<sup>2</sup> area. Their prison decoration consisted of 3 trees, and at night, spotlights would glare down on them so that the animals could be seen at all times. According to information provided by the resort's employees (as the owner was absent), the slow lorises had been bought for 100,000 rupee (\$ 7.5 US) a piece from local villagers. After the animals were officially handed over by one of the employees, they were taken to the BKSDA forest outpost in Pontianak, where they were greeted by 2 other slow lorises seized in Kubu Raya (Western Kalimantan). They all were transferred to the Primate Rehabilitation center in Ketapang. Vets found them in very poor condition. Broken teeth and infected gums. They all were undernourished. They suffered from severe dehydration, diarrhoea, heart arrhythmia. A female named Gia did not survive, despite the intensive care.

For Alan Knight, executive director of the center, "It is no wonder that the lorises being kept at the resort were in such poor condition. [...] Slow lorises are shy nocturnal primates. They spend their days sleeping, hidden away deep in the forest, and emerge in the cool darkness of the night to hunt for food. These captive lorises were victims of shocking cruelty and neglect. Had our team not rescued them, I have no doubt that more of them would have died before too much longer."

"It is also worth alerting other potential visitors to the location via online travel sites such as Tripadvisor."<sup>35</sup>

**May 11, 2017**

**Mount Ciremai, Province of West Java, Indonesia**

At least 1/3 of the slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) captured in forests die through stress, dehydration and open wounds before they are even sold on the Internet, markets and streets.

In 2016, the Indonesian control services, with the help of civil society, spotted 625 lorises for sale on 50 Facebook pages. Lorises are protected by Act No. 5 of 1990 and by Regulation No. 7 of 1999.

Eighteen females and 12 males, including a one-month-old baby with his mother, were released into the Mont Ciremai National Park (see "On the Trail" n°16, p.45). After being seized from traffickers, they were convalescing and learning to take again the plunge into the wilderness.

The government wants to restore the biological functionality and food chains of Mount Ciremai National Park. These survivors of online traffic will contribute. The Natural Resources Agency of the Province of West Java, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Park directors participated in the ceremony, VIPs at the bedside of slow lorises and of the National Park extending over 150 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>36</sup>



## MALAYSIA

**June 21, 2017**

**Padang Besar, State of Perlis, Border between Thailand/Malaysia**

The 2 baby orangutans have had a narrow escape. Any more and they would have passed the border in company of 51 clear water turtles and permanently lost any hope of ever being set free into their home forest in Borneo or Sumatra.<sup>37</sup>

## THAILAND

**Beginning of May 2017**

**Thailand**



Electrocuted by the side of a heavy traffic road.<sup>38</sup>

**May and June 2017**

**Thailand**

The WFFT-Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand was confronted by ordinary and extraordinary cruelty. They saved several wild animals listed in Appendices I and II of CITES, and yet mistreated in captivity or savagely attacked on the outskirts of cities.

-An Oriental small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II) fed on dog biscuits and having never seen or eaten a fish in its life. It was bought a year ago on Facebook and was languishing at back of a courtyard in Bangkok. There are several otter breeders in the country that supply the pet market. In their last natural aquatic habitats, otters are threatened by pollution and lack of food. Fish are more and more rare.

facebook





- A Long tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) was hit by a metal arrow. It was stuck in the skull, under the right eye. Alerted by witnesses, a care team succeeded in capturing the torture victim. He is being treated. He could pull through.



-Another Long tailed macaque, a female, was electrocuted and got 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns from touching electric lines. Thousands of wild animals are electrocuted each year. The other plagues that weigh on the species are their sale to the public and the world market for animal experimentation.



-A pig-tailed macaque was chained by the neck for 4 years in a Buddhist temple. He grew, but the chain did not. At the time of his rescue, it was incrustated in his flesh. He was captured at a very young age in a forest near the temple.



-A female white-handed gibbon (*Hylobates lar*, Appendix I) about 15 years old and originally from the Kaeng Krachan National Park, on the bordered with Myanmar. Very young, she was stranded at the home of a couple that treated her as a child. She wore diapers 24/7 and ate cooked food. She remained captive all her life, or practically, and her "parents" gave her anti-depressants. After all this ordeal, the WFFT rescued a disabled "old lady", whereas at the age of 15, she should be bouncing around and of prime age. The caretakers, despite their attentive care, have not yet heard her singing and she slowly is habituating to sunlight.<sup>39</sup>



## REPEATED OFFENSE

June 2017

**Songkhla Province, Thailand**

Seizure in a car with a registration number in Malaysia of 2 baby orangutans and 3 dozen turtles tied together. The introduction of orangutans in Thailand via the Malaysian peninsula expanded with a "revival" of the orangutan bellboy in houses and the use of orangutans for public amusement in attraction parks, and not only in Thailand but also in Laos and in China. The turtles were going to be sold at the Jatujak Sunday market in Bangkok. The driver is in detention on suspicion. This was not his first offense. Unfortunately, he was freed on bail. He was heading for Hatyai, a city known for wildlife traffic in Thailand and beyond.<sup>40</sup>

## VIET NAM

April 5, 2017

**Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam**

A Buddhist monk got rid of a macaque that he claims to have found injured in the forest. He kept the macaque chained to a tree.<sup>41</sup>





**April 11, 2017**

**Vinh Hiep, Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam**

Two pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) were bored to tears in the coffee shop "Reach On." They spent their time trying unsuccessfully to bite customers. They are now free in the Hon Ba Reserve.<sup>42</sup>

**April 12, 2017**

**Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Viet Nam**

A trafficker who put a purchase offer for a loris online was caught red-handed and arrested in a public park. A member of Education for Nature - Viet Nam had noticed the advertisement. He negotiated with the vendor, set up a meeting with him and then gave the information to the Hanoi environmental police. The loris, weighing 300 g, was for sale on yeuthung.com for 800,000 dong (about \$ 35 US).<sup>43</sup>



**April 18-19, 2017**

**Dak Lak Province and Le Thuy District, Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam**

-A northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*) is back in the forest after having been chained for a long time in front of a car wash where he tried in vain to bite the customers or their children. Macaques are not pets. Their bite is toxic and they do not like to be in chains.

-Two macaques in a coffee shop were waiting in vain to be freed. Thanks to 1800-1522, they are now in the Dong Chau forest, if they have not yet been eaten by an animal stronger than themselves.<sup>44</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**April 26, 2017**

**Thuan Nam, Binh Thuan Province, Viet Nam**

Adult. 10 kilos. For years, his horizon was blocked by wires. The father supposedly got him from his son who moved abroad. One day without being prepared, the stump-tailed Macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) was released in the forest. Will he be all right?<sup>45</sup>



**April 28, 2017**

**Thua Thien-Hue Province, Viet Nam**

Sure enough, in Viet Nam, a cup of coffee and macaques are linked. A rhesus *Macaca mulatta* just left a coffee shop and has been freed in the Sao La Reserve.<sup>46</sup>

**May 4, 2017**

**Hanoi, Viet Nam**

The 2 northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*) were bought in the street last year. They weigh 6 and 10 kg.

They were voluntarily turned over to a dedicated shelter center in Hanoi.<sup>47</sup>



**May 6, 2017**

**Nha Trang, Province de Khanh Hoa, Viet Nam**

Street vendors in tourist areas try to sell small, young animals that are easy to hide in pockets, hats, or in bags. Woe betides those who buy them! One way or another, they will have to pay dearly. Once they grow up, the small animal devours, costs a lot, bites and attracts troubles. After 2 weeks, a Russian family understood this. They return the baby loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) on their own to Save Viet Nam Wildlife.<sup>48</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**May 10, 2017**

**Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam**

A family bought a baby northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*) in the street. He weighs 1.5 kg. He left jail.<sup>49</sup>

**May 11, 2017**

**Ho-Chi-Minh, Viet Nam**

A volunteer from ENV found 2 lorises in a cage in a parking spot at a hospital in Ho Chi Minh. They were brought to the Dao Tien primate refuge.<sup>50</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**May 15, 2017**

**Viet Nam**

Appeal dismissed for Nguyen Van Ly (see "On the Trail" n°9 p. 40), sentenced by the court to 3 years in prison for having, along with his spouse, father and 2 other accomplices, set up 100 traps in the Son Tra Reserve in 2015, and having poached deer, squirrels, and red-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I).

At the house of Van Ly, the police found several kilos of smoked douc meat. The douc, often said to be "wearing a suit", is the most colorful of the bipeds with his dark red spots, black hands and feet, his golden and white face, blue eyelids and white tail. The Son Tra Reserve is too close to Da Nang, the third largest city in the country. The red-shanked douc langur is the Da Nang mascot.<sup>51</sup>



**May 2017**

**Dong Phu District, Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam**

Do not give your girlfriend a 500 g pygmy slow loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I). It is an endangered species. She will notify Education for Nature Viet Nam and it will, if it has all its teeth, be set free.<sup>52</sup>

**May 2017**

**Son Tra District, Da Nang, Central Southern Coast Region, Viet Nam**

The red-shanked douc (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I) is threatened by deforestation, cement, bricks, concrete, cars, noise, atmospheric pollution and artificial light. The eastern part of Son Tra is menaced by an unprecedented tourist and residential development that covers close to 3000 hectares.

The experts predict that pilfering so much greenery could make Da Nang the most suffocating city of Viet Nam and deprive the langurs of their last habitat by the sea. Son Tra is about to become a chic suburb of Da Nang. Until 2008, the mountains of Son Tra, an ideal observation post overlooking the sea, was controlled by the army. Sometimes, military activity and biodiversity make a good combination. Since, the peninsula has been invaded by tourism and by a network of 50 km of wide roads. When one speaks of the damage caused by the fragmentation of habitats, the example of the douc should be the first to come to mind. These strictly tree-dwelling monkeys move from tree to tree. They never touch the ground. The groups are hopelessly separated from one another. Their reproduction cycles are interrupted and the survivors are easily isolated and captured by poachers. The mayor of Da Nang, following instructions from the vice-prime Minister, ordered the work to be suspended. The project must be reconsidered. In 10 years, the douc sanctuary on the Son Tra peninsula has gone from 4400 to 2600 hectares (see "On the Trail" n°9 p.40, n°16 p.48).<sup>53</sup>



**May 25, 2017**

**Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam**

The young 400 g pygmy slow loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) was released this morning in the Hon Ba Reserve after having grown up in a cage in the middle of Nha Trang.<sup>54</sup>

**May-June 2017**

**Viet Nam**

**Seven freeings**

-Having wild animals in your business is not good for business. Two crab-eating macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) on display in a restaurant and in an entertainment shop were reported to the police by clients. The police turned up; now one of the macaques is in the forest and the other is in a transit center.



-The Assam macaque (*Macaca assamensis*) has escaped his prison. It was a health care establishment. He is now in the Soc Son transit center.

-A pair of pig tailed macaques have left prison. They were in a cage near a hospital room for aged and handicapped people.

-Three years old. Here for months for human amusement. Voluntarily given to forest services.

- In prison in the city. Liberated on June 8.<sup>55</sup>

**June 6, 2017**

**Nghê An Province, Viet Nam**

The man claims he bought the 5 dead monkeys (*Pygathrix*, spp. Appendix I) in Laos to deliver them to Viet Nam for a manufacturer of bone glue, a by-product from cooking bones, considered a cure for a range of sicknesses, despite the absence of scientific evidence.<sup>56</sup>

**June 15, 2017**

**Province of Kon Tum, Central Highlands Region, Viet Nam**

A red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I) was given for care to the Forest Protection Department. A province resident had bought him from Laotian hunters to save him. The small male, 1 kg, was taken to the Cuc Phuong National Park. Kon Tum province is next to Cambodia and Laos, in a mountain and forest area which harbours several reserves and national parks: Virachey National Park (Cambodia), Dong Amphan National Bio-Diversity Conservation Area (Laos), Chu Mom Ray National Park (Viet Nam).<sup>57</sup>

**Mid-June 2017**

**Province of Dien Bien and Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Seizure of a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) in one pagoda and another in a restaurant.<sup>58</sup>

**June 20, 2017**

**Thai Nguyen Province, Viet Nam**

Voluntary handing over of a 6 weeks old loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) of 1.2 kg. Transfer to the refuge of CUC Phuong.<sup>59</sup>

**June 22, 2017**

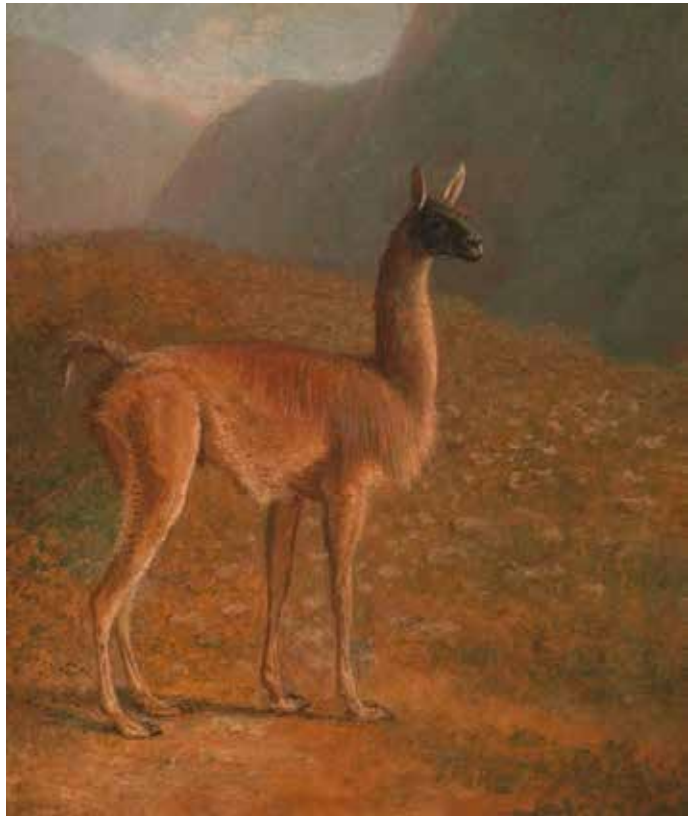
**Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

Liberation of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) imprisoned in a courtyard in district 12 of the city, 13.5 million inhabitants.<sup>60</sup>

## SPAIN

**April 11, 2017****Madrid-Barajas International Airport, Spain**

The bush meat landed in Madrid. The suitcase which the traveler from Equatorial Guinea forsook on arrival contained the eviscerated remains of a colobus monkey (*Colobus* spp., Appendix II) and 2 pangolins in contaminated clothing. The infectious meat, clothing and suitcase were incinerated. In Europe, emigrants often return from holidays with local culinary traditions.<sup>61</sup>



Guanaco. Jacques Laurent Agasse (1767–1849)

## Guanacos and Vicuñas

**Guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*) are listed under CITES Appendix II. Vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*) are listed under Appendix I or II depending on populations.**

In the beginning of the last century, the guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) was common in western South America, in the Andes, from Peru to Patagonia. After a century of extermination, the species still resists in the dry plains of Argentina. Like the camel his cousin, this lama resists great cold as well as heat.

## AMERICA

## ARGENTINA

**April 20, 2017****Trelew, Province of Chubut, Argentina**

Seizure in a pick-up truck near the former airport of several bags of fresh guanaco meat. The vehicle was approaching a clandestine facility for the cutting and processing of wild meat.<sup>1</sup>

**April 25, 2017****Puerto Madryn, Province of Chubut, Argentina**

The Toyota van carried 70 kg of wild boar and guanaco meat and the Chevrolet a guanaco cut into 4 pieces.<sup>2</sup>

**End of April 2017****Pico Truncado, Province of Santa Cruz, Argentina**

Interception by residents and arrest by the police of a hunter carrying in his Dacia SUV 2 dead guanacos, a firearm with serial number removed, 29 cartridges, a bloodstained knife and 2 greyhounds.<sup>3</sup>

**May 2, 2017****Trelew, Province of Chubut, Argentina**

Roadside checks on roads 8 and 1 at city entrances. Results: seizure of 200 kg of guanaco meat in a Ford Ranger, a Cherokee and a Chevrolet pick-up.<sup>4</sup>

**May 15, 2017****Trelew, Province of Chubut, Argentina**

The industrial butcher shop "Los Trabajadores" is a regrouping spot. Guanaco meat was seized in the building. 700 kg in bags including 60 kg of minced guanaco meat, 203 kg of guanaco cutlet and 65 kg of guanaco sausages.<sup>5</sup>

**May 19, 2017****Puerto Madryn, Province of Chubut, Argentina**

Seizure inside a Toyota Hilux of 270 kg of guanaco butchered and a rhea (genus *Rhea*).<sup>6</sup>



**End of May 2017**

**Caleta Olivia, Province of Santa Cruz, Argentina**

Interception on Route national 40 of a Ford Ranger. Inside the double cabin, a man and a woman and in the back under a pile of clothes 6 guanacos reduced to the state of meat.<sup>7</sup>

## BOLIVIA

**May 16, 2017**

**El Alto, La Paz Department, Bolivia**

Seizure of 15.250 kg of vicuña yarn (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). Alejandro Pozo director of the Policia Forestal y Medio Ambiente (POFOMA) adds that such an amount of wool requires to sacrifice at least 70 vicuñas.<sup>8</sup>

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

**June 14, 2017**

**Villa Martín, Nor Lípez Province, Bolivia**

The family clan escaped on motorbike but 2 of them and a third one were caught back. They were in possession of Vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I) woolly skins and knives. A fourth member of the Condori family was arrested. Minor, he was released. The three adults are behind bars.<sup>9</sup>

## CHILI

**April 9, 2017**

**Juntas del Toro border control, Coquimbo Region, Chili. Border to Argentina.**

Seizure of 2 dead guanacos, a large caliber rifle and ammunition. Three arrests.<sup>10</sup>

## PERU

**May 14, 2017**

**Salinas y Aguada Blanca National Reserve, Arequipa and Moquegua Regions, Peru**



Discovery of 5 skinned vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) in a hut on a hill. The wool and poachers had vanished.<sup>11</sup>

## Felines

**The most cruel story is that of the old circus lions from South America who were sent in a South African sanctuary then poisoned and mutilated for black magic rituals.**

**The most beautiful story is the rescue of a leopard fallen in a well and saved by the forest rangers in India.**

**The mascot of the quarter: an orphan oncilla found in a schoolyard in Brazil.**



**On the Trail "n°17**

**The value of felines or felines parts on the black market, according to media or official sources**

Asia	Animal/parts	Price US\$	Ref.
India (Uttarakhand)	Leopard skin	7700 - 10,800	7
India (Assam)		4600	18
India (Uttar Pradesh)	5 kg of tiger bones and a skull	7700 - 10,800	36
India (Kerala)	Tiger skin with claws	3000	46
India (Maharashtra)	Sub-adult tiger skin	9300	47
Viet Nam	Living tiger weighing 200 kg	44,000	54
India (Karnataka)	Bengal leopard cat skin	1100	78
<b>América</b>			
Bolivia	Living young jaguar	800	72



Jaguar, page 65.

## LEOPARDS

Leopards (*Panthera pardus*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.



### AFRICA

#### GABON

**April 4, 2017**  
**Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon**

Jean-Vincent Biyogho Bissone was arrested with 2 leopard skins thanks to a joint operation between Conservation Justice and government services.<sup>1</sup>



**May 22, 2017**  
**Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon**  
Seizure of teeth and the skin of a leopard.<sup>2</sup>

**June 8, 2017**  
**Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon**  
Seizure of 3 skins and 3 skulls and panther teeth. Four in custody.<sup>3</sup>

#### REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**June 29, 2017**  
**Impfondo, Likouala Department, Republic of Congo**  
One arrest for possession, transport and trade of 2 leopard skins and at least one skull. The man would be a usual wildlife trafficker in the department.<sup>4</sup>

### ASIA

#### INDIA

**April 17- 19, 2017**  
**Birpara, Alipurduar District, West Bengal, India**  
Within 2 days, 2 leopards poisoned with pesticides near a tea estate.<sup>5</sup>



**April 24, 2017**

**Golaghat District, State of Assam, India**

A male leopard accused of having attacked villagers was beaten to death by an angry crowd. More than 1000 people were at the scene. "We had brought a cage from Kaziranga to capture it, but they had beaten it to death before we could do anything," said those on the side of the forest rangers and police force.<sup>6</sup>

In 2016, 436 leopard deaths were recorded in India, 157 since the beginning of 2017.

**April 29, 2017**

**Didihat, Pithoragarh District, State of Uttarakhand, India**

Three men on their way to Nepal were arrested in Didihat by the special operations forces of the Pithoragarh police. They were in possession of a leopard skin, 2.4 m long including the tail. The skin's worth is estimated to be between 500,000 and 700,000 rupee (7,000 to \$ 10,800 US). Ajay Singh, Manohar Singh, and Gagan Singh had never been convicted of smuggling or any other crime. The Pithoragarh police superintendent, Ajay Joshi, said "We are trying to unearth their links in Uttarakhand and Nepal so that we launch a thorough probe the matter."<sup>7</sup>

**April 30, 2017**

**Delhi, India**

Chand Ram and Anil Kumar were sentenced to 3 years in prison for having illegally kept 2 authentic leopard skins, poached in the State of Haryana, and 5 fake skins. The affair dates back to December 12, 2003.

In the deliberation, the judge said, "Some rare species have already been wiped out of the earth and some others have reached the danger mark predicting total extinction, unless expeditious protective measures are adopted. Despite best efforts put in by the governments of almost all the countries across the globe, wildlife offences are not coming down. Such case needs to be dealt with strictly to curb the wild life offences."<sup>8</sup>



**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Kumta, Uttara Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India**

A young female leopard killed by a car around 3:30 AM in the night. The roads are dangerous, they can also be criminal. Drivers are often poachers. After the bump, the legs, tail and head were cut.<sup>9</sup>

**May 2, 2017**

**Kullu, Bilaspur District, State of Himachal Pradesh, India**

A male leopard's carcass, with missing head and paws, was discovered by a forest ranger. No suspect has been identified.<sup>10</sup>

**May 6, 2017**

**Kishtwar, Kishtwar District, State of Jammu-and-Kashmir, India**

One arrest. He was carrying a leopard skin in a bag.<sup>11</sup>



## LEOPARDS - FOLLOWED

**May 7, 2017**

**Edapalayam, Kollam District, Kerala, India**

Two people were arrested by forest rangers for having trapped a leopard with metal wire. The animal was discovered by rubber tappers; he died a little while after being freed. Rajappan Pillai (55) and Shameer (38) remain in custody under the Punalur legal authorities, charged for forest infractions.<sup>12</sup>



**May 8, 2017**

**Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal State, India**

Nine people tried to sell a leopard skin to cops disguised as buyers. They are being interrogated. They killed the leopard in Kokrajhar in the State of Assam.<sup>13</sup>

**May 10, 2017**

**Bal Dadar, Dungarpur District, State of Rajasthan, India**

Stoning of a leopard.<sup>15</sup>

**May 10, 2017**

**Palpadar, State of Rajasthan, India**

A 3-year-old leopard was lynched in an outburst of public anger. The forest rangers could not intervene in time to anesthetize and evacuate the animal. The leopard was distraught and the people wanted his skin, figuratively. The feline was accused of having hurt 10 people, in the previous hours, including a woman who was getting water from a well.<sup>16</sup>

**May 16, 2017**

**Bicholim, Northern Goa District, State of Goa, India**

He was about 4 years old, a male weighing 25 kg. He was caught in a trap and the rescuers did not arrive in time. The trap was put together using a moped break cable and was attached to a tree near a rice field. The victim was baited into the area by wild dogs.<sup>17</sup>



**May 2017**

**Rajasthan, India**

The State of Rajasthan has announced that in the beginning of October it would launch "Project Leopard," a network of 8 nature reserves and sanctuaries, with a total surface area of 1926.80 km<sup>2</sup>. The objective is to protect the species and to reduce man-leopard conflicts. "Project Leopard" will cover the following sanctuaries: Jaisamand in Udaipur, Bassi in Chittorgahr, Shergarh in Baran, Kumbhalgarh and Raoli Todgarh between the cities of Ajmer and Udaipur, Mont Abu-Sundamata and the Jhalana Aamagarh Reserves in Jaipur, Jawai near Pali, and Khetri Bansyal, Jhunjhunu district. "Project Leopard" has a team of national and local experts and a budget of 50 to 80 million rupee (773,000 to \$ 1,237,000 US), of which a part will be allotted to tourism. "In the first five years, aim will be to restore habitats and increase leopard numbers to 1500. By taking appropriate measure, leopards will be prevented from straying into human dominated landscapes and this will in turn minimize the negative impact of blue bull Nilgaut [*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III] and wild boar [*Sus scrofa*] populations."<sup>14</sup>

**May 16, 2017**

**Gohpur, Biswanath District, State of Assam, India**

Arrest of 4 government employees in Arunachal Pradesh for the possession of a skin and the entire skeleton of a leopard that they were selling for 300,000 rupee (\$ 4600 US). It was thanks to a tip that Kaziranga National Park agents, helped by the police, could intervene during the night in the Dafalagarh Tea Garden. The 4 men were supposed to meet a buyer interested in the skin and nearly 5 kg of bones, including the skull. They are suspected of having poached the leopard in the Park. The 2 motorcycles were also taken from the traffickers.<sup>18</sup>

**May 19, 2017**

**Pithoragarh District, Uttarakhand State, India**

The police are on their 7<sup>th</sup> skin since the beginning of the year. These two, taken from itinerant traders, measured 2.43 m and 2.10 m long. The leopards were between 6 and 10 years old.<sup>19</sup>

**Late May 2017**

**Pithoragarh District, Uttarakhand State, India**

Surendra Singh Mehta was sentenced to 3 years in prison and a fine of 10,000 rupee (\$ 156 US) for smuggling leopard skins. The affair dates back to 2012. The arrest took place at the Naini Sani Airport. Four presumed accomplices were acquitted due to lack of evidence.<sup>21</sup>





## LEOPARDS - FOLLOWED

**May 25, 2017**

**Bhoirwadi, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India**

During the dry season, a female leopard fell into a well. She was saved by forest services.<sup>20</sup>

**June 5, 2017**

**Palpur-Kuno Reserve, Sheopur District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Seizure of a leopard skin. Arrest of 2 Mogias, over-equipped with traps, gunpowder, shotguns, leg-hold traps, hatchets, and other poaching tools. The Mogias are one of the 645 tribes recognized by the federal government. They live in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha.<sup>22</sup>

## IRAN

**April 7, 2017**

**Tehran, Iran**

Seizure of a skin at an antique shop.<sup>23</sup>

**May 16, 2017**

**Mazandaran, Iran**

After several days of attentive care, a leopard around 5 years old was freed in the Mazandaran National Park.<sup>24</sup>



**May 16, 2017**

**Firuz Kuh, Teheran Province, Iran**

The baby leopard died before the veterinary team arrived. He was riddled with bullets. His mother may have been poached.<sup>25</sup>



## NEPAL

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**April 2, 2017**

**Birganj (Bordering India), Parsa and Kathmandu Districts, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Acting on a tip, the Central Investigation Bureau of Nepal Police (CIB) arrested 3 men in possession of a leopard skin that they were looking to sell. During questioning, Binesh Bhandari, Anup Bartaula, and Bibek Bartaula admitted to smuggling 3 leopard skins and bones across the border control of Birganj. A single skin was sent to Kathmandu to show buyers. The rest of the loot was hidden near platform No. 1 of the Birganj Customs Point. Alerted by the CIB, the police bureau of the Parsa district were sent to the spot and discovered 2 white boxes containing the skins of 2 leopards and 34.9 kg of unidentified animal bones, possibly those of a leopard. The 3 suspects were sent to the Kathmandu District Forest Office. They risk up to a one-year mandatory jail term.<sup>26</sup>

**April 19, 2017**

**Patan, Baitadi District, Nepal**

He was transporting a 152 cm by 273 cm leopard skin. It was seized and he was questioned by the police.<sup>27</sup>

**June 9, 2017**

**Tamghas, Gulmi and Malika Districts, Arghakhanchi District, Western Development Region, Nepal**

Ishwori Khanal (30 years old) and Chandra Bahadur Magar (29 years old) were caught red handed in a Tamghas hotel as they were on the brinks of selling a leopard fur and skull. The police agents had pretended to be buyers. The 2 men gave the name of a stooge, Pharsa Bahadur Shrees, who was arrested in Malika in possession of 6 leopard skins and various animal parts.<sup>28</sup>



**June 20, 2017**

**Gongabu, Katmandou District, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Arrest of 2 men, 18 and 25 years old. They were in a hotel with 2 leopard skins.<sup>28bis</sup>

## TIGERS

**Tigers (*Panthera tigris*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.**

### AFRICA

#### SOUTH AFRICA

**May 29, 2017**

**Roedtan, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Two 2-year-old Bengal tigers were fatally poisoned in the Johan van Zyl breeding grounds and hunting enclosure. The paws and the head were cut off by poachers.<sup>29</sup> See also p. 124 ref. 3.



### AMERICA

#### MEXICO

**June 15, 2017**

**Chiapas Airport, State of Chiapas, Mexico**

A Bengal tiger was seized at the arrival of a flight from Mexico. "The feline was handed over to the public prosecutor, the investigations are ongoing".<sup>30</sup>

**June 15, 2017**

**Jerecuaro, State of Guanajuato, Mexico**

Seizure of 3 Bengal tigers, cash and drugs inside 2 private homes.<sup>31</sup>

### ASIA

#### BANGLADESH

**May 13, 2017**

**Khulna, Khulna Division, Bangladesh**

Eleven bones and 7 teeth on the Shibsa River in the swamps of the Sundarbans, a registered UNESCO World Heritage Site. Seven arrests, they were all from Khulna.<sup>32</sup>



## INDIA

**April 2 and 29, 2017**

**Bandipur Tiger Reserve, State of Karnataka, India**

The presumption is that Prince at age 12 died of natural causes. The average lifespan of a tiger is 16 to 18 years.

Prince was the most famous tiger in Karnataka. The body was found mutilated, with no muzzle, and no lower jaw.

Several days later, the muzzle was discovered buried 200 m from the body and, at the end of April, 3 teeth were seized at the house of 3 residents of a nearby village. "The accused saw the carcass in the forest and they decided to saw off the teeth to sell to collectors," according to the director of the Reserve.

In the first 65 days of the year, 19 tigers have died in the country, including 9 in Karnataka.<sup>33</sup>

**April 7, 2017**

**Bhopal, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

**From AK47 to the musket of the 17<sup>th</sup> century**

It took 30 minutes for the police to get them out of the bathroom where they had taken refuge, in the house of some distant relatives. With 3 accomplices, Bastiram and Gulab Singh went to hunt boar and claim to have panicked when a tiger unexpectedly appeared, and they shot it.

Hit in the spinal cord, the victim died after 13 days. Post mortem, veterinarians found several artisanal lead bullets, 1.25 cm in diameter. Ballistics specialists formally deduced that the ammunition had been shot by Bharmars, the local name for muskets used by soldiers in the infantry between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. They are heavy weapons that can weigh up to 6 or 7 kg. Their handling requires the use of a bracket, always present on the models from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Two of these archaic weapons were taken.<sup>34</sup>



"Tenez le mousquet sur la fourchette"

Jacob de Gheyn, 1608

Musée de l'Armée (Dist. RMN-Grand Palais)

**GANG****April 8, 2017****Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

Ghanashyam Gupta was transporting the skin and the bones of a Royal Bengal tiger quite near the Biswanath Ghat forested area, when he was arrested by the police, Saturday night. He was handed over to the forest rangers who launched an investigation. "The skin and the bones were being smuggled from Arunachal Pradesh to sell to someone at the Biswanath Chariali area in Sonitpur district. The arrested person is a middleman who took the said articles from someone. Our investigation is on," said Rohini Saikia, divisional forest officer (Kaziranga).<sup>35</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENSE****April 8, 2017****Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Five kg of bones and a skull. Kalua, 40 years old, and his associate Chhote Lal, 33 years old, were on their way to Khatima, in Uttarakhand, to deliver the bones and skull to an middleman, who would have sent them on to Nepal. The final destination would undoubtedly have been China. The value of the bones is estimated to be between 500 and 700,000 rupee (7700 and \$ 10,800 US).

Lal was convicted of tiger poaching in January 2015, and he just got out of prison under bail.<sup>36</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS****April 9, 2017****Satna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

They had been wanted for 4 years. The trio was part of the Pardhi clan. Tilia, 25, Tyohari, 36, and Rockin, 38, had blood and fur on their hands from 30 tigers poached between 2012 and 2013 in the Vidarbha region, State of Maharashtra. Other sources say 11 tigers. The trio supplied the Sarju Bagdi network, well known in the first issues of "On the Trail" (n°2 p. 37 et 41, n°3 p. 43-44, n°4 p. 57, n°7 p. 51, n°10 p. 40, n°11 p. 48). Sarju was the conductor and pay master of the gang. The skin and the bones were exported to China via Nepal. Forty members of the network were sentenced to prison, 20 have already gotten out. At least 3 are still on the run, Luchi, Bharo, and the most rebellious Keru. Two key men are still behind bars, Chika and Mamru. Men like Tilia, Tyohari, and Rockin are the tiger poaching workhands. They are the inheritors of an ancestral culture. They know the forest better than the rangers do. Since hunting of tigers became illegal in 1971, they have become useless outcasts. Most lead a nomadic life and live off small trade or large-scale animal trafficking.<sup>37</sup>

**April 13, 2017****Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India**

Arrest of Jiten Namo Das and Pramod Hazarika. They were hiding a tiger skull and 10 kg of bones at home.<sup>38</sup>

**April 15, 2017****Bhandara and Nagpur Districts, State of Maharashtra, India****Two-headed justice system in Maharashtra**

-Paoni, the judge found the investigation file convincing and condemned 5 tiger poachers to 3 years in prison. Among them, Kuttu, the getaway king. His latest arrest happened early on a November morning, in 2016, despite violent protest from his clan (see "On the Trail" n°15, p.63). He was arrested for the first time back in May 2007. At the time, he was already in the company of 5 poachers. They were let go, due to lack of evidence.

Kuttu has other appointments with the courts.

-Khapa. Two poachers of a tigress and 2 sambar deer, Vinayak Savalakhe and Devidas Boriwar were freed on bail of \$773 US each. However, they are not allowed to stay in their place of birth and residence, and have promised to return to court when summoned for the needs of the investigation.<sup>39</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS****April 19, 2017****Vilam, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Electromania in Maharashtra

Shriniwas was 3 years old, a famous tiger, son of Jay, who mysteriously disappeared a year ago. He was in an exit corridor 2 km from the forest, when he ran into an electric barbed wire fence, installed by a farmer to prevent deer and boars from entering his fields. Irpate, 60 years old, with help of his neighbors, buried the body inside his farm, on the other side of the electric enclosure. On his property, the investigators found huge electric wire bundles and 80 poles. It is a well-established practice in the region to divert public electricity from medium voltage aerial lines.

The court liberated the Irpate clan, the father, the son and a brother-in-law, under bail of \$ 232 US. Their lawyer pointed out that no body parts had been stolen. An affirmation that one would hope will be verified as the investigation progresses, and that certainly does not prove the honesty of electricity thieves. Indeed, the simplest and the most discrete manner of "harvesting" the bones of a tiger is to bury the body and let it rot. After a few months, the bones are right there, perfectly clean and ready to sell at \$ 150 US per kilogram on the local market.<sup>40</sup>

**April 29, 2017****Bandhavgarh National Park, Umaria District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Death of 3 tiger cubs after their mother was electrocuted in January, in the buffer zone of the Park.<sup>41</sup>



## TIGERS - FOLLOWED

**End of April 2017**

### **Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal State, India**

Controversy on the translocation of tigers. The National Tiger Conservancy has approved the move of 6 tigers, 2 males and 2 females. The objective is to recreate a viable population. The Reserve is suffering. It is surrounded by quarries and occupied by domesticated herds. Several forest fires have been identified. Valmik Thapar, a tiger expert believes that, given the current situation, the reintegration of the 6 tigers is bound to fail. The Buxa Reserve consists of 760 km<sup>2</sup>. Currently, it is said to be home to 3 tigers, but they have not been seen for several years. The project could be carried out before the end of the year. The new arrivals will come from the neighboring State, Assam. They will be put in an enclosed area for one week, before being set free in the Reserve.<sup>42</sup>

**May 3, 2017**

### **Bejjalatti, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

An 8-year-old tiger is accused of having killed a bison. The 4 men are accused of having poisoned the carcass and consequently the tiger, then having taken the claws and the teeth to sell them. They all live in the tribal village of Bejaletti. Following a tip, a team of forest rangers attached to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve rushed into the village to arrest 4 men in their 30s: J. Jadisi, R. Muthusamy, U. Velmurugan and M. Shivaji.<sup>43</sup>



**May 4, 2017**

### **Saoli, Chandrapur District, Maharashtra State, India**

Mystery. No one knows why he died. The skin, the teeth, the claws are all still there. The body is rotting, has reached the liquefaction phase. He was a male. There is no trace of territorial conflict. The post-mortem exam was done by 5 veterinarians in the presence of a representative from NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority), a representative of PCCF (Principle Chief Conservator of Forests), Ram Dhotre, RFO (Range Forest Officer), M. Rathod (Member of Parliament), and Talmale ACF (Assistant Conservator of Forest). The tiger remains were burned on the spot.<sup>44</sup>

**May 6, 2017**

### **Design, District of Gadchiroli, State of Maharashtra, India**

Kuthu sentenced again to 3 years in prison for tiger poaching. It is not known whether the 2 penalties will be combined.<sup>44bis</sup>



**May 6, 2017**

### **State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

Minus 12 tigers since January 1, 2017.<sup>45</sup>

**May 24, 2017**

### **Palakkad District, Kerala State, India**

His name was Anish. He is 28. Four of his accomplices succeeded in fleeing. He was snagged with a tiger skin, claws included. He was trying to sell it for 200,000 rupee (\$ 3000 US) near a Buddhist temple.<sup>46</sup>

**June 8, 2017**

### **Maharashtra State, India**

Seizure of a sub-adult tiger skin valued by services to be worth 600,000 rupee (\$9300 US). Baban Shelke, 38, was arrested.<sup>47</sup>

**June 9, 2017**

### **Pana Tiger Reserve, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) requests that directors of parks, reserves and other sanctuaries immediately stop circulation of photos and videos tracing the tiger's movements such as captured by the hidden cameras in the forest on WhatsApp and Facebook. NTCA recalls that these images are intended for wildlife management officials only. For 1 year and 2 months, 43 tigers have been poached in Madhya Pradesh, including 14 since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2017. NTCA fears cyber poaching. The cyber alert dates back to 2013 and an attempted hacking of the computer stocking data on the movements of Panna 211, a tiger with a geotag.



Some experts do not believe in this threat. They note that in the country poaching is practiced by tribes heir to exceptional knowledge on all felines behavior. They do not need computers.<sup>48</sup>



**June 22, 2017**

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

The first instance judge has refused bail for 3 members of the Baheliya tribe suspected of tiger poaching near Masondi. All 3 had been arrested in April in the Satna District, Madhya Pradesh. During the trial they were accompanied by the famous couple Minar and Narafal, poaching glories (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 37, n° 3 p. 43-44, n° 8 p. 45).  
.../...

## TIGERS - FOLLOWED

The lawyer says there is a mistake and that his clients are not the suspected poachers. Two of the accused pulled out an AADHAR card, that is an identity card, the authenticity of which is questionable. In return, the anti poaching expert Kartik Shukul brushed away all the defense arguments: 'They are directly responsible for the poaching, scorching and deboning of the tiger. Their participation has been confirmed by no less than 9 other accused.'<sup>49</sup>

**June 2017**

### **Sariska National Park, State of Rajasthan, India**

The tiger ST-9 has lost her tail. The camera footage shows it. And no one is able to say whether loss of this body part results from a fight or poaching. Hypothesis of a localized infection was brought up but the tiger's tail was completely cut off. For the moment ST-9 is very nervous and is inaccessible to vets who would like to sedate her and solve the mystery. Reintroduction of tigers in Sariska from Ranthambore dates back to 2005 (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 40). The individual ST-1 had been poisoned a few months after arrival. The director and guards are also very nervous. Fifteen poachers have been arrested in the Park within one month. Their main target is the ST-13 tigress.<sup>50</sup>

**June 27, 2017**

### **Pench Tiger Reserve, State of Maharashtra, India**

Night-time fishermen poach herbivores for food and tigers for money. At the home of Tukaram Kumre and Mansaram Kumre 12 kg of bones and 14 tiger claws were found by the police. These are not quiet fishermen. They attack rangers with dynamite and set the forest on fire. Yet, fishing is banned in the Reserve. The Kumres then gave the names of 2 "unintentional" tiger killers. Sariyam alias Chunnu and Kunjam set up an electric trap for boars and they got a tiger. Chunnu and partner in turn gave in the names of 2 other companions, Mukesh Uike and Ramdas Warkahde.

In the best case, 3 tigers would have been electrocuted in the Reserve, in the worst case it would be 6. According to the Special Tiger Protection Force, these fishermen are not professional poachers and just take the claws, nails and bones after the body has rotted buried in the ground.

Police still are wondering if this bunch of "amateurs" is not responsible for the poaching of 25 tigers in the Vidarbha regions, 100 km away from the Pench Reserve.<sup>51</sup>



## INDONESIA



**May 15, 2017**

### **Kabupaten Bengkulu Utara, North Bengkulu Regency, Indonesia**

Arrest of Awaludin and Sabian. They often marauded in Kerinci Seblat National Park, especially in search of tigers. They were transporting a skin, bones and traps. The tigers of the region also have difficulties with industrial oil palm plantations and eucalyptus plantations for paper pulp.<sup>52</sup>

## VIET NAM

**April 5, 2017**

### **Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam**

The ambulance was moving towards the Hoa Binh province, transporting the body of a frozen tiger, 180 kg. The driver and accomplice succeeded in escaping in the Cuc Phuong National Park, when the vehicle was stopped by the police for speeding in the express lane, 70 km from Hanoi. There are no more than 5 wild tigers left in Viet Nam, compared to 30, in 2011.

The brigades fighting against animal trafficking must distrust the ambulances in the country (see "On the Trail" n°3 p. 31, n°6 p. 53).<sup>53</sup>



**May 25, 2017**

### **Dong Da District, Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Dismantling of an animal-trade gang directed by a 40-year-old woman. Seizure of a tiger weighing 200 kg alive and locked in a cage. Everything was ready to make glue from the tiger bones to satisfy a big order. The tiger had been bought for 5 million dong per kilogram (\$ 220 US), altogether one million dong (\$ 44,000 US). Opium was also seized. It was to be used as a co-ingredient in the glue.<sup>54</sup>



## TIGERS - FOLLOWED

### RUSSIA

**April 29, 2017**

#### **Natural Sanctuary of the Dichun Regional State, Far Eastern Federal District, Russia**

Orphaned and retrieved in a pitiful state in 2015 at the Center for reintroduction of Amur tigers and other rare animals (PRNCO) located in the Primorie Krai near Vladivostok, the young female tiger in full health was released. "The first weeks are crucial for young tigers who need to make the right decisions and face the dangers, but we have trust", says Ekaterina Blidchenko, spokeswoman for PRNCO.<sup>55</sup>

### LIONS

**African lions (*Panthera leo*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, Indian lions (*Panthera leo persica*) under Appendix I.**

#### AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**April 8, 2017**

#### **Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

A lion in captivity killed a 12-year-old child. The owners defended themselves, saying that their lions are used to sleeping in their room. The Minister of Justice replied, "Even though the couple had permits, that did not mean they were allowed to keep animals in their home."<sup>56</sup>

**May 17, 2017**

#### **Near Groblersdal, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Four women, aged 29 to 48, were transporting 2 lion heads, 8 paws with the claws, and 2 skins freshly skinned are now being detained. No bones. The NGO Endangered Wildlife Trust is worried about the rise in lion parts trafficking. "We do not have a good understanding of the trade in lion parts and what drives it. While we have very little information on this case, we commend the police on making the arrests and hope that the information obtained from this case can shed some light on trade routes and uses of lion parts."

There are questions as to whether the animals were poached from the wild or from breeding facilities, and sanctions are taking too long to take effect. Walter Slippers d'Ingogo Safaris, where 3 lions were targeted at the beginning of the year (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 55) was stunned that one of the alleged perpetrators continues to work as a hairdresser near Alldays, and has not yet been summoned for the investigation.<sup>57</sup>

**May 28, 2017**

#### **Emoya Big Cat Sanctuary, Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

They were from Colombia or Peru, where circuses that are crueler than others exploit them as beasts of burden. Animal Defenders International found them a refuge in South Africa, in the savannah from which their ancestors came. Old and ageless, the 2 wise animals always stayed close to each other and took care of their manes. On a Sunday night, heroic poachers silently and fatally poisoned them. Their tails, heads, and paws were cut off. Gloriously labeled "wild lions", the remains of Jose and Liso will supply prehistoric medicinal practices, black magic or the suitcases of expats returning to Asia.<sup>58</sup>



**June 2017**

#### **South Africa**

Fail! Despite protests, the Minister of the Environment validated quotas for the export of 800 farmed lion skeletons, with or without the skull as advised the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI).

The specialist on wildlife trafficking Karl Amman points out that between 2009 and 2015 Laos imported with CITES permits 2000 complete lion skeletons, over 2300 bones and skulls. The bones would then be transferred without any export license to Viet Nam where gruesome cooks boil them and turn them into glue. The consumer accommodates them with rice wine.

Hunting permits for farmed lions in South Africa are granted to international hunters for \$ 20,000 US. The government claims it is aware of the risk of wild lion bone trafficking and declares itself ready to examine any abuses of the system. They have already occurred. The assassination and mutilation of the poor lions who came from South America to find a safe haven in South Africa is one of them.<sup>59</sup>



## LIONS - FOLLOWED

**June 22, 2017**

### **Buffelshoek, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**

Seizure of a lion's head and claws in the belongings of Thokozane Fakude, 31 years old, and Bheki Mazibuko, 32.<sup>60</sup>

**May 8-11, 2017**

Five lions jumped together the Kruger enclosure and were seen in the night under the N4 bridge. The day before, they had tried to attack livestock. Rangers are looking for them. They have recaptured 4 of them and taken them back to the Park. Only one is still missing. A call to witness has been made. The SAN Parks scientific director explains that these lions' escaping out of the Kruger Park are in part due to family affairs. The young male are sacked from the prides by the adult male. If they do not move away, they are at risk to be severely attacked and to be left paralyzed over the bush with the back broken and to be at hyenas and vultures mercy. As the lions' habitats in the Kruger Park are held by formed prides, some young males choose to leave the Park and try to settle down somewhere else.<sup>61</sup>

## ANGOLA

### **Angola**

The NGO Panthera based in the United States has unfolded a network of cameras covering 27,500 km<sup>2</sup> around the Cuando, Luiana and Luengue basins with the agreement from the government. Footage has brought specific new knowledge:

-Human activity- poachers, illegal diamond mines, trappers, drying racks for bush meat, wood trafficking- are much more frequent than animal trails.

-Zebras, kudus, most herbivores have practically disappeared.

-There were 1000 lions in 2004. They are estimated now to be between 10 and 30. Lions are victims of food shortage.

- The lesser carnivorous are getting out better. Cheetahs and leopards are slightly more numerous. There would be 150 to 500 individuals.

-Small carnivores profit from poaching and the animal carcasses. A spotted hyena was photographed bring back to her den an elephant trunk to feed her offspring.

-The population of African wild dogs is encouraging. There would be 600 of them.

The Panthera Report notes that after the civil war that lasted 30 years, 1972-2002, thousands of people who found refuge in the forest stayed there and consider poaching as a food source and in some cases an economic one.<sup>62</sup>



## KENYA

**April 11, 2017**

### **Tana Delta, Tana River County, Kenya**

Difficult rescue of a maneless lion caught in a trap. It took 3 days to get a bush plane to bring in the legendary veterinarian, Doctor Poghon, who directs an intervention unit with specialized tools. He works in the eastern and western parts of the Tsavo National Park.

The KWS, the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, the pilot Neville Sheldrick and the rangers on the ground helped make the operation a success.<sup>63</sup>

## NAMIBIA

**May 22, 2017**

### **Ongandjera, Omusati Region, Namibia**

Hooray! I killed 2 lions. The Minister Pohamba Shifeta wants photos of hunters posing in front of dead Big Five to be banned on social media. "Just one foolish guy can tarnish Namibia's name and have a huge impact on the economy."

The 6 lions who were killed in the region a couple of days ago had left the Etosha National Park. Kambwa, one of the killers is a member of the Ondonga royal family since he married the daughter of the king, Immanuel Kauluma Elifas in 2013. Kambwa is a "businessman" and entrepreneur in public works. He received millions of Namibian dollar to reconstruct the enclosure of the National Park. The lions are accused of having killed 21 cows. No photographic evidence of the killings has been found on social media or elsewhere. An inquiry has been opened to determine whether the lions were problem lions.<sup>64</sup>



**June 2017**

### **Okongwe, Erongo Region, Namibia**

"Tullamore" ("tue-la-mort", or "to beat death," in French) is dead. XPL93 was named after an Irish whiskey. He was the last of the "5 musketeers" (see "On the Trail" n°14 p.52-53). He had showed no sign of life since the beginning of April. He and XPL104, his new female companion, along with 2 cubs, were the victims of the guerilla warfare between the 150 nomad felines of his species and the semi-nomadic livestock farmers.

Several NGOs, notably the Desert Lion Project, are attempting to calm tensions between the herdsmen and the last of the lions.<sup>65</sup>



## LIONS - FOLLOWED

### UGANDA

**Beginning of June 2017**

#### **Western Uganda**

One arrest. Seizure of one skin and two jaws.<sup>66</sup>

### ZIMBABWE

**May 7, 2017**

#### **Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe**

Two lionesses, including one that was pregnant, were shot. It was an act of retaliation from a livestock farmer who said that a cow had been attacked the night before. But no proof has confirmed that claim. None of the groups specialized in human/lion conflict has been solicited. The groups include the Soft Foot Alliance, The Lion Guardians, Mother Africa Trust, Conservation and Wildlife Fund, and Panthera.

Brent Stapelkamp, the Park lion specialist, regrets that the district council approved the lionesses' murder, without having the least bit of proof that they had preyed on the cows.

The two lionesses were well known in the Park. The photographers and hotelkeepers, and all those who try to promote tourism are grieving. They deplore that entire herds of livestock have been grazing for months on the edge of the Park, near Dete, or even inside the Park, as far as Nehimba lake, which is the felines' only watering hole in the area. The Hwange Park covers 14.651 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>67</sup>

## AMERICA

### MEXICO

**May 8, 2017**

#### **Monterrey, State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico**

The African lion cub was in a garage. He was given to the Pastora zoo.<sup>68</sup>

## EUROPE

### RUSSIA

**June 2017**

#### **Ramenskoye District, Moscow Region, Russia**

A lion couple aged about 18 months was found agonizing in a deserted hotel. They were used as an "attraction" for clients and were abandoned by Kirill Babenko, the hotel owner, when he escaped to India running from police. The male lion was locked in a cage much too small, the female lion was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the owner's bedroom.



Both were moaning for food. They were dying of thirst. They carried traces of blows with a metal bar. The male was so weak he couldn't walk to the food brought by some saviours. They had been scantily fed in secret for several weeks by teenagers in the area, who gave them pies and meat pâté. The 2 felines were taken to a "rehabilitation centre", probably for the rest of their lives: they are deemed for ever incapable to re-adapt to life in the wild. According to Ildar Khanterinov, one of the rescuers, this case comes from lack of control by authorities of the underground trade in endangered species. A 3 months old lion cub could be bought for 140,000 ruble (about \$ 2500 US).<sup>69</sup>

## CHEETAHS

**Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatu*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.**

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**May 2017**

#### **Near Lephalale, Waterberg District, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

The 3 young cheetahs are dead. Accidental or intentional collision ? Dumping of cumbersome corpses by an underground breeder ? Local press speaks of a "savage" who would have chased them in a "biggish bakkie", a pick-up with a double cabin.<sup>70</sup>



## CHEETAHS - FOLLOWED

### MALAWI

#### **Move Mid-May Liwonde National Park, Southern Region, Malawi**

Four cheetahs, 2 males and 2 females, woke up and left their cases. Captured in South Africa, they found themselves in a pen in Malawi, before being released in the Liwonde National Park and Hunting Reserve. The species disappeared from the country 20 years ago. In fact, the species is endangered in all of Africa. On 30 million km<sup>2</sup> of land, there are no more than a few thousand cheetahs.<sup>71</sup>



### JAGUARS

**Jaguars (*Panthera onca*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.**

#### AMERICA

### BOLIVIE

#### **June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 Tunari, Cochabamba Department, Bolivia**

A young jaguar was seized, he was for sale on the internet for the price of \$ 800 US. A young man of 22 years old is being pursued for marketing protected wildlife. The jaguar is 4 months old, he was poorly fed and was dehydrated, he was sent to Santa Cruz wildlife refuge. He is in a cage of 4 m long. He is eating one kilo of meat per day. He is busy with a teddy bear and a ball.<sup>72</sup>



### BRAZIL

#### **April 12, 2017 Apiacás, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil**

The 39-year-old man manager of a fazenda hunted jaguars in the Indian Reserve. Seizure of one skin and one skull. Fine equal to \$ 1600 US.<sup>73</sup>



#### **April 20, 2017 Carauari, State of Amazonas, Brazil**

Conflict between man and jaguar. The feline was killed by a gun shot to his abdomen. The farmers accuse him of having killed 5 cows.<sup>74</sup>

### MEXICO

#### **May 3, 2017 Espita, State of Yucatan, Mexico**

They tracked the jaguar with dogs on a mountain 6 km from the village, caught him and later killed and scorched him in a cellar to sell the skin. Picture went around on social networks. The 4 offenders have been identified and are wanted by police.<sup>75</sup>

## PUMAS ET JAGUARUNDIS

### COLOMBIA

**Mai 22, 2017  
Tauramena. Casanare Department, Colombia**  
Rescue of a puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) bloodstained and riddled with bullets. It cannot at present be determined if he will survive.<sup>76</sup>

### PERU

#### **April 11, 2017 Junín, Junín Department, Peru**

Rescue of a jaguarundi (*Puma yagouaroundi*, Appendix II). He was in the street with a leather collar and a padlock around its neck. He was transferred to the Huancayo Zoo. An inquiry is underway. The small 5 kg feline is prey to ocelots. He is hunted by farmers. He is accused prowling around hen houses and feeds primarily on mammals, birds and reptiles weighing 400 g at most.<sup>77</sup>





## LEOPARD CATS

Wild leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, except in Bangladesh, India and Thailand where they are in Appendix I.

### ASIA

#### INDIA

##### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**April 5, 2017**

**Bangalore, State of Karnataka, India**

Impersonating potential buyers, agents of the Forest Cell of the Criminal Investigation Department intended to entrap Harsha, a newly certified engineer from Alur who was trying to negotiate the purchase of a Bengal leopard cat skin. The price offered was 70,000 rupee (approximately \$ 1100 US). The investigators set up a meeting with him one evening in the Sampigehalli neighborhood of Bangalore, and arrested him in the act; but his cousin Rakshit succeeded in escaping. Harsha claims that Rakshit did the poaching and asked him to sell the skin. The duo also had elephant tusks and the skins of other wild animals for sale. As a civil services aspirant, Harsha had recently taken the sub-inspector's exam.<sup>78</sup>

#### VIET NAM

**April 25, 2017**

**Ha Giang Province, Viet Nam**

A young Bengal leopard cat was saved; it weighed 150 g. It was captured with its mother when she entered a courtyard to kill a chicken. The mother has disappeared.<sup>79</sup>

**May 24, 2017**

**Thua Thien-Hue Province, Viet Nam**

Rescue of a Bengal leopard-cat that was for sale on Facebook.<sup>80</sup>

facebook



## ONCILLAS

### AMERICA

#### BRAZIL

**June 30, 2017**

**Cubatao, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Rescue of an oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I) of around one month and a half, he was found in a school playground. His teeth are growing. For now, he is only drinking milk. The vet thinks his mother was killed by poachers.<sup>81</sup>



## VARIOUS SPECIES FELINES

### AFRICA

#### CAMEROON

**April 13, 2017**

**Meiganga, Mbéré Department, Cameroon**

Two leopard skins and a lion skin were seized in sacks of corn, in the back of a gray Toyota near a gas station parking lot at the entrance of Meiganga and in a restaurant downtown. That was the setting for the police intervention that put a stop to a trade between Garoua, where the 37-year-old collector and provider is from, and Meiganga, where the 38-year-old trafficker operates a restaurant in which an elephant tusk sits boldly center stage, like a rallying sign and a nod to poachers or gold searchers passing through. Garoua is in the north, just a few kilometers from Nigeria. Meiganga is 300 km to the south. It is a stop-over point before reaching Yaoundé and Douala.<sup>82</sup>

## GUINEA

April 7, 2017

**Kindia, Kindia Region, Guinea**

Caught in the act for possession, transportation, and sale of 2 leopard skins and a lion's head, Hamidou Traoré and Thierno Souleymane Bah have been arrested and the animal remains have been put under seal. The temporary prosecutor is said to be under pressure to let the 2 scoundrels free quickly.<sup>83</sup>

## AMERICA

## BRAZIL

April 21, 2017

**Ribeirão Cascalheira, Mato Grosso State, Brazil.**

The former mayor of the city of 10,000 inhabitants has questionable connections. A jaguar skin, a puma skin, and 70 firearms were taken by the police in the tank of an oil truck belonging to him.<sup>84</sup>

## ASIA

## INDIA

May 28, 2017

**Kanker District, Chhattisgarh State, India**

"Police had the input that Dahivele and Nagwanshi, who are natives of neighboring Balod and Rajnandgaon districts, respectively, had arrived near Bansla village Bhanupratappur to procure wild animal skin from Yadav and Dhruv, following which a joint team of local crime branch police swung into action."

Seizure of a tiger skin and a leopard skin.<sup>85</sup>



## Leopards and Elephants



## AFRICA

## CAMEROON

April 20, 2017

**Sangmélima, Dja-et-Lobo Department, Cameroon**

The priest from the Catholic church says that the profits of his traffic in ivory and leopard skins are helping to build a church. This clergyman is the leader of a gang. He provides ammunition, blankets, and food to a small band of faithful poachers. He delivers to Yaoundé and to Douala, by-passing all check-points, as a "Man of God." "Indeed, no one would dare to suspect that a Catholic priest is transporting illegal goods," writes Ndjana Modo in Alwidha Info. The wildlife agents of the Departmental dared. In his car, the holy man, who to this day does not have any known earthly identification, was transporting 2 tusks, and the skin and teeth of a leopard slaughtered not long ago.<sup>1</sup>

Cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 59 and 62, n°6 p. 80, n°7 p. 67, n°8 p. 87 and 94, n°11 p. 37, n°12 p. 51.

## COTE D'IVOIRE

May 8, 2017

**Treichville and Cocody neighborhoods, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**

- Handcuffed and kneeling on 7 leopard skins, the man and his fellow were in possession of 165 worked ivories and 40 kg of raw ivory. The operation was directed by the UCT (Unité de lutte contre la Criminalité Transnationale), with the help of EA-GLE.

-Seizure of 150 worked ivories (18 kg), 6 raw tusks (41 kg), and 300 kg of vene wood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) by UCT.<sup>2</sup>





## GABON

**April 12, 2017**

### **Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon**

Seizure of 4 horns, an elephant tail, 5 leopard skulls, and a feline skin. Arrest of Mauril Obame, a poacher who had been wanted for 2 years and of Jean Amane Ango, his client. The leopards had been trapped in the bush and were finished off with a rifle.<sup>3</sup>

An elephant tail used as a fly-whisk renders invisible and uncatchable. He who uses it as so is under the protection of the elephant and protects thus his clan. Bwiti is an initiation ritual from Gabon that sees in elephant tails extraordinary powers.<sup>4</sup>



**May 9, 2017**

### **Franceville, Province of Haut-Ogooué, Gabon**

New joint operation carried out by authorities and Conservation Justice. Seizure of 2 leopard skins, 2 elephants tusks and a tail.<sup>5</sup>



**End of May, 2017**

### **Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon**

Seizure by the judiciary police and Conservation Justice of 2 leopard skins and an elephant tail. Four arrests: Yoghos, the business dealer, Ngablegue, Leboussi and Manouss, suppliers of a skin, Oyié, supplier of the other skin and of the elephant tail.<sup>6</sup>



## ASIA

## VIET NAM

**May 14, 2017**

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

The retired Vietnamese woman, 65 years-old, tried to get through customs with 3 leopard skins, 4 kg of semi-raw ivory, 9 tails and a number of elephant foot nails, estimated by public authorities to be worth \$ 88,000 US. "Everything was very well-hidden in her bags." Not well enough. The flight came from Africa.<sup>7</sup>



Elephant tail, see also in this issue, p. 92 (ref. 29) and p. 113 (ref.11).





# Wolves



The Tale of Prince Ivan, The Firebird and the Grey Wolf.

## AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**April 20, 2017**

#### **Anchorage, Alaska, United States of America**

The Center for Biological Diversity is engaged in a case of the highest importance with the court of justice. The NGO is contesting the constitutionality of the Congressional Review Act that, since 1996, has authorized congress to rescind on decisions adopted several months earlier under the administration of the previous president. In August 2016, the US Fish and Wildlife Service banned the hunting of wolves and of cubs in their dens, the killing of bears in their feeding zones and from the air in helicopters and their capture with metal traps. All of these hunting tactics were recommended by the Alaska Board of Game and accepted by the government of the State. They had just come to be validated by the Trump administration. Since 1996, the Congressional Review Act had only been used once in 2001, but since the arrival of Donald Trump, it has been used 13 times to "reverse" Obama's decisions.<sup>1</sup>

**May 11, 2017**

#### **Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, United States of America**

Wanted- \$5000 US reward from the Yellowstone Park management to anyone who gives any information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person who, between the morning of April 10 and 2 pm on April 11, fatally shot a 12-year-old gray wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), discovered by hikers, agonizing near Mammoth Hot Springs and the border of Montana.

Fourteen wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone Park in 1995. Through a domino effect, they have redesigned the ecosystems. Predators of coyotes, wolves have contributed to the redistribution of small mammals. To avoid the wolves, deer have moved back into areas that had been abandoned, like riverbanks, and in their turn, have contributed to the redistribution of water birds.<sup>2</sup>

## EUROPE

### GERMANY

**April 2017**

#### **Hamburg International Airport, Germany**

Failed attempt to import a wolf skin (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) with the teeth and head, from Kazakhstan, with no CITES permit.<sup>3</sup>



### SWITZERLAND

**June 9, 2017**

#### **Bellegarde, Gruyère District, Canton of Fribourg, Switzerland**

After F16 (See "On the Trail" n°16 p. 63) it's F13's turn. She was poisoned. Same place, same time, 6 foxes, a black kite and a badger shared the same fate. The Chief of Forest and Wildlife Services highlights that herds protected by dogs have never been attacked by wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II).<sup>4</sup>

# Bears

## AMERICA

### PERU

**May 19, 2017**

#### **Ayacucho, Ayacucho Region, Peru**

The spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I) was on a leash in front of a pathetic cage. The species has almost disappeared in Peru. Spectacled bears are hunted by cattle breeders. They supposedly attack the herds. The species is mainly herbivore. Also known as the Andean bear, they live solo or in families in the forests up to 2500 m.<sup>1</sup>

## ASIA

### CHINA

**May 2017**

#### **Hechi, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China**

In presence of local NGOs, destruction by burning of 34 bear paws seized by forest services. Value of the burning is estimated at 50,000 yuan i.e. \$ 7250 US, \$ 214 US per paw.<sup>2</sup>



With this move, authorities wish to show their determination to tackle poaching in cooperation with the civil society, but also to avoid any risk of infection because of rotting body parts.

### SOUTH KOREA

**May 7, 2017**

#### **South Korea**

To finish once and for all with an industry that clings in South Korea, the government is planning to make sterilization mandatory for the bears that remain in captivity in the country.<sup>3</sup>

## INDIA

**May 9, 2017**

#### **State of Uttarakhand, India**

Seizure of 3 bear gall bladders. Trafficking is increasing. It is hard to keep under control. The bears in northern India, the Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) and brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I) and Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), are the most sought for to compensate for extinction of bears in south-East Asia. The gall bladder is sold on the basis of one tola (10 g) at prices higher than for gold.<sup>4</sup>

## IRAQ

**Mid-April**

#### **Halgurd Sakran national Park, Erbil Governorate, Iraq**

4 bears freed. They were, for better or for worse, released into the mountains and trails of the Halgurd Sakran National Park. Before, these 4 adventurers were in the hands of bear leaders. One of them was too human impregnated and quickly found its way back to residential sectors. He was taken back to the well known Dohok refuge. He is in the company of 3 other bears who, after a learning period, will also be released into the mountains, 213 km north of Mossoul, on the border of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Irakian Kurdistan shares a 40-km-long border with Iran. The economic consolidation of the Erbil governorate depends partly on the development of the National Park, attracting tourists and protecting biodiversity. This ambition may seem a utopian in this transnational region, overlapping Syria, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, that the immense majority of the world's population sees as a "No Go Zone."

Wrong! One to 2 million tourists from Iraq and the rest of the world are attracted each year to the beauty of the countryside, the historical heritage and the exceptional biodiversity, which includes tigers, bears and wolves. The Park administration has banned hunting and cutting down trees. Like in a lot of national parks on other continents, there is friction with nomadic shepherds who use weapons or poison to protect their herds from attacks by large carnivores.<sup>5</sup>





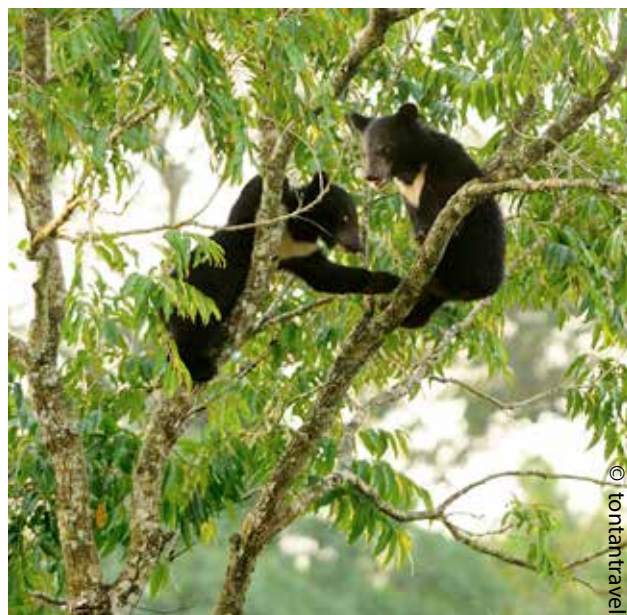
## VIET NAM

**June 23, 2017**

### **Province of Binh Duong, Viet Nam**

9 Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) including 4 females had been exploited for 8 and 10 years in a commercial farm near Ho Chi Minh City. They were locked in cages and regularly were subjected to the painful puncture to collect the bile. Reminder, the bile produced by bears' gall bladders is deemed to heal gastro-intestinal problems and hepatitis, joint pains and rheumatisms, dysentery, jaundice, ulcers and abscesses.

The government has banned such practices since 2005. The 10 bears are going to be shipped to the dedicated sanctuary in Tam Dao in the Vinh Phuc province. The NGO Animal Asia's actions have resulted in liberation of 186 bears exploited in farms in Viet Nam.<sup>6</sup>



*Ursus thibetanus*

## EUROPE

## RUSSIA

**June 2017**

### **Zabaykalsky, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia**

Five bear paws for a total weight of 8.5 kg, hidden behind brake gear housing of a wagon carrying logs from Siberia to China, were seized by Russian customs at the Zabaykalsky border control post, between Zabaykalsky and Inner Mongolia.<sup>7</sup>

**June 2017**

### **South Saharinsk International Airport, Sakhaline Oblast, Far Eastern Region, Russia**

Seizure among the belongings of 2 Vietnamese passengers leaving for Seoul, South Korea, of 4 paws, a gall bladder and 31 bear claws.<sup>8</sup>

## Hippopotamuses

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

## AFRICA

## ZIMBABWE

**April 2, 2017**

### **Binga District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

Sudden death of 12 hippopotamuses in the Zambezi Basin.

First attributed to the spraying of illegal or over-dosed pesticides, the carnage was then thought to be due to anthrax. The villagers have officially been instructed not to butcher the carcasses.<sup>1</sup>

## Hippopotamuses and Elephants

## AFRICA

## UGANDA

**End of April 2017**

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



Seizure: 8 kg of elephant, 13 kg of hippopotamus, 4 arrests.<sup>1</sup>

**Mid June, 2017**

### **Mbale, Mbale District, Eastern Region, Uganda**

A man who managed a restaurant and 2 others who call themselves house painters were arrested. They were in possession of 34.6 kg of ivory and 500,000 counterfeit shilling (\$ 142 US). Even then, the ivory came by contraband from Kenya.<sup>2</sup>





# Rhinoceroses

Seven human losses, 6 poachers and 1 ranger. From southern Africa to Nepal, rhinoceros fall by dozens. KwaZulu Natal is named the «Rhinos Ground Zero». Seizures are streaming in from every direction. They account for only 10 to 15% of the horn traffic. The two new and feared events are the removal of the moratorium on horn trade inside South Africa and the horn auctions planned in August and September by the largest rhino breeder.

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°17

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	South Africa	15,240	44
		16,000	47
	Swaziland	83,400	62
Asia	China (Hong Kong)	25,000	65
		25,714	66
	India (Assam)	34,000	71
	Malaysia	59,800	82
	Viet Nam	52,800	85
		88,000	89

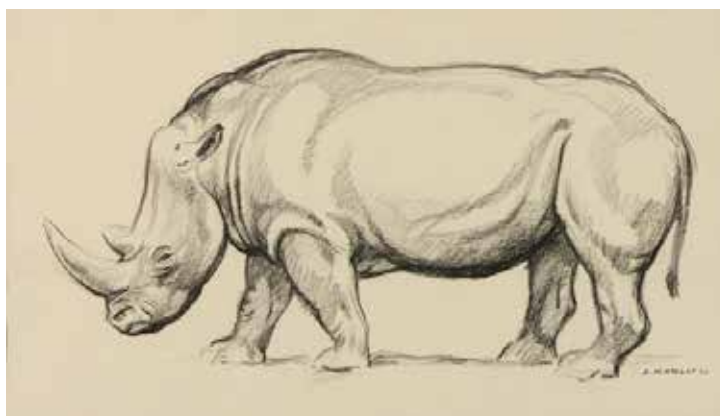
## EASTERN AFRICA

### KENYA

May 8, 2017

**Solio Ranch, Nyeri County, Central Province, Kenya**

An operation by the Kenyan Wildlife Service, KWS, took place Monday to lay hands on several poachers who trespassed on Solio Ranch, slaughtered a female and cut her horns off, and left a distraught young rhino near the dead body of its mother. According to Paul Gathitu, spokesman for KWS, a second carcass was discovered following aerial patrols launched to find the poachers. The rhino was killed and the horns taken approximately 3 weeks ago.<sup>1</sup>



André Margat (1903-1997). Rhinocéros.

June 21, 2017

**Near Solio Ranch, Nyeri County, Kenya**

Since the beginning of the year, rhino poaching has been splattering blood throughout the Solio Reserve said Solio Ranch. In the last episode, a female had her horns amputated while she was still alive. She was still alive several hours after when she was discovered by rangers.

The families of 2 men who were implicated in this eruption of poaching in Solio are worried. One week ago, their empty car was found, near Solio. Since, James Wanjohi, 47, and Issac Mungai Kihato, 25, had not given any sign of life or death. It is a total mystery. Meanwhile, the Director of Criminal Investigations identified a Solio Ranch guard who was a key link in the poaching, and the two missing men would have been mixed in a recent ivory traffic that went bad. The two men could have been silenced by the incriminated guard or those close to him or by other partners in trafficking, unsatisfied with the uneven distribution of profits. To follow. The truth is perhaps somewhere else.<sup>2</sup>

Cf. “On the Trail” n°1 p. 25, n°3 p. 51, n°4 p. 64, n°6 p. 61, n°7 p. 64, p. 66, n° 10 p. 46, n°12 p.74.

End of June 2017

**Solio Ranch, Nyeri County, Kenya**

Arrest of Gichobi Mwai and Gerald Nderitu. According to the ballistic investigations, the weapon they had on them was used to poach a rhino in Solio Ranch on 19 May.<sup>3</sup>

### MOZAMBIQUE

April 15, 2017

**Maputo International Airport, Mozambique**

The police and customs of the Maputo airport found out 10.5 kg of horns in an aluminum case during passenger check-in. The owner ran away. The destination of the horns and the airline company have not been revealed by the police. The horns might belong to South African rhinos.<sup>4</sup>

**Weekend of April 22 and 23, and April 26, 2017****Beitbridge, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe**

Deadly weekend in Nottingham. Saturday and Sunday, Bino Ndou set his traps. Sunday, he went to collect them, and when 3 rangers approached, he shot on sight. One ranger was killed. He is at the Beitbridge morgue awaiting a post-mortem exam. Wednesday April 26, Ndou was arrested.<sup>5</sup>

**May 17, 2017****Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

\$ 200 US bail for the disappearance of \$ 3 million US of rhino horns. What is disconcerting in Zimbabwe and neighboring countries is that the more valuable the theft, the smaller the bail required for release. In other terms, we might also say that the higher the rank of the accused, the lower the bail. That was the case with Edson Chidziya, former manager of the State "horns of war" stock, nearly 4,500 horns. A ZimParks audit states that 56 horns are missing, corresponding to \$ 3 million US. Chidziya was released on \$ 200 US bail.<sup>6</sup>

Cf. ivory theft in Mozambique, page 90, ref. 17.

**June 2017****Savuli Ranch, Province of Masvingo, Zimbabwe**

Two carcasses of dehorned black rhinos exhumed in the Savuli Ranch rented by the Province's Minister of Interior Affairs. Shuvai Mahofa remains undaunted. She claims she is victim of a plot set up by the neighboring white farmers.

In 2012, News Day, a private media, had related that Mrs. Mahofa was suspected of poaching or complicity of such. Three buffalo carcasses and other wild animals' meat had been found in the butcher shop she ran in Gutu before becoming Minister.

At the beginning of the month, another rhino body with a bullet in his head had been found by a Zimparks patrol in the Savuli ranch that covers 5000 hectares.<sup>7</sup>

**GANG****Mid-june 2017****Masvingo, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe**

Munashe Mudenge Murwira, a secret agent, was discharged for lack of evidence. He was introduced as the supplier in weapons and cars for the poachings in Savé Valley Conservancy between 2014 and 2015. Munashe Mudenge Murwira had a preferential treatment. His partners in crime were sentenced from 10 to 35 years in prison (cf. "On the Trail" n°11 p. 57 and n°14 p. 60).<sup>8</sup>

**Capital punishment for rhinoceros****April 5, 2017****Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

The Constitutional Court definitively validated the lifting of the moratorium on domestic trade of rhino horns, body parts and by-products. The Minister of Environmental Affairs immediately issued a press release with a reminder that international trade remains banned by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The analyses of NGOs are completely contradictory. Conservation Trust summarizes their position "This is a slap in the face for the overwhelming majority of countries that voted against the trade in horn at the CITES CoP17 meeting in Johannesburg last year and a huge victory for the very few, extremely wealthy, rhino farmers and potential traders who have been lobbying Molewa for years." For the rhinoceroses, the devil is in the details, and particularly in Article III of the CITES Convention, which authorizes the export for non-commercial purposes (i.e. for personal purposes) of animal parts, if an export/import permit has been obtained, even if the animals are listed in Appendix I, or in Appendix II with a zero quota annotation. The criterion "of personal purposes" theoretically excludes any intention on the part of the possessor to sell or carry out any other kind of commercial transaction. It is the responsibility of the import country to verify in the long-term that the horns remain the property of the possessor, as a souvenir or decorative object. Given the value per kilo of rhino horns - Swaziland estimates it at \$ 30,000 US "wholesale price" - side-stepping and other risks on this slippery slope are to be feared. The government is trying to put measures in place to limit abuse. To sell a horn, to export it, to give it or receive it as a gift, to transport it in a car, by plane or by helicopter, the sender and the receiver must both fill out a photographic file with numerical details, proving that the horn is of legal origin and that it was not poached or obtained from any hidden source. Under the same conditions and under the vague description of "personal effects", foreigners can leave South Africa with a maximum of one or two horns, within an unspecified period. Without being too pessimistic, this renewed opening of the domestic market could be interpreted as an introduction to the reopening of international commercial trade, that South Africa could present at the plenary meeting of CITES, in 2019 in Sri Lanka.

.../...

#### Capital punishment for rhinoceros - Followed

Confirmed poachers and traffickers like the Deventer brothers (see "On the Trail" n°16, p 65, and p. 77 of this issue) will leap straight through these half-opened doors. Instead of killing the demand for horns, the Constitutional Court's decision will stimulate it.

It is extremely discouraging to note that one of the most influential countries in Africa relies on the questionable and charlatan trafficking of horns, lion bones, donkey gelatin to consolidate its economy and the gains of a select few.<sup>9</sup>

In 2015, John Hume joined with Johan Kruger to sue the 2009 decision by the environmental Ministry to forbid the national trade of horns. With the support of the Private Rhino Owners Association, he has just won following the judgment of the Constitutional Court in Pretoria and he is now planning to organized from August 21 to 24 an online sale by auction and on 19 September a physical auction.

John Hume looses and makes money out of anything, big budget movies like *Zulu Dawn* with Peter O'Toole and Burt Lancaster, the hotel business, supermarkets, taxis and since 1996 rhinos. "It was a project for my retirement" he says, portraying himself as responsible grandfather in front of Julian Rademayer author of *Killing for Profit* published in 2012.

Now he would own more than 1500 rhinos and 6 tonnes of horn. Based on the value of a horn on the black market he is the richest man in South Africa as long as he is able to sell them in Asia. Hume's point of view is to consider rhinos as farm animals that can produce revenue by collecting each year a kilo of horn from their nose. For the moment, products of his preventive dehornings are stockpiled in bank vaults. For him as for all his colleagues horn is a renewable resource.<sup>10</sup>

John Hume, cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p. 25 et n°11 p.57.

#### May 27, 2017 Namibia

Namibia does not plan to reopen the horn-trading industry within the country. For the moment, South Africa's position has not yet created a snowball effect.

In 2016, 222 rhino horn and elephant tusk traffickers were arrested. The spokesperson for the Ministry of the Environment and of Tourism believes that the trend is positive. "So far in 2017, we only have about 8 rhinos and 4 elephants poached, which is significantly low compared to the same time last year."<sup>11</sup>

## SOUTH AFRICA

April 3, 2017

#### Bela Bela, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Confiscation from 2 suspects of an unregistered 375 caliber weapon, a cutlass and a Toyota.<sup>12</sup>



April 4, 2017

#### Winterveldt, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Four men, between 26 and 46 years old, suspected of rhinos poaching were stopped at Winterveldt, 50 kilometers north of Pretoria. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, they had poached one in the Madikwe Game Reserve. Rapidly informed, the police arrived on the scene just in time to see them flee. According to Sergeant Sabata Mokgwabone of the Northwest police, "The suspects allegedly saw the police, then abandoned their vehicle and fled on foot to evade arrest. Upon searching the suspects' vehicle, the police found a rifle, knives and two rhino horns inside. As part of the investigation, leads were followed and that led to the arrest."

The suspects will appear before the Zeerust court to answer to charges of conspiracy to commit rhinoceros poaching, as well as possession of firearms and of rhinoceros horns.<sup>13</sup>

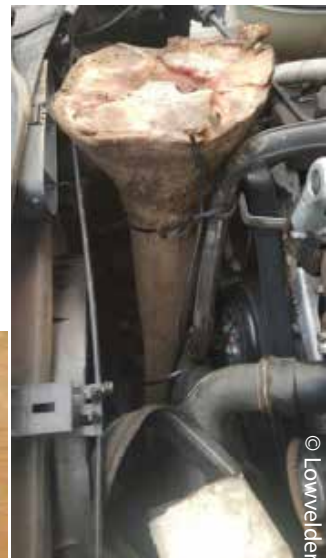
## GANG

April 12, 2017

#### Mahamba, Gert Sibande District, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa. Border of Swaziland.

Four traffickers were brought before the Mahamba court for the possession of two horns. They were apprehended the day before at 8 a.m. at the Mahamba border post. Driving a silver Mercedes, they were spotted by members of the police and South African army. When they were asked to open the front hood of the car, the driver said that it did not open... After the police insisted, he consented to open it and revealed 2 rhinoceros horns. He tried to escape but was caught.

The police confiscated the horns and the vehicle. The 4 suspects, Steven Stolz, Clarence Ngomane, Keletso Makwakwa, and Bathabile Lubisi are now being maintained in detention on suspicion.<sup>14</sup>





**April 19, 2017**

**Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Ye Zhiwei, 28, carrier of 15 black rhinoceros horns and 3 white rhinoceros horns was arrested at the Johannesburg airport, on November 23, 2016, as he was in transit between Namibia and Hong Kong (see "On the Trail" n°15 p 80) and was sentenced to a fine of \$ 91,200 US or to 6 years in prison. If, as he claims, he accepted the job of being a mule offered by a Chinese compatriot named Zang Fei to help with serious financial problems, then he will go to prison. The mysterious Zang Fei is still on the run.<sup>15</sup>



**April 19, 2017**

**Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Three Chinese citizens, Zhiaiang Wany, Jianghoa Zang, and Mei Li, were sentenced to 2 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 rand (\$ 7606 US) for having been in possession of rhinos horn and ivory. They were arrested on March 16, 2016.<sup>16</sup>



**April 19, 2017**

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

Installation of a regional court specialized in rhino horn poaching and trafficking. According to the Minister of the Environment, this "rhino" court is going to speed up procedures and shorten delays between arrests and judgments.<sup>17</sup>

**April 26, 2017**

**South Africa**

Difficult rescue by the veterinarian Dr. William Fowlds of a female black rhino shot in the head near the right eye.<sup>18</sup>

**April 28, 2017**

**Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa**

De-horning of 2 white rhinoceroses in the zoo, without having informed the local council. The horns have disappeared. Two zoo agents have been suspended from their duties. That's all, and yet it is a theft that has been exposed by the SAPS (South African Police Service).<sup>19</sup>

**GANG**

**April 30, 2017**

**East London, Amathole district, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

As they were driving in a multi-passenger vehicle towards the Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve, near East London, 5 men were arrested in possession of a .308 hunting rifle equipped with a home-made silencer, 15 chargers, a hatchet, a machete and a metal saw. They had been



given away. The suspects, aged 26 to 46, have been incarcerated at the Gonubie police station as they await their trial in the East London Court for the possession of firearms and ammunition and organized murder attempt. For Graham Stanton, one of the owners of the Reserve, "It is a relief for the wildlife on the coast."<sup>20</sup>

**GANG**

**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Ekland Game Farm, Makhado, Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

The Makhado police set a trap for poachers who were preparing to enter the Ekland Game Farm. Seeing themselves surrounded, the 2 men triggered an exchange of gunfire with the law enforcement officers. One of the bandits was hurt. The second surrendered. A gun, 10 cartridges for very large game, 3 hunting knives, and a Ford Ranger were confiscated. The suspects were charged with poaching and attempted murder of police officers.<sup>21</sup>



**May 2, 2017**

**Empangeni, Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

The Thula Thula orphanage is closing its doors. The NGO Lawrence Anthony Earth threw in the towel. A risk assessment showed that watch guards had to be present 24 hours a day. The costs involved are impossible to bear. The personnel and volunteers are still in shock from the raid, and the violence to which both they and the rhinoceros orphans were subjected. The orphans were taken to other establishments that will benefit from funds that were collected but not yet used by Thula Thula (see "On the Trail" n°3 p. 49, p. 50 and n°16 p. 67).<sup>22</sup>

**May 5, 6, and 7, 2017**

**Mokopong, North West Province, South Africa, near the border with Botswana**

A nasty weekend for the Mercedes Benz gang. After the poaching on Friday, the Vryburg Public Order Policing and Dog Unit hunted down the killers. Shots were fired. The bandits supposedly shot first. One of them was hurt. Two accomplices ran into the wild. The first was arrested the next Saturday in Mokopong, the second on the Sunday night in Morokweng. One or 2 horns (depending on the sources), a stolen firearm, and a very recent luxury car were seized. The injured man is under safe watch at the hospital. His life is not in danger. An immigrant from Mozambique is actively being searched. He is one of the henchmen of the gang.<sup>23</sup>



**May 10, 2017**  
**Albert Falls, UMgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Two carcasses were discovered in the night, very probably poached in the Msinsi Game Reserve near Albert Falls. Vishnu Naidoo, spokesman for the police declared, "This was reported to us on Wednesday night and our crime scene technicians are busy processing the scene."<sup>24</sup>



**10-11 May, 2017**  
**Hluhluwe-iMfolozi, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Full moon for poachers or full-moon poachers. The first 2 weeks of May were tragic. No less than 23 rhinos were poached in the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve alone. Only 2 suspects were apprehended in Mpumalanga. All the victims were de-horned. Several gangs had coordinated efforts. 89 rhinoceros have died for their horns since the beginning of the year in Kwazulu Natal. Nearly 50% more than in 2016. Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park is becoming the "Ground Zero" of rhinos, deplores News 24.com.<sup>25</sup>



**May 14, 2017**  
**Punda Maria, Kruger National Park, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Deadly outbreak between rangers and poachers in the north of the Park in the middle of the night. One man was found dead. He would be part of the Mercedes-Benz gang responsible for the death of a rhino near the border to Botswana, a week ago (see p. 75). He would be a former Kruger Park ranger. On site, 2 fire arms, ammunition, bags full of axes, machetes and knives were found. Three suspects vanished into the bush.<sup>26</sup>



**May 2017**  
**Modimolle, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Aged 36 and 64, Sakkie Marutle Malaza and Manabeng Michael Makua have been sentenced to 18 years in prison. The affaire began in February 2013 when, in the Bela Bela district, a patrol caught sight of the 2 men sneaking into the Mabalingwe Reserve. Malaza had been immediately immobilized, dropping a hatchet and firearm on the spot. Makua was arrested a little later and 62 rhino or elephant cartridges were taken from his house.<sup>27</sup>



**May 2017**  
**South Africa**

Innovative medical treatment for a young white female rhino who had an infected horn after a poaching attempt 8 months ago. The initial diagnosis shows encouraging signs. Her recovery is being monitored by Saving the Survivors.<sup>28</sup>



**May 21, 2017**  
**South Africa**

The Hawks deny that the wife of the Minister of Public Security was implicated in trafficking. Mahlobo, the Minister, was a regular at a hair salon, massage and brothel kept by Guan Jiang Guang, an expert in prostitution, corruption, and scams (see "On the Trail" n°15, p79). Guang is off the radars.<sup>29</sup>

**May 17 and 22, 2017**  
**Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

- As cargo destined for Hong Kong, via Qatar, Doha, passed through the X-ray scanner, customs officers at the Reginald Tambo airport spotted rhinoceros horns. Once opened, the package in question, which was labeled as containing "tea bags," revealed 8 pieces of horn weighing a total of 7.035 kg. They were wrapped in aluminum foil and mixed in among packets of candy and chocolates.<sup>30</sup>

-Seizure of 13.2 kg of horn cut in pieces. The reconstructed puzzle formed 9 small horns. The victims were young. The flight was destined for Hong Kong.<sup>31</sup>



**May 23, 2017**  
**Ofcolaco, Limpopo Province, South Africa**  
 Arrest of 3 men suspected of poaching, thanks to a canine brigade.<sup>32</sup>



**May 25, 2017**  
**Polokwane Game Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

After preventative de-horning, now there is preventative relocation. The herd of rhinoceros, the main attraction at the Reserve, has been transferred to an unidentified place.  
 (See "On the Trail" n°2 p. 43, n° 9 p. 64, n°13 p. 72, n°14 p. 64).<sup>33</sup>

**May 26, 2017**  
**Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Another killing of a female and her baby in the early morning. Four armed poachers overpowered the 2 guards, tied them up, shot the animals and sawed their horns. The guards managed to free themselves and give the alert but the poachers are on the run with their loot.<sup>35</sup>

## **GANG**

**May 20 and 31, June 21, 2017**  
**Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

**The Ndlovu Gang is lucky and has good lawyers**

Since they were arrested, there have been no more rhinoceroses assassinated with M99. Forty rhinoceroses have been poached using M99 in the province since 2009. The 3 poachers are doing everything they can to be freed on bail. Jabulani Ndlovu, Forget Ndlovu, and Sikhumbuzo Ndlovu are supposedly not related. Two are from Zimbabwe and the third claims to be South African. They were surprised last year near Grahamstown with a fresh horn 72 cm long, a dart gun, and M99, a powerful anesthetic. Sophisticated equipment that, according to the investigation in process, implies their affiliation with a well-organized and skilled team (see "On the Trail" n°13 p.72).

According to their lawyer, Terry Price, they are willing to provide 35,000 rand (\$ 2662 US) in joint bail to be let out on interim release. Terry Price underlines that they have no criminal record and that they are ready to accept all the restrictive clauses, like the confiscation of identification papers or being required to report regularly to the police station near their place of residence. "There was no evidence before court that the men were a flight risk."

The first request to be released on bail was refused last year.

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, the High Court accepted to free the trio as they await trial. Protests from the rhino-owners and from NGOs were immediate and intense. "They deserve 15 years in prison and we are not likely to see them again in court".

Mai 31<sup>st</sup>, the threesome were arrested again. New charges are against them and an arrest warrant was delivered by Hoedspruit Court, Limpopo province. They are linked to two other poachings in the district. Surprisingly, they were freed again on the 21<sup>th</sup> June on a 5000 rand bail, \$ 380 US, even before the investigators could present their new clues at the Bar. The police officers and the rhino owners are appalled.<sup>36</sup>

## **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**April and June 2017**

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

The two terrible brothers, Gideon and Niklaas van Deventer, (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 65) are looking to leave prison on bail. They say that the horn thrown in the ditch from their all-terrain pick-up truck belongs to a certain Ruben. They consider themselves to be police informers, and their lawyer believes that as such, they can be freed on bail.

After a marathon of 5 months during which the brothers hoped to be granted interim release, the judge said no. The tips on the mysterious Ruben, supposed owner of the horn, are not substantial enough for the Deventers to be considered informants. Their long history as repeat poachers does not work in their favor, either. Their accomplice, Onward Muchagowa, could join his family in Zimbabwe without awaiting trial if he was granted early release. He will also remain in prison.

**January to May 2017**

**South Africa**

Progress report: 50 arrests in 2 months and seizure of 13 rhinoceros horns, 2 elephant tusks and 19 hunting rifles.<sup>38</sup>

Since the beginning of the year, 477 rhinos have been poached, including 119 in KwaZulu-Natal.

**June 3, 2017**

**Near Roedtan, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Minus 2 rhinoceros, the horns are gone.<sup>39</sup>

**June 5, 2017**

**Grahamstown, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa**

Arrest of 3 suspects. They would be involved in 2 poaching acts. A rifle they had in their possession would have been involved in 60 poaching acts.<sup>40</sup>



**June 7, 2017**

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

Warning: full moon! Minus one rhinoceros at dawn near Satara.<sup>41</sup>



**June 8, 2017**

**Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, Afrique du Sud**

Warning: full moon! Minus one rhinoceros in Gravelotte.<sup>42</sup>



**June 12, 2017**

**KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

JP Van Zyl-Roux after 30 years in the anti-poaching field, including the last 10 years in the elite corps of the HAWKS, rewarded with a certificate of merit from CITES is downgraded to an office desk sorting papers. He is confusedly accused of having stocked private weapons in a service room or of having taken part in an attempted murder in conspiracy, in fact crossfire with poachers.

His lawyer, before the final dismissal procedure, speaks of non sense and just as the Elephant Action League does, he believes the gang of poachers is linked to an eminent member of the ANC (African National Congress). "Saving soldier Van Zyl-Roux is a duty if one wants to save the rhinos in Zululand" proclaims Jamie Joseph, spokesperson for Saving the Wild.<sup>43</sup>

**June 11 and 13, 2017**

**O.R. Tambo International Airport and Kempton Park, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

Arrest and court hearing for Yong, 57 years old, and Sun, 35 years old, after a second inspection of their luggage in the hold of the flight for Istanbul revealed 10 horns for a total weight of 24.96 kg. Value: 5 million Rand, that is \$ 380,300 US and \$ 15,240 US per kilo.<sup>44</sup>



**June 12 and 13, 2017**

**Nkangala and Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Given away by locals, 2 men with clothes covered in blood were arrested in the early morning by the anti poaching unit in KwaZulu-Natal, 2 km outside the Park. They admitted to having killed a rhino and led the agents to the spot where they hid the horn. The canine unit is in search of the gun and axe.<sup>45</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**June 13 and 23, 2017**

**Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

There are 1800 charges against Groenewald and company. The lift of the moratorium on the domestic trade of rhino horns (see pages 73-74) could lead to many of his charges being dropped. This legal flip-flop will have retroactive effects. Consequently, the High Court of Pretoria has again postponed the trials of Dawie Groenewald, his spouse and of his partners in crime.

The trial of Hugo Ras, another kingpin of the rhino mafia, has been postponed for the same reasons.

The Groenewald brothers are bailed out for 50.000 rands (\$ 3850 US) for Danie and 10,000 (\$ 770 US) for Janneman.

Both their passports are in the hands of national police and Interpol (cf. next page).<sup>46</sup>

**June 14, 2017**

**OR Tambo International Airport, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Seizure of \$ 456,000 US in the form of 28.7 kg of horns, representing \$ 16,000 per kg. They were covered in wax to throw off the canine unit. A Vietnamese citizen was arrested.<sup>47</sup>

**June 14-15, 2017**

**Thula Thula Private Game Reserve and iSimangaliso Wetland Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

**-Thula Thula** - Dehorning by chainsaw. The 2 resident-rhinoceroses, 8 years old, were first anesthetized. The poachers around Thula Thula are extremely violent and will do anything for a couple of grams (see "On the Trail" n°16 p 67.) Horns regrow. To be a deterrent, dehorning must be repeated every year.

**-iSimangaliso.** Identical operation for 2 resident-rhinoceroses. The horns were safely tucked away in an unknown place.<sup>48</sup>

**June 16, 2017**

**Great Fish Nature Reserve, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

By tracking in the early morning suspicious tracks in the Great Fish Nature Reserve, rangers fell upon a team of poachers who were on the lookout, ready to slaughter a rhino. They uncovered it by following his dropping. Refusing to turn it in and to respond to warnings, they engaged in a shooting with the rangers. One of the poachers was hurt in the leg and in the arm in response. Sydney Malose, Mozambican citizen, was arrested in possession of a .375 caliber firearm with a silencer, although his

two accomplices were able to escape. Brought to the emergency room at the Frere Hospital of East London, handcuffed to his bed and theoretically watched by a police officer, he succeeded in escaping on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June. Only a bolt cutter was found. According to Pelham Jones, chairperson of the Private Rhino Owners' Association, "[...] it is totally demoralizing to those dedicated policemen and women, and anti-poaching members fighting the bloodiest poaching crisis this country has ever seen."<sup>49</sup>



**June 18, 2017**

**Gravelotte, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Men with the full behaviour and outfit of poachers were caught inside Gravelotte Ranch.

Guards called out the usual summons and the suspects fired back. Two were seriously wounded by the aftershots. The 3<sup>rd</sup> disappeared into the bush. Police say he has been identified.

A .375 caliber rifle, a silencer, a 9 mm gun, ammunition and 4 cell phones were found on site.<sup>50</sup>

**June 19, 2017**

**GANG**

**Wychwood, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

A workshop for cutting and polishing horns was closed down in Robinia and 3 suspects arrested. A horn worth an estimated 500,000 rand (\$ 38,000 US) was seized, along with a skull and bones supposed to belong to a lion. A 48-year-old woman and 2 men aged 30 and 40, all from China, also had a stolen Kia car and 47 7.65mm calibre bullets. Two other vehicles were seized and also some drugs.<sup>51</sup>



**June 20, 2017**

**Camperdown, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Maxine, an 11 year-old female, orphan raised by Natal Lion Park agents, was found dead and dehorned, killed with a bullet to the head during her sleep. The killer or killers acted at dawn. Maxine, a white rhino, was a Park icon.<sup>52</sup>



**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**June 20, 2017**

**Polokwane, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

The Groenewald brothers (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 61, n°7 p. 71-72) are entangled in Interpol's nets. The United States wants to question them. Their arrest comes one week after the Dawie trial has been postponed for the n-th time. He is accused along with his ex-wife and 9 other people of hundreds of breaches of the law regarding rhino hunting and international trafficking in their horns. Twenty six rhino corpses dehorned were exhumed from the grounds of their ranch in Musina.

The United States accuse him and his brother Janneman of having directly sold in dedicated salons like the Great American Outdoor Show in Harrisburg 11 illegal hunting permits for \$ 15,000 US each and having swindled the hunters by for example depriving them of the right to keep the trophies and claiming the rhinos were problem-rhinos, that is to say they were threatening the safety of the ranch personnel and neighbouring populations. The Minister of Justice of the United States also accuses the Groenewald brothers of money laundering and bank fraud on the American soil or from the American soil. Even if the Hawks' spokesman says that crime has no borders, lawyer's brothers, Henni Erwee would be filing an urgent application in the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria to rescind the Interpol international arrest warrants. "It makes sense to finalize pending cases here before proceeding with any applications for extradition."<sup>53</sup>

**June 20, 2017**

**Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**

Conviction of a torturer, sentenced to 16 years in prison. The bullet forensics proved that the rifle seized from Makhubele's hands fired the mortal shot that killed a Kruger Park rhino on 31 March 2013. Then the head of the victim still alive was taken to with an ax, ridden of its eyes, nose and jaws. Before being terminated, the martyr roamed in the savannah like a ghost letting out dismal screams.<sup>54</sup>



**June 22, 2017**

**Near Lephalale, Waterberg District, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

A flock of vultures triggered the manhunt. Three corpses, with their horns amputated, were found. The poachers remain impossible to find.<sup>55</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**June 26, 2017**

**Madikwe Game Reserve, North West Province, South Africa**

The mystery is solved. Three men are being interrogated. An ex-agent from the SAPS (South African Police Service) could soon join them. He served as a driver for the poachers and brought them food during their campaign.

The chase began on Saturday 24 June during the night. That night, poachers are suspected to have killed 3 rhinos. The Madikwe anti poaching unit neutralized 2 suspects on Sunday. With help from K9, a .303 calibre rifle with a silencer, a machete and a set of cell phones were found.

One of the men, Malema, 43, has already been convicted in 2014 for the same crime and sentenced to 8 years in prison, but he had been released on parole in 2016. Another who said to be named Balate would be from Mozambique and the 3<sup>rd</sup> is one of the Madikwe Game Reserve guards. He is strongly suspected of having provided very useful information to the 2 killers on the rhinos' location and the hours at which the patrols do their round. They will appear in first instance court during July and as usual will request bail.<sup>56</sup>

**June 27, 2017**

**Pongola, Zululand District, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

At sunrise, the Sedan was lurking in the Pongola protected area known for its rhinos. It was stopped in its way by the SAPS.

Inside there were a firearm with a silencer, ammunition, axes, knives and 2 suspected poachers including a police officer. After consulting the files, it turns out the rifle had been stolen in Pretoria in November 1996.<sup>57</sup>

**NAMIBIA**

**Mid-April 2017**

**Namibia**

A very sad week. Petrus Amaalwa was found hanging from the ceiling in his hut. Joseph Tomas was found hanging from a tree, in a green fishing net. The lieutenant Petrus Mutako Damaseb and soldier Isak Steven Omeb were intercepted at a gas station, with 2 horns in their possession, freshly cut and wrapped in aluminum foil.<sup>58</sup>

**June 2, 3, 5, 7, 2017**

**Khorixas, Kunene Region, Namibia**

Arrest and release under bail refused for 4 men indicted for rhinoceros poaching and for 3 of them, attempted murder, carrying prohibited weapons, and illegally hunting a protected species.

In the early hours of Saturday June 3, the car was stopped by a roadblock. Three passengers ran and after a warning shot, fired back. The exchange of shots did not cause any deaths or injuries to the poachers or police officers. A gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*) body was found in the trunk of the car. The last two fugitives were flushed out of the brush before sunset. The 4 men had the intention to poach 2 black rhinos and were dissuaded by the flyover of an anti-poaching unit helicopter. Monday, the first hearing for their release was refused because of the absence of an Oshiwambo interpreter. A part of Namibia speaks Oshiwambo.

The anti poaching news is loaded around Khorixas. Three men ages 24 to 60 were tried on Friday June 2 for poaching a zebra. The 12 of June they were set free under a bail of 1500 Namibian dollar each (\$ 115 US).<sup>59</sup>

**June 21, 2017**

**Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia**

At the homes of Lu and Chen, there were 5.5 kg of horns (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 69). They had both been freed on bail of 330,000 Namibian dollar (\$ 25,100 US) after 2 and a half months of detention on suspicion. Only Lu came to the court hearing to testify as a part of the investigation. Chen is now the object of an arrest warrant and his bail will be permanently attributed to the State if he does not reappear by July 5. Lu has lived in Namibia for 16 years. Chen had a tourist visa.<sup>60</sup>



**June 23-25-30, 2017**

**Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia**

-Airbound surveillance leaves no doubt. Eight rhino carcasses were spotted between 23 and 25 June in and around the Etosha National Park.

Sixteen rhinos since the beginning of the year and 16 elephants.

-Poaching of a pregnant female estimated by the ranch owner worth 600,000 Namibian dollar (\$ 462,000 US).<sup>61</sup>



Minus 17 rhinos since the beginning of the year.

**SWAZILAND**

**Mbabane, Swaziland**

No release on bail for Chen Beisun and Hasiao Chen Hao, 2 Taiwanese caught red-handed smuggling 24 or 31 pieces of rhino horn (depending on the sources) at the King Mswati III Airport (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 70"). The total weight of the load was 26.37 kg. The retail price value is estimated by the Swaziland media to be \$ 2.2 million US (\$ 83,400 US/kg).

The victims in Swaziland generally have their horns cut off very cleanly. No losses. Expert work (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 65).

The two Taiwanese suspects are in cahoots with Mawillis Shiba (alias Dragon or Drago) and Dan Nkosi, two "wanted men," who have escaped to the big neighboring country, South Africa.<sup>62</sup>

**June 10, 2017**

**Hlane Royal National Park, Swaziland**

A dramatic shooting between poachers and the royal Swaziland police helped by rangers from the Big Game Park ended in the death of 3 suspects. The authorities benefited from a tip which said that a team of rhino poachers was preparing to operate in the Hlane Royal National Park. They were discovered by a patrol inside the Park. Intense exchange of shots followed. Two poachers are supposedly from South Africa but no identities have been revealed. "A high powered hunting rifle, axes, a saw, and other items known to be used in poaching rhinos were recovered on the scene," explained Police Chief Information and Communications Officer Khulani Mamba.<sup>63</sup>



**AMERICA**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**April 27, 2017**

**University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont, United States of America**

The director of the University of Vermont announced reward of \$ 3000 US for any information relating to a horn stolen at the end of April. The horn has been the University's property since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has been on exhibit for decades in a closed room. The thief used a drill to open the lock. The horn is that of a black rhinoceros, but the documents that accompanied it disappeared in the 50s.<sup>64</sup>



**ASIA**

**CHINA**

**June 9, 2017**

**Hong Kong International Airport, China**

The 46-year-old man came from South Africa. He was carrying inside tin foil 2,5 kg of horn estimated by customs worth \$ 500,000 HK i.e. \$ 200,000 HK per kilo (\$ 25,000 US). Tests are underway to assure the horns are authentic.<sup>65</sup>



**June 10, 2017**

**Hong Kong International Airport**

The 23-year-old man came from Indonesia. He was carrying, in a black bag, 10.5 kg of horns estimated to be worth \$ 2.1 million HK (\$ 270,000 US and \$ 25,714 US/kg). Analyses are currently underway to check that they are genuine.<sup>66</sup>



## INDIA

**April 17, 2017**

### **Orang National Park, State of Assam, India**

Deathly skirmish around midnight. Two poachers killed. Two days later, the investigation leads to a neighboring village at Sanjit Basumatary home where a .303 caliber rifle, a silencer, ammunition and an ax were seized. Sanjit is on the run. A member of his family was arrested.<sup>67</sup>



**April 20, 2017**

### **Gorumara National Park, West Bengal, India**

Two de-horned rhinos unearthed. We all remember the car accident that took place on March 14, 2017. Three deaths and a rhino horn in the smashed remains of the car (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 71). According to the information initially reported by "On the Trail," the rhino had been killed in the Kaziranga Park. New clues, and even confessions, lead to another National Park, Gorumara. A survivor of the accident, known as Jacob, has admitted to having poached the rhinoceros in the West Bengal Park. According to the police, the car was heading towards the States of Manipur and Nagaland, and the horn would have been exported to Viet Nam or China, via Burma. Before the poaching, Jacob stayed in a lodge near the Park. The owner and 4 to 5 others were questioned by the police. The Minister of State Forests, Binoy Krishna Burman, was astonished that rhinos could be buried secretly inside the Park. The 2 corpses, one male and one female, had been shot numerous times and then de-horned. One horn was found in the accident, but the second is missing and the suspicions weigh on the collusion with one or more of the Gorumara Park guards. At the very least, the efficiency of surveillance patrols is challenged. The worries are even greater because the most famous rhino in the Park, "Khara Sringa," "he who has the longest horn," has not been seen in several weeks. The Gorumara Park covers 79 km<sup>2</sup>. Rumor has it that since shootings on sight are not forbidden in the Assam parks, poachers will be retreating towards West Bengal.<sup>68</sup>

In Assam State, there is not, strictly speaking, a regulatory incentive for sight shooting on poachers. The order signed by the Secretary of State for Environment and Forest Department on 14 July 2010 specifies that those charged with maintenance of public order related to forest and wildlife protection, conservation and management, may be prosecuted or arrested in case they used their firearms only if the magistrates of the locality come to the conclusion that such use was unnecessary, unwarranted and excessive and such report has been examined and accepted by the government.

**April 2017**

### **Churachandpur, Manipur State, India**

Good deals for poachers. Churachandpur, in the State of Manipur, replaces Dimapur in the State of Nagaland. The city profits from the aging of the horn mafia in Dimapur. A new generation of poachers and traffickers has set up shop in Churachandpur, considered safer and situated only 20 km from Myanmar. The smuggling road between Dimapur and China that goes through Nepal and the Himalayas is more and more risky, and is going forsaken in favor of the Manipur-Myanmar-China route.<sup>69</sup>

**April 23-25, 2017**

### **Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

Discovery of a body, horn cut off. An empty .303 caliber cartridge was found next to it.

It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> to be poached since the beginning of the year in the Park, classified as a UNESCO world heritage site (see February 14 and March 14, "On the Trail" n°16, p.17).

Two days later, 6 inhabitants of the neighboring village of Bohikhuwa were arrested and ten .303 cartridges were seized. The ballistics investigation is currently underway.<sup>70</sup>

**April 29, 2017**

### **Nagaon District, State of Assam, India**

Seven days later, on a cross road, in a small restaurant, the Nagaon Police acted on a tip from WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and arrested 6 men, seized 2 motorcycles, cellphones, drugs, and a horn weighing about a kilo. Arun Saikia and Ranjan Jyoti Saikia were to meet with clients or intermediaries. The horn is estimated at 2.2 million rupee (\$ 34,000 US).<sup>71</sup>

**Sunday April 30, 2017**

### **Modajir Tapu, Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

Another de-horned rhino has been found, a male, in the north of the Park.<sup>72</sup>

**April 30, 2017**

### **Nagaon District, State of Assam, India**

Arrest by Nagaon police of Rahimuddin, Iman Ali and Abdul Rashid, rhino poachers.<sup>73</sup>

**May 16, 2017**

### **Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

The Minister of the environment of Assam wants all anti-poaching initiatives taken by the government to be known by the public. Sanctions are re-enforced, but that's not all. 423 additional forest rangers are being deployed. In the conclusion of his answer to the People's Chamber (Lok Sabha), he said that only one case of rhino poaching has occurred so far this year in the Kaziranga Park, compared to 18 during 2016, and that 10 poachers have been arrested so far, compared to 59 in 2016. He pointed out that special Courts have been created.<sup>74</sup>

In March, the NGO Survival, that defends the rights of tribal peoples, called on 131 travel agencies in 10 countries, asking that they boycott Kaziranga, the other large State Park in Assam, as long as shootings on poachers on sight remained authorized. This appeal is based on a BBC documentary according to which the guards are authorized to shoot without orders and without being in a situation of legitimate self-defense. The Park director, Satyendra Singh, debunked the accusations of the BBC, "There is no shoot-on-sight policy, only legal immunity for poor forest guards who do a very difficult job." Between 2005 and 2015, 127 rhinos and 67 poachers were killed in the State of Assam.<sup>75</sup> See also previous page, ref. 68.

**May 19, 2017**

**Jhakhalabanda, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India**

Ali, Sattar, Ali, Haque, Ali and Ainul were furtively approaching the Park in 4 cars with a firearm used for very large prey and the cartridges to go with it.<sup>76</sup>

**May 21, 2017**

**Rupahihat, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India**

Rafiqul Islam is again behind bars (see "On the Trail" n°6 p 70, n°7 p 14). Fifteen .303 rifle silencing cartridges were found buried in his hideout.<sup>77</sup>

**June 2, 2017**

**Golaghat District, State of Assam, India**

Kutumb was involved in a memorable case of rhino killing, 2 of them, in the Agratoli sector of the Park. That was in 2013. He had managed to escape. Police caught him near Gogamukh on 8 September 2016. He admits he killed 2 rhinos. He has just been sentenced to 7 years prison time by the Golaghat court, one of the 10 specialized tribunals for poaching offenses. The other anti-poaching tribunals are installed in the Jorhat, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Cachar, Darrang and Udalguri Districts.<sup>78</sup>



**June 19, 2017**

**Jorhat, Jorhat District, State of Assam, India**

Arrest of Jadav Saikia Kutum, who has been wanted for a year due to his presumed involvement in several cases of poaching in the Kaziranga Park. He was in a hotel room. He had several cartridges on him.<sup>79</sup>

**June 19-20, 2017**

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

In a turn of events that the local press deemed "sensational," but that actually is not, an anti-poaching operation led to the arrest of an agent of the Assam Forest Protection Force. Soleman Ali was assigned to the protection of the Orang National Park. In the same village adjacent to the Park, 2 accomplices were intercepted. Cartridges and a gun were taken. The three suspects admitted that

they were organizing to bring in sharpshooters from Nagaland to take advantage of the rainy season and flooding that push the rhinoceroses to leave the Park and take refuge in the hills.<sup>80</sup>

**June 22, 2017**

**Orang National Park, State of Assam, India**

One rhino killed and dehorned near the guards station post in Gaspara, 6 km from the main camp.<sup>81</sup>

**MALAYSIA**

**April 7, 2017**

**Kuala Lumpur international Airport, Sepang, State of Selangor, Malaysia**

Acting on a tip, customs officers of the airport, intercepted a package in the free-trade zone, coming from Mozambique via Doha, Qatar, containing 18 horns for a total weight of 51.44 kg. The total was declared as "Obra de Arte", or "Works of Art" in Portuguese. The initial investigation showed that the address of the destination, in the city of Nilai, in the Sembilan Negeri State, was false. One or several accomplices should have intervened in the transportation chain between the airport and Nilai, to redirect the horns to the right place. The value of the seizure is estimated to be 13.6 ringgit (\$ 3,076,000 US, or \$ 59,800 US per kg).<sup>82</sup>



**May 2017**

**Tabin Wildlife Reserve, State of Sabah, Malaysia**

She was in pain. She was 25. She was a victim of skin cancer. She has been finished off. Puntung was incurable. She had been living in captivity for 6 years, in an enclosure on the Reserve. The last 2 Sumatra rhinoceroses are still living, but they are also captive in Tabin. They are past the age of fertility. Once again, a program for reproduction in captivity and saving a species or sub-species collapses.<sup>83</sup>



## NEPAL

**April 8, 2017**

### **Chitwan National Park, Chitwan District, Nepal**

Poaching of a 14-year-old male. The first in 1071 days (see "On the Trail" n°5, p. 78). Struck in the temple by a bullet. The guards did not hear the shot. The sharpshooter chose the right night. The wind was whistling in the storm. The police were busy with local elections. The employees of the Park and the army were occupied with the transfer of rhinos from Chitwan Park to Shuklaphanta Park. The horn was cut off with a hatchet. The handle broke in two and was found at the scene.<sup>84</sup>

## VIET NAM

**April 16, 2017**

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

A 34-year-old woman and a 21-year-old man arrived on a flight from Africa and were arrested by customs for carrying of 7 fragments of horns (about 5 kg) hidden in their bags amidst electrical appliances and speakers. The seized objects are worth about 6 billion dong (about \$ 264,000 US, i.e. \$ 52,800 US/kg).<sup>85</sup>



**April 25, 2017**

### **Noi Bai International Airport, Viet Nam**

A 28-year-old woman coming from Yangon in Myanmar was betrayed by the X-rays. In the belongings of Dong Thi Tra, there were 8 pieces of horn, weighing in total 3 kg.<sup>86</sup>

**May 8, 2017**

### **Ho-Chi-Minh-City International Airport**

Seized in the bags of a 20-year-old Vietnamese man were 1.5 kg of horns hidden in toy boxes. The flight came from Africa. The last wild rhinoceros in Viet Nam was poached in the Cat Tien National Park in 2010.<sup>87</sup>

**May 26, 2017**

### **Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Viet Nam**

The horns are real. Nguyen Anh Son says that in the afternoon around 1 p.m. he was approached by 2 unknown persons who followed him home, gave him 2 boxes containing, according to them, buffalo and cow horns, and asked him to keep them at his house until someone came for them. To conclude, they promised to give him 5 million dong (\$ 220 US) for his services. When night fell and

the police came to the door to raid his house on Dinh Cong street, he attempted to escape from the second floor, taking the 2 famous boxes with him. Wasted effort. The police took in 18 horns weighing 13 kg. The operation was successful thanks to the Wildlife Commission of the Ministry of Justice, the environmental police, and the NGO Education for Nature Viet Nam.<sup>88</sup>

**June 14, 2017**

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

Arrest of a woman, 32, and of a man, 36, of Vietnamese nationality, and seizure of a 4-kg horn, cut into slices, wrapped in aluminum and placed in a ceramic pot, tin cans and a box of cosmetic products. The value of the materials confiscated is estimated to be \$ 352,000 US, or \$ 88,000 US/kg.<sup>89</sup>

## EUROPE

## GERMANY

**April 30, 2017**

### **Straelen, State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Border to the Netherlands.**

During a routine road check on the A40 Highway, border police discovered a rhino horn in the car of a traveller from Berlin. He claims he bought it for € 5 in a flea market in Belgium. It had been stuffed into a sock. It is worth at least € 17,500.<sup>90</sup>



## BELGIUM

### **Pairi Daiza Park, Brugelette, Hainaut Province, Belgium**

**April 7, 2017**

Preventative de-horning in Belgium. The horns of three rhinoceroses were shortened. The 10 kg of horns were burned in the boiler of one of the steam locomotives that go through the zoo. The de-horning and burning were not monitored by the Belgian authorities. "The de-horning is a unilateral initiative of the zoo," confirms the director Eric Domb.<sup>91</sup>

## NETHERLANDS

**Week of June 12 to 18, 2017**

### **Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport, Province of North Holland, The Netherlands**

The wooden statuettes hid 6 kg cut in slices, some of which are stamped. The parcel came from South Africa and was addressed to Laos.<sup>92</sup>

# Laikipia County, Kenya

Cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.89 "Other news from the front line".

**April 23, 2017**

## Ol Ari Nyiro Reserve, Laikipia County

Kuki Gallmann has been the target of unidentified shooters. Accompanied by KWS agents, she was on an inspection mission after the arson that destroyed two lodges the night before. Kuki Gallmann operates a Reserve of 98,000 acres (39,660 hectares) that has been subject to raids and plunders for several years (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p. 79, n°7 p. 76, p. 82, n°9 p. 73). First extracted from the ambush sector by helicopter, she was then evacuated by plane to the Aga Khan Hospital in Nairobi. She is now out of danger. Seventy-four years old, Kuki Gallmann is viscerally attached to the Kenyan culture and nature. Living in Kenya since 1972, she is originally Italian and her fanciful life was adapted for film. Ensuring the transition, her daughter Sveva says that 2 guards came from being fired at by 2 trespassers. John Emuria and Joseph Echwa have worked in the Reserve for 3 years. In 3 years, John has been a target 5 times. Once again, the 2 guards are coming off.<sup>1</sup>



## June 2 and 19, 2017. Sosian, Northern Laikipia County

Sosian is deciding to suspend hosting tourist. Beginning in March, 3 lodges have been burned by shepherds and a guide was fired to death when he was visiting the ruins on horseback.



Since the beginning of the year, 15 elephants have been poached and all of the tusks have disappeared. The hole-ridden and roughly cut up bodies of Grevy zebras (*Equus grevyi*, Appendix I), impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*), hartebeests (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), are widely dispersed and are giving evidence of hard times and misery that are spreading in Laikipia county and are at risk to spread beyond. In the Sosian Reserve, ivory is cut from elephants but sandalwood is also cut (*Brachyleana hutchinsii*). The poached wood is bought by a dealer in Somalia and is routed by truck to Baringo 350 km away without the least incident with the police. Some people say that sandalwood is exchanged for arms and ammunition.<sup>2</sup>

.../...



*Equus grevyi*



*Aepyceros melampus*



*Alcelaphus buselaphus*

May 29, 2017

### Ol Pejeta, Laikipia County, Kenya

In quick succession, the Ol Pejeta private Reserve lost 2 black rhinoceroses. The horns had been cut off. A poacher was killed by security forces. Ol Pejeta extends over an area of 360 km<sup>2</sup>. The Reserve harbors leopards, elephants, buffalos, lions, black and white rhinoceroses. Until 2004, Ol Pejeta was a livestock breeding ranch inherited from the English colonization. The ranch was then bought by an organization based in the United Kingdom, Fauna and Flora International, with the financial support of the ARCUS Foundation. The model of ecological, economic, and social development of this protected area until 2020 is supported by the admission fees of national and international tourists, the sharing of land with local breeders, the development related to the local economy and the improvement of the standard of living in rural communities. Ol Pejeta is managed in cooperation with the State and KWS, whose common objective is to maintain plant and animal biodiversity, to safeguard the future of endangered species, and to make Kenya and its resources sound prosperous so that it becomes a hub for tourists, naturalists, and scientists. In a sense, Ol Pejeta can be considered as a social and environmental experiment.

"There is a need to ensure there is a more productive use of these lands" said Raila Odinga, the leader of the opposition on the eve of the general elections, August 8, 2017. He would have promised to dismantle all of the private ranches operated by the whites.

On the local radio Seria FM in the Massai language, the very influential district representative for Northern Laikipia, Mathew Lempurkel, representing the nomad breeders of the Samburu tribe, incited them to register to vote by finishing his speech with "As long as I am a representative, nobody will go short of grass in Laikipia North. Here there is no private land."

Ol Pejeta, which the press said a couple months ago is as well protected as a nuclear plant is nonetheless worried for the chimpanzee sanctuary which, after the defection of that in Burundi, takes in orphans from central Africa and in zoos individuals within war zones, the last known being the famous rescued of Duhok in Iraq ("On the Trail" n°15, p 49).<sup>3</sup>



#### The last 3 Northern white rhinoceroses face poaching and sterilization.

The fate of 2 females and a male transferred to Ol Pejeta in 2009 from the Czech zoo Dvur Kralové (cf. "On the Trail" n°16 p 59) is not reassuring. They are not radically protected from poaching attempts and the prospect of having progeny is compromised if not impossible. Sudan 42 years, originally from Sudan no longer has enough sperm. Najin, 26 years, Sudan's daughter, is hurt on her paws and cannot support pregnancy, and Fatu the daughter of Najin and the grand daughter of Sudan has a malformed uterus that has rendered futile all attempts based on Medically Assisted Reproduction out of frozen sperm from 11 white rhinoceroses who are now dead. The pretense to save animal species from hunting, the greed and shortsightedness of humans translates today to a new scientific fad. A certain Thomas Hildebrandt, from the Research Institute for Zoos and Wildlife in Berlin wishes to take ovum from Fatu and Najin and the frozen sperm from their anonymous counterparts to develop embryos in test tubes and implant them in the uteruses of some Southern white rhinoceros surrogate mothers.<sup>4</sup>



*Ceratotherium simum*



# Rhinos and Elephants

## AFRICA

### MALAWI

**April 2017**

**Kamuzu International Airport, Lilongwe, Malawi**

Upset at KIA. Eight people arrested. Two of them are policemen. Six work for airport logistics.

- 29 January 2017, 39 kg of rhino horns were seized in China at the Pudong airport. The contraband had been loaded at KIA on a South African Airways flight.

- 13 March, 119 kg of rhino horns were seized in Viet Nam at the Hanoi airport. The loot had been loaded at KIA on a Kenya Airways flight.

- 7 March, 330 kg of raw ivory were seized at the Bangkok International Airport. The contraband had been loaded at KIA.

Malawi would be the latest find in trafficking to export fraudulently towards Asia. "Proof is, says the Government, We have less than 10 rhinos here."<sup>1</sup>



## ASIA

### CHINA

**May 22, 2017**

**Lianyungang, Province of Jiangsu, China**

Four sentences for sale and purchase of made in ivory and rhino horn items to one year and 8 months prison and 6 months prison time, and fines worth 60,000 yuan (\$ 8850 US), 35,000 yuan (\$ 5200 US) and, 5000 yuan (\$ 740 US).<sup>2</sup>



## VIET NAM

### REPEATED OFFENSE

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**April 27-28, 2017**

**Hanoi - Xuan Tin, Province of Thanh Hóa, Viet Nam**

Trafficking big boss, Nguyen Mau Chien, arrested. In his house, the police found raw ivory, rhino horns, several frozen baby tigers, carved ivory and other remains of protected animal species. He was arrested in 2007, in Tanzania, and condemned for transporting and attempted smuggling of



wildlife products. He is originally from the Thanh Hoa province where he raised tigers. He began his business by selling fake tiger bones and got rich by buying young tigers of illegal origin. In the last 5 years, he redirected his efforts towards Africa, concentrating on rhino horns and ivory, as well as pangolin scales. Multiple seizures in the ports of Hai Phong, Da Nang, and Ho-Chi-Minh-City in 2015 and 2016, appear to be related to Chien's network. He was arrested immediately after 2 of his accomplices were arrested in the Hanoi train station. They were carrying more than 30 kilos of horns.<sup>3</sup>

Bad spell for Mau Chien. At the end of May, a 13-year-old boy was seriously injured by one of his farm tigers on a year-end school trip. The 2 tiger cubs found in a freezer at his home in Hanoi came from the same breeding farm. It is not exactly to this type of conservation that the authorities of the province of Thanh Hóa refer to issue the license for tiger breeding. Mau Chien embezzlements give animal protectors a new opportunity to demand the closure or recovery of tiger farms suspected as a whole of fueling the traffic of bones and meat. (See "On the Trail" n°11 p. 49, n°13 p. 60, n°15, p. 64 and n°16 p. 54). In 2007, there were 7 tiger farms throughout the country; there are 13 today.

## EUROPE

### UNITED KINGDOM

**April 5, 2017**

**Watford, Hertfordshire County, United Kingdom**

Allawi Abbas was charged with making sales proposals in September 2016 for 3 rhinoceros horns, 2 elephant tusks, and 4 hippopotamus tusks.<sup>4</sup>

# Elephants

Tusk and supertusk disappear one after the other. The genetic heritage of the African species impoverishes and tusks on equal age will shorten according to the experts.

Ivory price trend on the Asian market is going downward. It is too early to say whether this is a long term or temporary decrease.

Despite the strengthening of sanctions in almost all countries of the pachyderm's natural range, poaching and connected cruelties don't diminish. In the Kruger Park it is increasing.

The survey during this quarter shows two new examples of tricks in ivory traffic. An official UNICEF car was used for smuggling between Kenya and Uganda, and a Chinese "tourist" used central processing units to pass 61 kg of ivory.

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°17  
Black market raw ivory quotation  
from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	965	4
		972	11
	Malawi	1777	12
		2000	14
	Uganda	107	23
	Tanzania	3347	31
	Zambia	2500	38
Asia	China (Hong Kong)	1886	76
		2570	80
	India (Assam)	635	86
	Indonesia	1876	95
	Viet Nam	612	109

## EASTERN AFRICA

### KENYA

**April 28, 2017**

**Tseikuru, Kitui County, Eastern Province, Kenya**

Two arrests and seizure of 117 kg of raw ivory. The men in question, George Njeru Mutithi and Abdi Ibrahim Arow would be supplied by a certain Osman Abbas, a shepherd whose herd grazes in the Meru National Park. The ivory had recently been "harvested".<sup>1</sup>

**From April 24 to 30, 2017**

**Counties of Meru, Kitui and Makueni, and Runyenjes, Embu County, and Nairobi, Kenya**

For a week, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) coordinated anti-poaching operations. Seizure of 24 elephant tusks weighing a total of 191 kg, 33 kg of bush meat, flashlights, and rustic arms. 18 interrogations.<sup>2</sup>

**May 5, 2017**

**Kenya**

A tusker hit in the leg by a lance was saved by the veterinarian Njoroge, who arrived in the area by helicopter, and took the projectile out. By chance, it had gone in just above the knee joint. Antibiotics were administered to the victim. Green clay was applied on the wound. The prognosis is favorable.<sup>3</sup>

**May 9, 2017**

**Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya**

Seizure of 30 kg of ivory: 3 million shilling or \$ 28,995 US (i.e. \$ 965 US/kg). Three arrests.<sup>4</sup>

**May 13 – May 25, 2017**

**Meru National Park and Bisanadi National Reserve, Meru and Isiolo Counties, Kenya**

Thanks to the cooperation of the chiefs of villages and venerable elders in local communities, the tusks were returned to KWS a few days after some shepherds had discovered poached elephants. The delinquents are known. They are on the run.<sup>5</sup>

**Week of May 29, 2017**

**Kenya**

Homage by Save the Elephants: "It is with sadness that we report the death of the young male elephant we treated for a gun shot injury to his leg on May 11. He was a 9-year-old son of Cheyenne, the current matriarch of the family named after the Native Americans. He was treated for his injuries but unfortunately his front leg had been broken."<sup>6</sup>

**End of May- Beginning of June, 2017**

**Kenya**

Six arrests and 2 seizures thanks to the cooperation of Big Life and KWS.

-Four tusks, weighing a total of 67 kg, one arrest.

-25 kg of raw ivory, 5 arrests.<sup>7</sup>



**June 5, 2017**

**Mariakani, Kaloleni and Kinango Districts, Coast Province, Kenya**

The hidden bags contained 3 large tusks for a total weight of 70 kg. Genetic tests will be made to determine their origin. Three suspects will appear before court. The Mombasa port is 35 km away.<sup>8</sup>

**June 17, 2017**

**Makindu, Makueni County, Kenya**

Four indictments for illegal possession of 2 tusks worth \$ 15,440 US. They had been arrested a day earlier in Kibwezi.<sup>9</sup>



**April 24, May 5 and 27, June 2017  
Mombasa, Mombasa and Malaba County, Busia County (border to Uganda), Kenya**

Following the seizure in Singapore in March 2014 of one ton of raw ivory coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo, via Uganda and Kenya, the investigation coordinated by the Lusaka Agreement Task Force has led to several decisive arrests:

- James Njagi, Inspector for the KRA (Kenya Revenue Authority). As such, he inspected the container before departure from the Mombasa Port and didn't signal any defect in the supposed "coffee cargo".

- James Orech. A commissioner in charge of the customs formalities within the Patana company.

- Sila Ndolo Kinen, a Patana employee.

The 3 men were released on bail paid in cash of \$ 1900 US coupled with a surety bond of the same amount.

- Jumbah Maheno Gaylor. He schemed to avoid that the container seized in Singapore be put through the scanner in Mombasa port.

- Justin Wesenga. He took part in placing the ivory in the container in Kampala, Uganda, before driving to Mombasa.<sup>10</sup>

The Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora federates 7 Eastern and Southern African Countries.

**June 27, 2017**

**Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Abdinur Ibrahim deemed the gang leader and his 5 companions have been arrested. At their home, 216 kg of raw ivory estimated at \$ 972 US/ kg were cut and wrapped ready to depart for Hong Kong. The buyer would have already paid 50% of the price as an advance before delivery. In a latter phase a certain Ahmed Mohamud Salah alias Gedi, a Somalia citizen, was arrested at the Namanga border control. He would be the middleman between the ivory sellers and the buyers in Asia. The investigation is in progress, the ivory would be from the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>11</sup>

**MALAWI**

**April 14, 2017**

**Mchinji, Malawi**

He is 24 years old. He wanted to sell a tusk weighing 1 kilo, taken from a baby elephant, at the price of 1,290,000 kwacha (\$ 1777 US).<sup>12</sup>



**April 28, 2017**

**Chigwirizano, Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi**

Arrest of Banda, 29 years old, and Mbewe, 60 years old, and seizure of a pair of tusks.<sup>13</sup>

**May 10, 2017**

**Mchinji, Mchinji District, Central Region, Malawi**

Arrest of a young man 15 km from the dividing line between Zambia and Malawi. The trafficker was uncovered by the Wildlife Crimes Investigation Unit (WCIU).<sup>14</sup>

26 years old, 9 tusk sections, 27 kg in total, \$ 2000 US/kg. He was denounced by a person with "good intentions". Experts confirm it is ivory.



**June 28, 2017**

**Lilongwe International Airport, Central Region, Malawi**

Arrest of Mady Conteh, a 34-year-old Gambian, for having meddled in contraband of 330 kg of ivory in Thailand during the month of March. See "On the Trail" n°16 p. 87.

The 330 kg of sliced tusks correspond to 200 elephants. Conteh worked in logistics for KIA (Kamuzu International Airport). Malawi wants to get rid itself of its bad fame of being an ivory and other wildlife products hub. From 2010 to 2015, there was less than one smuggler arrested per month and sentences, when there were any, usually summed up to about a \$ 40 US fine. In 2016, arrests have increased and sentences average around 4 years prison time without any possibility of an alternative fine.<sup>15</sup>

**MOZAMBIQUE**

**April 20, 2017**

**Nampula, Province of Nampula, Mozambique**

Seizure of 3 raw tusk sections in a bus line linking the Sofala central province to Nampula. Four suspects, 3 of whom work for the transport company - the 4<sup>th</sup> from Guinea is considered the "brain" of the gang- are being questioned by the town police's 1<sup>st</sup> squadron.<sup>16</sup>



**May 3, 2017**

**Mozambique**

Since April 2016, 763 kg of ivory has been stolen from protected stocks. In the last incident, the thieves got in through the roof. These misappropriations of seized ivory were disclosed by the Criminal Investigations Services and the National Administration of Conservation Areas.<sup>17</sup> Cf. theft of rhino horns in Zimbabwe, page 73, ref. 6.

**Saturday 20 and Sunday 21, May 2017**

**Chicalaquala, Province of Gaza, Mozambique. Border to Zimbabwe.**

Poisoning of at least 94 African white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II). In the mass grave 3 were still alive. Only one finally survived. This massacre comes at the worst time for this endangered species. It is nesting and hatching season. This new episode of cyanide or pesticide poisoning is in ricochet killing, fledglings by the dozen. The spot is in the process of being decontaminated.

Poachers consider the vultures as snitches. They fly in circles above elephant corpses and attract the attention of forest rangers and other wildlife surveillance agents. Vultures grouping in the air and on ground are in the way of the killers' teams on the loot in the area. Better exterminate them. Vultures fulfill a useful task. Natural knackers and immune to viruses and bacteria, they are fighting in the wild against bacterial pollution and rabies or anthrax seats.<sup>18</sup>

See "On the Trail" n°2 p.59



**UGANDA**

**April 6, 2017**

**Kampala, Center Region, Uganda**

Two traffickers and 20 kg of ivory.<sup>19</sup>



**GANG**

**April 28, 2017**

**Lira, Northern Region, Uganda**

The police arrested 7 habitants of Jinja Camp, in the suburbs of Lira. They are suspected of being poachers. Solomon Okello, Favio Ocen, Maxwell Omara, Dennis Epila, Susan Aber, David Omonya, and Jasper Oweka were found in possession of more than 50 kg of tusks ready to be marketed. Their accomplices are on the run.<sup>20</sup>

**Uganda**

**April 25, 26 and May 13, 2017**

**Fusion avec 207-042017, 172-042017 & 56-052017**

The NGO EAGLE Uganda announces by laconic communiqués the arrest of 5 traffickers with 6 tusks, 4 traffickers with a pair of tusks weighing 70 kg total, the arrest of 3 traffickers with 3 tusks and the arrest of a muezzin and a mosque guard with a pair of tusks. Most of the arrests happen in the north of the country.<sup>21</sup>

**May 2017**

**Murchison Falls National Park, Gulu and Masindi Districts, Uganda**

Rescue of a twenty-year-old female elephant. She was limping near a swamp. The Park abounds with traps. Rangers armed with branches lit small fires, working for several hours to force her to move back to the dry savannah. Once out in the open, she was anesthetized. Her front leg was freed from steel wires that had dug into her flesh and the vermin that were living off the wound.<sup>22</sup>



**May 29, 2017**

**Bweera, Kasese District, Uganda. Border to the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

Uganda continues to serve as a transit country for by-products of poaching in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Bwabale Kalambi, 32 years old and Moses Mumbere, 35 years old, were arrested with 27.8 kg of raw ivory worth a local value of \$ 2650 US, i.e. \$ 107 US per kg. They are being held in custody in the Kasese police station.<sup>23</sup>



**June 2017**

**Amudat District, Eastern Region, Uganda**

"On the Trail" already knows the hearse (n°11 p. 8, n°12 p. 81), the ambulances (n°3 p. 31, n°6 p. 53), the trunks of UN troops (n°4 p. 30), the fake military trucks (n°2 p. 9), but the poachers in Uganda found better: a double cabin UNICEF pick-up given to the government for the promotion of youth sports in the north-eastern province of Karamoja. On the inside, there was no sporting equipment to give to children, but instead 49 kg of ivory in the form of 10 tusks and 2 passengers pretending to be a shepherd and an agricultural worker, and at least one was of Kenyan nationality. The regular driver of the humanitarian vehicle tried to escape at the time of checking. The vehicle had been loaned for the occasion by Joshua Lokapel's health and education advisor. According to the 2 suspects, Lokapel was aware of the contraband.



UNICEF's car was used to transport ivory in secret across the Kenya-Uganda Border. For several months, information had been circling about an ivory traffic between Kenya and the Amudat district in Uganda but this is the first time that facts have been established. This spectacular arrest shows the complicity of high Ugandan government officials and the creativity of traffickers.<sup>24</sup>



**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**June 21, 2017**

**Kampala, Kampala District, Uganda**

Yekoyada Nuwagaba is a two faced man playing a double game. He has been an advisor to President Museveni for over 10 years. Today the protocol rank places him 42<sup>nd</sup> on the list. For this he earns 2,370,000 shilling a month (\$ 672 US). At the same time Nuwagaba is a crook and a merciless trafficker. -In 2006, Maku a big pangolin killer (se "On the Trail" n°8 p. 42, n°9 p. 31) and crooked exporter of scales and turtles names him as an accomplice.

-In 2008, Navina Exports for which he is the CEO sends 300 monkeys for animal testing to the Chumakov Institute in Moscow with an expired permit.

-In February 2017, UWA agents suddenly in possession of solid information went as potential buyers to negotiate a stock of illegal ivory at Nuwagaba's house in the Makindye neighbourhood. When they reached a deal, \$ 227,000 US, the UWA guys showed their badges.

Compromizing documents were later seized in another of President Museveni's advisor's homes.

The case hasn't received much publicity and Nuwagaba was let out on bail after the first auditions under the excuse weak health and old age, with nevertheless obligation to present himself weekly to the police station. Since then he cannot be found, hasn't returned to any of his usual homes and has cut all his known cell phones lines.

His cupidity and talents in fraud have made him reappear in an unexpected manner. The husband of the traditional practitioner Mama Fina was assassinated in broad daylight in Kampala in November 2016, killed at short range in his car, next to his personal driver. There is strong upset in the capital. Mama Fina's powers are acknowledged by all the healers in the country. Two months later, Nuwagaba contacts her, tells her he knows who her husband's assassins are, claims she is also under threat and asks her as a faithful old friend to give him 2 million shilling (\$ 570 US) to garanty her safety. After receiving the ransom, Nuwagaba gave no more sign of life nor did he tell Mama Fina what steps had been taken at the highest level to arrest her husband's murderers and prevent her in turn from falling victim. At the end Mama Fina finally told of Nuwagaba's dealings to her friend Mzee, otherwise known as the President Muzeweni. Nuwagaba was arrested at 7 p.m. coming out of a work meeting with the Prime Minister.<sup>25</sup>

**End of June 2017**

**Kampala, Kampala District, Uganda**

Forgers and traffickers share a common cause. Seizure of 6 tusks and blank sheets to print fake bill.<sup>26</sup>





## TANZANIA

**April 7, 2017**

### **Dar es Salaam region, Tanzania** **"Queen of Ivory"**

Mrs. Yang Feng Clan, an interpreter and business woman who is well-integrated in Tanzanian high society, is still in prison. She is accused of organizing a massive tusk contraband destined for China (see "On the Trail" n°15, p 90).

One of her presumed accomplices claims to have been tortured in April 2014 during the interrogation and was admitted to a hospital for urgent care. He is pressing charges. The 2 police officers deny any violence. The confessions were spontaneous, they say. The hearing lasted about one hour and 30 minutes.<sup>27</sup>

**April 11, 2017**

### **Kimara Temboni district, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**

During the full-scale raids in different neighborhoods of Dar es Salaam, the police arrested 2 men in possession of 2 pieces of ivory. The suspects were identified as Faith Muzo, 55, and Hassan Abdallah, 32, residents of the capital. They have been put into detention as they await their trial.<sup>28</sup>

**April 12-18, 2017**

### **Tunduru District, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania**

-Around midnight, a poacher who was well-known in the sector was arrested with 2 tusks and an elephant tail, in a village near Ruvuma.

-A man suspected of poaching was taken to the Songea Police Station. He had 2 firearms on him.

-The Tunduru district suffers from poaching and firearms trading; the two activities feed off one another. Mozambique is just around the corner. The PAMS foundation (Protected Area Management Solutions) has given local authorities 2 patrol planes to monitor the movements of the poachers. The territorial conflicts between men and elephants seems to be worsening in the area. The coordinator of PAMS advises residents to plant chillies around their houses. "It is the safest way to intimidate elephants," says Mr. Maximilian James.

-Two men arrested and 3 tusks seized near the border with Mozambique.

-Conviction of Talika Saidi and Mkwepu Izulu to 7 years in prison for the possession of 4 tusks.

-Arrest of 4 men. According to the preliminary investigation, they killed 2 elephants on April 18<sup>th</sup> in the Selous Reserve, 3 times bigger than Kruger Park. The tusks have disappeared and no one knows where.<sup>29</sup>



**May 3, 2017**

### **Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**

His name is Samwel Bwandu and he is 38 years old. He has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for having, between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and the end of June 2015, possessed and transported 8 elephant tusks, estimated at a local value of 60 million shilling (\$ 30,000 US). His presumed partner in the business, Kidamisi Kidanami, alias Hamis Mang'ati, was acquitted. According to the new penal code, Bwandu could avoid prison if he manages to pay a fine 10 times higher than the value of the trophies he illegally possessed, the equivalent of \$ 300,000 US. The investigation file shows that the traffic went on between 2012 and 2015, and is suspected of involving about 60 tusks or tusk parts, with a global value of \$ 450,000 US.<sup>30</sup>



**May 28, 2017**

### **Sesenga, Region of Morogoro, Tanzania**

Regional police is looking out for squalls.

After the seizure in a car of 5 bags of cannabis and 60 litres of adulterated beer in another, police arrested M. Linganga Kalinga for possession of 4 tusks for a total weight of 9 kg and total value locally of \$ 30,124 US i.e. \$ 3347 US per kg.<sup>31</sup>

**End of May 2017**

### **Tanzania**

Okoa Tempo Na Tanzania and Save the Elephants are in favor of the irretrievable destruction of the 118t of ivory most of which comes from seizures in ports, inland borders and on the roads of the country. The Ministry for Natural Resources has just rejected this option. "Our position is clear, that, we are keeping them for scientific research."

Unfortunately such a statement is surely good news for the trafficking diaspora. Thefts and embezzlement from inside the governmental and courtroom vaults by dishonest civil servants or ivory robbers from the outside are common in Africa and in Tanzania. The seized ivory stockpile is supposedly under safe guard in Dar es Salaam. Save the Elephants says it costs \$ 75,000 US per year.<sup>32</sup> See "On the Trail" n°5, p. 87, n°6 p. 59

**June 14, 2017**

### **Singida, Singida Region, Tanzania**

Sentencing of a 46-year-old man to pay the equivalent of \$ 283,000 US or a prison sentence of 20 years for having illegally possessed on the 11 of February, 2017, 3 elephant tusks valuing \$ 283,000 US in the guesthouse "Friends B" in Singida.

For his defense, James Kalenzoe, also known by the name Saidi, insisted on the fact that he was a first time offender and that he had a large family to feed.<sup>33</sup>





**June 29, 2017**

**Tanzania**

**The watchword is to seize and to be honest!**

Within the framework of a workshop for public prosecutors and other magistrates to promote awareness on anti-wildlife trafficking issues, Jumanne Maghembe, Minister of Tourism and Natural Resources showed his optimism. "We can win", he says underlining that heavy sentences will await traffickers when caught. Tanzania's Vice-President, Samia Suluhu, urged the honourable assistance to stay away from all attempted corruption schemes and hold high the values of the magistracy. After the meeting, a special operation aiming to confiscate all weapons and poaching equipment was announced.<sup>34</sup>

**ZAMBIA**

**April 9, 2017**

**Near Livingstone City, Southern Province, Zambia**

A taxi driver in possession of 17 pieces of ivory was intercepted by a roadblock set up by the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA), in cooperation with the Zimbabwe Parks administration (ZimParks). The vehicle was from the village of Mandiya, 35 kilometers west of Livingstone City, on the Upper Zambezi. Mandiya is a popular place for poachers, supplying porters and canoes under the nonchalant eyes of the local authorities. The inquiry revealed that the tusks were poached during an expedition in Botswana and Zimbabwe. The taxi driver was sentenced to 4 years in prison. This is the first time that the Zambian authorities have taken action against ivory poaching in that region. Following this experience, ZAWA and ZimParks have agreed to carry out joint patrols along the riverbanks of the countries' border, to reduce infiltrations and illegal activities.<sup>35</sup>



**April 13, 2017**

**Southern Zambezi region, Zambia**

The first successful achievement of the new canine brigade. Seizure of 4 sections of raw ivory.<sup>36</sup>



**May 4, 2017**

**Mumbwa, District of Mumbwa, Central Province, Zambia**

Conviction of Mr. Orden Mafuta Nabombwe, sentenced to 5 years prison time. On 27 March 2017, he had been found in possession of 8 kg of raw ivory and 2 large calibre cartridges. He's a former lookout for the Chona village. In 1960 there were 250,000 elephants in Zambia. Now there are a bit more or a bit less than 20,000.<sup>37</sup>



**May 8, 2017**

**Zambia**

Sell or burn, that is the question.

The government stock of ivory is over 52 tons, unless undetected thefts have taken place in the last couple of years. 27.2 tons is considered legal ivory, and 26 tons is illegal ivory. This represents a shortfall of \$ 100 million US, according to government calculations based on the rate of \$ 750 US per kg before the ban on international trade, and on the current price of \$ 2,500 US per kg on the local black market. Mr. Banda Minister of Tourism and Arts does not exclude the possibility of burning the stock.<sup>38</sup>

**Mai 23, 2017**

**Chingola, Province of Copperbelt, Zambia**

Fabricas Chowilupwishi, 27 years old, Congolese nationality, was hiding 83 tusks at home. Chingola is 20 km from the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Two escaped.<sup>39</sup>

**ZIMBABWE**

**April 6, 2017**

**Zimbabwe**

Two ivory sellers arrested. In exchange for illegal ivory, they had asked for a large sum of money from a member of the Matusadona Anti-Poaching Project (MAPP), who reported them to the police. The two men claimed that they could provide more ivory after the first transaction, as well as other wildlife products.<sup>40</sup>

**May 2017**

**Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

The Constitutional Court postponed the case for procedural defect. The 2 female complainants and their lawyer Tawanda Zhuwarara think it's their right to know the identity of the person who on condition of anonymity denounced them for having 25,9 kg of ivory in the trunk of their car in December 2015. If the Constitutional Court agreed, the investigators will have less chance to catch smugglers.<sup>41</sup>

**May 10, 2017**

**Gokwe North District, Gokwe Region, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe**

The same weapon was used to kill a female elephant a month earlier. One man was arrested. Two assistants are on the run. Between 2 operations, the poachers often bury their weapons.<sup>42</sup>



**May 11, 2017**

**Gokwe district, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe**

-Good catch for the Matusadona anti-poaching team: 3 large .303 calibers, a .22 caliber rifle, cartridges, ammunitions and a small amount of ivory. Poachers in the Matusadona National Park have the habit of renting their arsenal from weapon dealers... or from police officers.

- Zengeni Chitekete, police officer, hid clandestine weapons in the police station armory and in his home and rented them to poachers. He also supplied munitions. The origine of this arsenal



is unknown. According to rumors, at least a few of Chitekete's colleagues knew of his parallel activities.

In the poaching channel, the armoury link is essential. Not all poachers have a large caliber firearm and ammunition. Weapons are leased or lent in exchange for ivory or other payments in kind.<sup>43</sup>

**May 16, 2017**

**Gache Gache, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe**

He had been on the run for 2 years. Bruce John, alias Keda, was formally implicated in elephant poaching and in a shooting with rangers. He is suspected to being involved in other types of trafficking, especially stealing weapons.<sup>44</sup>

**Beginning of June 201**

**Tsholotsho District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

How do 50 elephants finance the construction of a soccer stadium?

By dying under fire of hunters having paid for hunting permits at Lodzi Hunters thanks to the mediation of Jonathan Moyo, representative for the district and Minister of Education and of Saviour Kasukuwere, ex-Minister of Water, Climate and the Environment. Cf. "On the Trail" n°7 p. 105, n°9 p. 80, n°15 p. 92).<sup>45</sup>

**June 2, 2017**

**Gonarezhou National Park, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe**

The government has handed over management of the Park to the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) until 2020. The partnership began in 2007. Gonarezhou covers 14,651 km<sup>2</sup>. The Park is home to a viable number of black rhinos.

Since 2011, FZS has given \$ 19 million US to fight against poaching. Surveillance vehicles have been purchased. The fencing was redone. The local communities say that they have been excluded from Park management and its economic advantages. They are not represented in the new Board of Directors, which is composed of 3 FZS members and 3 members of Zimparks. Gonarezhou is accused of being a fortress. "The enclosure is so well sealed that not even a hare could escape." Hares cannot escape but the poachers can enter. In 2016, 11 elephants were shot and killed, and 9 died from cyanide poisoning (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 2, n°9 p. 64, n°10 p. 55, n°15 p. 92, n°16 p. 96). Hugo Van der Westhuitzen, the project manager from FZS, recognizes the frustrations of the neighboring 30,000 inhabitants of Chiredzi, and claims that parallel to the objectives pertaining to conservation of wildlife, there is a wish to explore different possible options so that local populations can profit from this groundbreaking agreement. FZS is an international conservation organization founded in 1858. FZS focuses on maintaining biodiversity and the conservation of fauna and ecosystems in protected zones and exceptional wildlife areas.<sup>46</sup>

**June 22 and End of June, 2017**

**Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

A ranger from ZimParks, Fungai Sibanda, is accused of having hidden in the accommodation provided by his job a rifle and 31 AK47 ammunition. He claims this arsenal was given to him by a colleague, Lameck Sankarwe, arrested on 22 June for having poached an elephant and chopped off the 2 tusks.<sup>47</sup>

**June 28, 2017**

**Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

Christopher Mupindi is accused of poaching 2 elephants with a .416 rifle. Four accomplices are on the run. After crossfire with rangers, he was thought dead and in waiting for the body to be taken to the morgue they spread to gather fire wood. At their return, Mutindi had vanished but 4 days later he turned himself in and asked to be taken to hospital. He is being kept in pre-trial detention.<sup>48</sup>

**May 31 and June 5-11, 2017  
Hwange National Park,  
Matabeleland North Province,  
Zimbabwe**

New cyanide attack. Three suspects have been taken in for questioning. They were aged 21, 23 and 27. One of them, Dyker Ncube, succeeded in escaping. At his home, 2 kg of raw Ivory, 100 g of cyanide, a kilo of dagga and bootleg African "gin," known as "thothotho," were discovered under a bed. Eight elephant bodies were identified by helicopter in the Liasha sector. The mortal spots were decontaminated. Buckets of water with cyanide granules, buckets of salt and of sodium cyanide were placed on the elephant's paths. The elephants were lying 100 m from the bait. The tusks had been taken from 3 or 4 of the bodies, according to sources. Most of the bodies were located before the poachers could retrieve their tusks. According to the latest reports, which are unfortunately not final, new poisoning killed 9 adult elephants and a young elephant. Several vultures were intoxicated as well. The tally has not yet been finalized. In addition to cyanide, Paraquat banned in the European Union was used.<sup>54</sup>



**June 29, 2017  
Hwange National Park,  
Matabeleland North Province,  
Zimbabwe**

Shooting on sight at 4 men in the process of ripping off an elephant's tusks. One is dead, another wounded ran away with the 2 others unharmed. Gun shots had been echoing in the main camp area since the early hours of the day until about 4:30 pm. The guards patrol was at their wits end.

Four tusks, a .416 calibre rifle and 2 empty cartridges were found on the scene of the tragedy. According to first information yet to be confirmed, the dead poacher was a repeated offender convicted in October and released on bail in waiting for his new trial in appeal.<sup>49</sup>



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**SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**April 19, 2017**

**Southern Africa**

1736! The number of CITES permits is published for the year 2017 : 1736 hunting trophies are granted  
-1000 to Zimbabwe  
-300 in South Africa  
-200 in Tanzania  
-180 in Namibia  
-56 in Mozambique  
Viva Botswana!

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**April – May 2017**

**Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

**The fall of the Tusker Dynasty**

See "On the Trail" n°1 p. 32, n°4 p.79, n°5 p. 91, n°6 p.77, n°13 p.83, n°15 p.101, n°16, p.74.

Timbavati is a private Reserve adjacent to the Kruger National Park. There is no fence in between the two. Timbavati organizes photographic safaris and hunting safaris. Through the Associated Private Nature Reserves, Timbavati just applied to the South African National Parks administration to obtain 11 hunting permits to hunt male elephants, including a specimen whose tusks are of "unlimited weight." The term "tusker" is reserved for elephants that have tusks weighing about 45 kg. There are only a few masters who are privileged by that title (see "On the Trail" n°16, p 74). The "super tuskers," with tusks weighing more than 50 kg, are exceptional. SAN Parks have apparently responded positively to Timbavati's request, but protests are coming from all sides. Experts say that older males are sexually active until the end of their lives. "In nature, matriarchs prefer males over 45 years old to procreate with," says Marion Garai, president of the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group. Another member of this group of experts, Lucy Bates, adds that hunting is not compatible with eco-tourism and that many tourists would be appalled to learn that some of the animals they photographed were shot later to raise revenue. The famous veterinarian Johan Marais, author of 2 books on "tuskers," says that, "They need to be protected at all costs!" "I don't care whether you are talking about Kruger, Kenya, Zimbabwe, or Timbavati - you just cannot issue a permit for a 100 pounder, finish and klaar." The "tuskers" of today are the "super tuskers" of tomorrow. They are indispensable for the future of the species. "If they disappear, the general size of tusks will diminish and the genetic heritage of the species will be modified," says Marion Garai. The rifleless visitors to Timbavati and to the 3 others reserves west of Kruger Park are more than worried, if we judge by their reactions on social media. They are outraged.

At the latest news, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency refuses permission to shoot the tuskers.<sup>51</sup>



**May 12, 2017**

**Malamulele, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Ivory stolen from an elephant who was wandering out of the Park. He was roaming near Malamulele and rangers decide to shoot him down. Too many people and fields around. In unexplained circumstances, a man then managed to saw the tusks off before the dead elephant was buried, cut up or moved. He was questioned by police and the ivory seized.<sup>52</sup>

**End of May 2017**

**South Africa**

Conservation Action Trust is criticizing the lack of transparency and communication of official figures regarding elephant poaching in Kruger Park, in neighboring parks and in the whole country. The NGO believes that withholding this information prevents public opinion from realizing the ongoing surge of elephant poaching especially in the north of Kruger Park. Official South African statistics count 24 elephants poached in 2015, 46 in 2016 and 11 over the first 3 months of 2017.

Michelle Henley, national director of the research group on living elephants and member of the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group to the government and competent services has sounded the alarm. "We need to take care that elephant poaching does not spiral out of control in much the same way that rhino poaching did a few years back."<sup>53</sup>

See elephant poaching and Kruger Park "On the Trail" n°5 p. 86, n°6 p. 78, n°10 p. 56, n°11 p. 74

**June 22, 2017**

**Acornhoek, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**

Arrest of Andries Munyai, the tusk was hidden in a wardrobe.<sup>55</sup>



**BOTSWANA**

**April 2017**

**Shadows and light in Botswana**

Botswana, despite having been honoured by Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit for being the first country in the world to protect large fauna, is not spared by wildlife corruption. Three agents of Botswana's Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) have just been arrested at a roadblock with inside a travelling bag 2 elephant tusks cut into sections. For their defense, the suspects claim that these tusks are the Service's property used for special missions to infiltrate networks. According to Ira Larivers, anti-poaching specialist in South Africa, it is improbable that "real" ivory be used to lure and trick traffickers and "fake" ivory provided by taxidermists is prepared for such purpose. Usually, the anonymous vehicles used by Intelligence agents are not searched. They only have to prove their identity for the vehicles to be released.

In the present case, the DIS agents, according to the Sunday Star, had been under surveillance for some time. They might be involved in ivory and diamond contraband between Botswana and Zambia. The international network then would export the goods to Tanzania where out of the Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar ports they would be then sent to Asia. A Pilatus PC-12 belonging to the DIS would have several times made a suspicious trip between Botswana and Lusaka, the Zambian capital.

Yet the 3 suspects have been released a few hours later after the incident under the supposed pressure from high up people in Gaborone, the country's capital. Tshekedi Khama, Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism who is the line ministry for the services that made the arrest declared there are no "sacred cows" in the frontline for the protection of the country's natural resources. In other words, no one is above suspicion, arrest or conviction.

The DIS agents are not the only one to be in trouble because of ivory. Colonel Tebo Kiloe, director of protocol and public affairs of the armed Forces confirms that 2 soldiers members of an anti-poaching unit have been recently indicted for illegal possession of animal trophies and received disciplinary sanctions.

One can also remember that 3 rhino horns had been stolen from a vault room in Maun (see "On the Trail" n°11 p. 60) and that Gilbert Monnawalesole had been arrested. He worked as an administrative agent in the State warehouse where the trophies were stored. One of his accomplices was a policeman. After the suspects' first court hearing in November 2015, nothing in the judiciary reports can explain what happened next. The judicial inquiry vanished into thin air. Monnawalesole is neither indicted nor discharged. One can only notice that such a smoke screen covers all other similar cases, whether concerning elephant tusks or rhino horns in Southern Africa, Eastern Africa or Western Africa.<sup>56</sup>

## NAMIBIA

**May 2017**

### **Grootfontein District, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia**

The Eden Game Farm covers 30,000 hectares. It raises rare and endangered species, and sells wild animals at auctions. The establishment, situated near Etosha Park, received authorization to export 5 elephants, aged 4 to 8, to a zoo in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The elephants must be first taken from their herds, put in observation in an enclosure and undergo several months of domestication. The social and health damages to the elephant families and the specimens who are subjected to this separation and exile are tackled in "On the Trail," about young elephants that were captured in Zimbabwe and exported, when they survive this ordeal, to China (see "On the Trail" n°15, p.92). The CITES offices in Namibia and the UAE issued CITES export and import permits. The elephants in Namibia are registered under Appendix II of CITES. However, Michèle Pickover, author of the best-selling book "The Rights of Animals in South Africa," underlined that it is illegal to export living elephants for commercial purposes if there is no conservation programme and if the well-being of the animal could be damaged. The director of Eden Game Farm, a Swedish industrialist who is in serious financial difficulty, is under pressure from 35 national and international NGOs led by Humane Society International.<sup>57</sup>

**May 24, 2017**

### **Salambala Conservancy, Zambezi Region, Namibia**

Seizure of tusks, a blue wildebeest skin (*Connochaetes taurinus*) and his paws. Three arrests, an agent of the Ministry of agriculture and 2 high school students aged 18 and 19. The wildebeest's remains were hidden in the bush. Morgan Sai-Sai regional director of the rangers states that even in winter the services are on 24 hour alert.

"Poaching activities peak during winter because the meat does not spoil quickly, and poachers believe they will not be caught because of the weather."<sup>58</sup>



**June 9, 2017**

### **Namibia**

Reinforcement of legal measures against poaching and illegal trade of elephant ivory and rhino horns. The maximum fines for poachers have been increased from 200,000 to 10 million Namibian dollar (\$ 65,000 US), and prison sentences from 5 to 10 years. All foreigners, after having expunged their prison sentences for these crimes, will be expelled and banned entering Namibian territory. This new law goes into effect immediately. The announcement was made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop on wildlife trafficking, organized by the Chinese embassy in Namibia (see "On the Trail" n°16 p69). Chinese businesses based in Namibia have contributed to a fund to fight trafficking. The fund currently has 100,000 Namibian dollar (\$ 7,600 US). The money is destined to help the Namibian government fight against wildlife crime. In 2016, 135 elephant tusks and 36 rhinoceros horns were seized in Namibia, according to official statistics. Most of the suspects arrested in airports or at land borders are of Asian origin.<sup>59</sup>

## WESTERN AFRICA

### BENIN

**March 28, 2017**

### **Parakou, Borgou Department, Benin**

The Parakou court of first instance has sentenced 4 traffickers (see "On the Trail" n°16, p 80) to 12 months in prison, a fine of 300,000 CFA Franc (\$ 510 US) each and 15,500,000 CFA Franc (\$ 26,400 US) in damages and interests to pay together. "The application of the law is indispensable to make public opinion sensitive to repression the heightened awareness of sanctions," highlights la Nouvelle Tribune.<sup>60</sup>



### COTE D'IVOIRE

**May 4, 2017**

### **Near Ferkessédougou, Savanes District, Côte d'Ivoire**

Warned of the presence of elephants near the villages Fourouh, Yebelé and Poulouh, Water and Forest department agents stumbled on the remains of a feast, braised bones and smoked meat. The baby elephant's head was close by with his little tusks. A man admitted to the killing. The baby elephant would have destroyed his mango orchard. Visit to the orchard totally contradicts the hunter's version. Three accomplices are also referred to the Kokrogo court.<sup>61</sup>

## CAMEROON

May 23, 2017

**Yaoundé, Centre Region, Mfoundi Department, Cameroon**

The car was searched in the Bastos quarter. It was coming from Kribi. In a sack of undergarments, the police found 2 sculptures. The driver, age 37, initially claimed that the objects were made of bone. The authorities say it is ivory, after having carefully examined the Schreger lines (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 82). The trafficker's final destination was Meiganga, in the north of the country, a city of more than 40,000 inhabitants that is becoming a "wildlife flea market" that provides for traffickers of various stripes.<sup>62</sup>

**GANG  
REPEATED OFFENSE**

May 24, 2017

**Bertoua, Region of East Cameroon**

Thunderous conviction of Aboubacar Hibrahim and Zakary Daouda for trafficking of 160 tusks (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 80), sentenced to 253 million CFA Franc that is \$ 431,000 US in damages, 3 to 4 months prison time and 5 extra years time if the damages are not paid. Daouda is a repeated offender. He had been sentenced to 6 months prison suspended sentence by the Djoum tribunal for trafficking of 18 tusks.<sup>63</sup>



## GABON

April 21, 2017

**Lambarene, Province of Moyen-Ogooué, Gabon**

Joint operation led by authorities and the NGO Conservation Justice. The offender is from Mali.<sup>64</sup>

May 10, 2017

**Ogooué Ivindo Province, Gabon**

Arrest of 11 people, 7 of which were Chinese, following a CAF (Contrôle d'Aménagement Forestier) mission aided by the NGO Conservation Justice. Thousands of m<sup>3</sup> of wood were illegally chopped in protected areas. The CAF project is financed by the French Agency of Development in the framework of debt conversion between France and Gabon. Possibly too fruitful in its investigations, the mission of CAF was prematurely suspended. The Gabonese government just signed a commercial agreement with 27 Chinese forestry companies. The exportation of okoumé (*Aucoumea klaineana*) is conceded to Chinese interests. Cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 68.

Linked to the mission of CAF, a night roadblock run by the National Agency of National Parks at the entrance of Makokou permitted the intercepting of a truck loaded with a container of mineral water between Franceville and Libreville, the capital. The 2

drivers, Bah Alassane and Kiakité Abddourahmane, from Guinea and Chad, had agreed to bring 60 kg of ivory in the midst of the packs of water as a favor for one of their old acquaintances, Abdarhmane Hamid. The three men were driven to the Makokou prison.<sup>65</sup>

June 7, 2017

**Léon Mba International Airport, Libreville, Estuary Province, Gabon**

Two nights under watch and compromise fines for 3 Chinese citizens caught in the act of trying to illegally trade chopsticks, combs, and baubles in ivory.<sup>66</sup>

June 2017

**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

He is from Côte d'Ivoire. Seizure of 2 tusks of unknown origin.<sup>67</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENSE**

June 17, 2017

**Makokou, Province of Ogooué-Ivindo, Gabon**

20 kg of raw ivory in the hands of this trafficker well known for escaping justice by means of corruption when arrested. His hunting ground is particular. It is the Courts' under seal evidence safe rooms. One accomplice was arrested.<sup>68</sup>





## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

### GANG

**April 14, 2017**

**Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of Congo**

The Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN), supported by the police, arrested four traffickers and confiscated a dozen kilograms of ivory in a jewelry and trinket workshop. The investigators had been watching the team for several days, and plans to go after the rest of the network.<sup>69</sup>

**April 21, 2017**

**Garamba National Park, Eastern Province, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Two rangers died in service. The patrol approached a common and tragic scene of life in the Park. Poachers were busy butchering a poached elephant. A violent shootout occurred. Joël Meriko Ari and Bolimola Afokao leave behind 11 orphans.<sup>70</sup>



## REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

### REPEATED OFFENSE

#### GANG

**April 4, 2017**

**Makoua, Cuvette Department, Republic of Congo**

A former conservation officer and an accomplice were arrested in possession of 3 ivory tips, weighing a total of 20 kg. Others are on the run. The former conservation officer was fired in 2016 for possession of endangered species and is suspected of being in the trafficking business since 2006. He operated around Etoumbi and Mbomo (in the West Cuvette Department), near the border with Gabon and the Odzala-Kokoua Congolese National Park. A man carrying the "products" and showing them to the clients helped him. They risk five years of prison time.<sup>71</sup>

**April 6, 2017**

**Ouessou, Sangha Department, Republic of Congo**

Four traffickers, surprised on the February 15, 2017 with 36 kg of ivory, sentenced to 5 years in prison (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 80).<sup>72</sup>



### REPEATED OFFENSE

**Beginning June, 2017**

**Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Sentencing to 5 years prison and a \$ 5000 US fine of Daring Dissaka. "The Daring gang" is directly involved in the case of the 70 kg of ivory seized at the beginning of the year near Pokola, the loggers' town.

Daring Dissaka, 39, have a lot of experience. As early as 2005, he began harassing elephants and making trafficking connections with Chadians. He



already had been sentenced to prison in 2011 and 2013. Each time he benefited from early release. His preferred terrain is the Nouabale Ndoki Park that covers 4200 km<sup>2</sup>. Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) has recently been set up to tackle regional trafficking. It is thanks to this new unit that Daring Dissaka was arrested, once again. The WCU is supported by Elephant Crisis Fund, The Wildcat Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.<sup>73</sup>

## CHAD

**April 22, 2017**

**Chari-Baguirmi Region, Chad**

South African veterinarian Mike Toft and founder of Zimbabwe Elephant Nursery, Roxy Danckwerts, arrive on site to care the elephants fallen in a poaching ambush at the end of March 2017 (see "On the Traile" n 16, p.81). The elephant herd has become fearful and even aggressive. 11 members of the family died. Four cubs are orphans and 5 elephants including one young are wounded. The rescue operations were funded or accompanied by the Franz Weber Foundation and WAR (Wildlife At Risk). SOS Elephants Chad, which triggered this rescue and took care of the injured animals for several weeks, is supported by the Brigitte Bardot Foundation.

## AMERICA

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**June 2017**

**Long Island, State of New York, United States of America**

Indictment of Robert Rogal, director of the Royal Gallery and of Jaime Villamarin for having displayed for sale and sold to infiltrated US Fish and Wildlife Service agents 2 ivory sculptures worth \$ 2612 US and having offered another statuette worth \$ 3600 US. "It is ivory, I believe but we cannot write it because they don't allow sale", said Royal to the interested party.

Search of the prestigious gallery enabled to retrieve "art works" made of elephant ivory, sperm whale ivory and crocodile skin.<sup>74</sup>

## ASIA

## CAMBODIA

**May 5, 2017**

**Province of Sihanoukville, Cambodia**

The case dates back to 2014. 3008 kg of ivory had been discovered in a container in the Sihanoukville port. Having left Mombasa, in Kenya, the container had transited through Malaysia and Viet Nam (see "On the Trail" n°5 p. 99).

Khan Sinith, director of the import-export company (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 91) denies any responsibility. Sentenced to 3 years in prison, he has formed an appeal. He has been let out on bail.<sup>75</sup>

## CHINA

**April 21, 2017**

### **Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, China**

The customs officers at the Lok Ma Chau check post, near the border between the Hong Kong special administrative region and the special economic zone of Shenzhen, have seized 9 tusks, weighing a total of about 75 kg, onboard a truck that claimed to contain "general cargo." The ivory is estimated to be worth \$ 1.1 million HK (\$ 141,500 US, or \$ 1,886 US / kg) on the black market.<sup>76</sup>



**April 21, 2017**

### **Beijing International Airport, China**

Arrest of a Chinese expatriate worker. He was returning from South Africa. He had hidden in the back of his bag raw ivory and worked ivory. In his defense, he said like many others do that he did not know transporting ivory is illegal.

Against him, the police and customs say that his behavior upon arrival was very nervous that he was going to hide for a while in the bathrooms and that an examination of his computer showed that he is regularly a part of wildlife trafficking.

From October 2016 to April 2017, Beijing Customs seized 520 tusk cuttings and worked ivories.<sup>77</sup>

**Beginning of May 2017**

### **Qujing, Province of Yunnan, China**

Sentencing to one year on probation and 6 months suspended prison of X and Y for having sold via social networks 28 carved ivories and having thus earned 33,000 yuan, that is \$ 4820 US between July 2015 and September 2016. At the time of their arrest, they were in possession of 7 carved ivories for total value of 3700 yuan/\$ 540 US. X and Y have received each a 1000 yuan/\$ 145 US fine. It was reminded that in China only approved shops have the right to sell ivory and such a capacity should disappear in December 2017 at latest.<sup>78</sup>



## COMPUTER NETWORK

**May 31, 2017**

### **Hong Kong International Airport, China**

Seizure of raw ivory. 61 kg cut in such a way that the digital tablets and the sections could fit inside 4 computer tower cases. The passenger was arrested. He is 27 years old.<sup>79</sup>



## TAILOR NETWORK

**June 14, 2017**

### **Hong Kong International Airport, China**

Seizure of 57.6 kg of semi raw ivory for a total value of 1.15 million dollar/\$ 148,000 US i.e. \$ 2570 US/kg. The ivory rods were carefully slipped inside 3 suit coats specially cut and packed in 3 suitcases coming from Zimbabwe that ended up uncalled for.<sup>80</sup>

**June 26, 2017**

### **Beijing, Direct-controlled Municipality of Beijing, China**

Sentencing of a certain Liu to 4 years prison term and 40,000 yuan (\$ 5900 US) in fine for attempted contraband of 16 carved ivories from Africa for a total of 88 kg.

Despite the precautions measures to hide the proof, wrapped in plastic and tin foil and fake compartment in his suitcase, Liu was arrested by customs at the airport.<sup>81</sup>



## INDIA

**Beginning of April 2017**

### **Similipal National Park, Mayurbhanj District, Odisha State, India**

#### **Anthrax or Misinformation**

Contrary to information published by the Similipal Tiger Reserve administration, the elephants that died 2 and a half years ago were not the victims of an anthrax epizootic. The appeal to the Right to Information Act submitted by the Wildlife Society of Odisha revealed that only 5 elephants were carriers of the anthrax virus when they died, and that the other 11 could have been poached by trap or poisoning.<sup>82</sup>

**April 8-13, 2017**

**Thrissur, State of Kerala, India**

Local press speaks of 2 pairs of tusks coming from 2 dead elephants stolen about 20 years ago in the premises of the temple dedicated to Sankarankulangara in the Kanattukara neighbourhood. Humane Society International India offers a 100,000 rupee (\$ 1500 US) reward to whoever will enable to identify, arrest and help to the conviction of those responsible for the theft.<sup>83</sup>

**April 17, 2017**

**Dhanupali, Sambalpur District, State of Odisha, India**

Prakash Biswal is behind bars. This white collar representative of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) was arrested right in the middle of a family wedding. He is involved in an ivory seizure in February in the Kansar village (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 85).<sup>84</sup>

**April 22, 2017**

**Guwahati, Metropolitan Kamrup District, State of Assam, India**

**New information on elephant trafficking.**

Forests around Namsai have become a sanctuary for those whose profession is to capture wild elephants. Over there they are called "fandis" and there are many in the Tinsukia District. "Fandis" capture wild elephants with "kunkis", local name for domestic elephants. To catch wild elephants is forbidden in India since 1977. After being caught, the elephants are submitted to a 4 months long domestication program deep in the forest, no doubt with the complacent accord of some authorities. The dewilded elephants are then sold around 500,000 rupee (\$ 7700 US) per individual to a middleman, then transported by road to Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala. They are given fake certificates stating their domestic origin. Elephant traffickers are often meddling in coal, wood or car trafficking. The young elephants ripped away from their natural habitat are destined to be exploited in entertainment, local festivals, religious ceremonies, marriages, circuses and zoos, and other amusement parks. Between 2011 and 2015 at least 40 domestic elephants registered as such in Assam escaped the administrations surveillance. No one knows where they are. The most pessimistic say they are dead and that the tails, ears, genitals, trunks were sold and consumed locally or used for black magic and that the males' tusks were exported.<sup>85</sup>

**April 26, 2017**

**Borgang, Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India**

Nocturnal seizure by the Kaziranga Park guards of a 8.5 kg tusk estimated worth 350,000 rupee or \$ 5400 US (\$ 635 US/kg).<sup>86</sup>

**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Nagarhole National Park, State of Karnataka, India**

Conflict between pro elephant activists and authorities.

On one side, the director of Wildlife First says that the 40 to 50 year old male was poached and that one of his tusks over a meter long was stolen. On the other side the director of the Reserve founding his position on 2 autopsy reports says the elephant had lost one of his 2 tusks before his death, presumed to be a natural one. "Services are trying to silence the case. This is not the first poaching in Nagarhole. Last time an elephant and several deer were killed by poisoning. We gave them all the information and they just sat on it", insists Wildlife First.

See "On the Trail" n°3 p.44, n°8 p.50, n°9 p.51, n°13 p.94.<sup>87</sup>

**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Ahutoli (Near Kaziranga Park), Nagaon District, State of Assam, India**

The old elephant's body was found in a water hole. The post-mortem report says he died following an attack. He was targeted with arrows and his trunk over 2 meters long was cut off. For the past ten years, the food demand for trunks is developing thanks to marketing from local tribes who descend onto the weekly market places and offer different forms of elephant meat. The trunk is the preferred piece. The vet from Wildlife Trust confirms that within 5 years he has noted several trunk amputations on dead elephants and a few cases of elephant poaching for the purpose of food use have been reported to him in the neighboring State of Arunachal Pradesh. In Central Asia, only male elephants have tusks. The species is extinct in Pakistan. They still survive in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, peninsular Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Viet Nam and China.<sup>88</sup>

**May 7, 2017**

**Parjang, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India**

Discovery of a pair of tusks, 2.4 kg and 2.3 kg, at the Naik family home. See "On the Trail" n°5 p. 99.<sup>89</sup>

**June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Melur, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

The 3 tusks had been bought in Krishnagiri by K.Prabhu 26 years old. For lack of an immediate buyer, Prabhu hid the tusks at his home. His accomplice is being searched for.<sup>90</sup>





**June 2017**

**Attappady, Palakkad District, State of Kerala, India**

**Controversy in Kerala**

The border with Tamil Nadu is a hot spot for poaching. A 45-year-old elephant knows something about it. He was the victim of poaching and a bullet was lodged in his forehead without killing him, says the NGO Heritage Animal Task Force (HATF) based in Thrissur. He was also the target of air-pressured gun.

The elephant was captured as it wandered in suffering in the borders of Attappady, 30,000 inhabitants, and driven to a camp for domestic elephants in Kodanad, 100 km away. HATF criticized forest services for not caring for the refugee starting with the extraction of the bullets.

The forest services say that the elephant was examined by a veterinarian and that no bullet was found on his forehead and that they did all they could do to avoid a general infection.<sup>91</sup>

**June 13, 2017**

**Kochi, State of Kerala India**

The high State Court put an end to the rebounding prosecution against Mohanlal, a Bollywood star. Several elephant tusks of an unidentified origin were found at his home during a tax audit in 2011. After the event, he provided documents saying it was an inheritance. See "On the Trail" n°12 p. 3, n°15 p. 100.<sup>92</sup>

**June 22, 2017**

**Kochi, State of Kerala, India**

At Manish Kumar Gupta's home, who was absent during the search, the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) found 50 bottles of counterfeit alcohol, deer antlers, sandalwood and ivory. The 2 tusks would be from a domestic elephant who died some time ago.

After verification, Gutha the "bizman", or businessman, doesn't have the least trace in his archives that could justify presence of these illegal items at his home.<sup>93</sup>

**June 2017**

**State of Karnataka, India**

**The Ranga Saga**

To avoid poaching or conflicts with human activities, Ranga the majestic solitary tusker who for years would come to the Bangalore and Magadi suburbs to find food and water, was captured and subjected to domestication behind a fence in the Bannerghatta National Park.

Despite a petition campaign on the Internet, he will not return to the forest. In some days or weeks at latest, Ranga will be removed to a domestic elephant camp in Dubare or Doddaharave.

If domestication is fully carried out, Ranga will be affected later to the celebration of the end of the monsoon in Mysore. He'll carry then on his back a golden palanquin displaying the statue of the Goddess Chamundeshwari (750 kg) and parade over 4 km.<sup>94</sup>

**INDONESIA**

**April 19, 2017**

**Jambi, Province of Jambi, Indonesia**

32, 55 and 61 years old, the trio surely seems to be experienced in ivory trafficking. They sold in Jakarta. Three tusks were seized in 2 different places. The chief of police in Jambi says the price on the local black market is \$ 1876 US per kilo.<sup>95</sup>

**ISRAEL**

**June 28, 2017**

**Israel**

The Knesset rejects the proposed law banning the domestic trade of ivory. The Minister of Immigration and Integration claims that there is no need to double the law of 1955 and its amendments.

In September 2016, the Tiroche auction house in Herzliya 15 km north of Tel Aviv caused protests by putting several ivory objects in its sale catalog. The NGO Israel Nature and the director of National Parks demanded that Tiroche suspends the sale if CITES documentation is not available.<sup>96</sup>

**JAPAN**

**May 26, 2017**

**Japan**

Reinforcement of the ivory legislation.

Any commerce selling ivory or items using ivory will have to be registered. Illegal transactions operated by merchants of individuals will entail a fine worth 5000 and \$ 9000 US maximum. See "On the Trail" n°11 p. 66.<sup>97</sup>

**June 23, 2017**

**Japan**

Havoc in ivory in Tokyo.

A respectable antiques company in the Japanese capital city is mixed up in a case of ivory fraud. 18 tusks were seized. They had been bought from private individuals even though the certificates of origin lacked clarity. The JWRC (Japan Wildlife Research Center) commissioned by the Ministry of the Environment to register all ivory transactions, in collusion with the antique dealers, approved commercialization of the litigious tusks. The company admitted to having bought 400 tusks over the last 5 years without requiring proof they had been legally imported into Japan. 27 people including the director, employees and suppliers are indicted for breach of the law on protection of endangered species and illegal trade in ivory.

EIA (Environmental Investigation Agency) denounced in 2015 oversights in the control of legality of the Japanese domestic ivory market, 2<sup>nd</sup> largest consumer after China. See "On the Trail" n°11 p. 66.

"On the Trail" has several times reported aborted ivory smugglings between Japan and China and noticed that seizures happen in China thanks to the scrutiny of postal customs and never happen in Japan (see "On the Trail" n° 8 p. 87, n°9 p. 84 et 85, n°11 p. 66).<sup>98</sup>



## MYANMAR

**May 2017**

### **Chaung Sauk, Region of Bago, Myanmar**

Drifting remains of elephant carcasses without tusks and skin in rivers are an exception but will stay engraved in the memories of the Chaung Sauk villagers.

The region and the country are faced with several problems:

- Poaching is increasing. Corruption rules. Surveillance agents and local elected officials accept bribes to keep their eyes closed. Poachers shelter in huts made of bamboo. They begin by collecting turtle eggs, then move on to ivory.

- The town Mong La, in the Shan Region, has escaped all government control or that of its services. It is a major route for poached ivory destined to China. Contraband is also well embedded towards Thailand leaving from Tachileik, Shan Region, or from Myawaddy, Karen Region.

- Wild male elephants, the only ones to be tusked are increasingly rare. 5 to 6000 domestic elephants serve for the Myanmar Timber Enterprise that controls the national forest industry. Joint effects of reduction and suspension of logging create a big problem regarding repurposing of this historical labor force that finds more protection under the CITES Convention than under labor laws.

- Industrial plantation endlessly prey on forests and hills and conflicts between agribusiness, its employees and the elephants become more frequent and sharper.<sup>99</sup>

Elephants in Bago Region, see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 86.

**May, 3, 6 and 10, 2017**

### **Pyin Oo Lwin District, Mandalay Region, Myanmar**

Three poaching acts in a week.

Two elephants were shot dead. One was a female, the other probably a male. He was decapitated and chopped up. Another would be in healing. He received a poisoned arrow. There would be about 20 elephants in the surrounding forests.<sup>100</sup>

**May 2017**

### **Wingabaw Elephant Camp, Bago, Bago Region, Myanmar**



Four tragic orphans receive 400 visitors a week; the visitors pay an entrance fee of 5000 Kyat (\$ 3.60 US) for locals and 4 times more for foreigners.<sup>101</sup>

## SRI LANKA

**April 2017**

### **Sri Lanka**

Thirty-five elephants were seized by the State. Their owners did not have birth certificates or other documents to prove that their very large prestigious pets were of domestic lineage. In fact, through collusion with the ministries, notables and high-ranking monks from Buddhist temples acquired baby elephants from organized gangs who capture them in the forest (see "On the Trail" n°5 p 97, n°7 p 91, n°8 p 85, n°10 p 64 and 65). The trickery was denounced by M. Ambewela (see "On the Trail" n°6 p 91). The government, in an attempt to end the controversy, ordered that the overabundance of young elephants in the Pinnawala orphanage could be used by Buddhist temples for ceremonies and parades, and that the 35 confiscated elephants could be returned to their "owners" in exchange for a payment to the State of 10 million rupee (\$ 65,000 US). The State, in turn, would abandon legal charges. Icing on the cake for religious and social officials: all those who had been issued permits for domestic elephants and who did not yet have one due to the diverse supply difficulties, can now buy one in the flesh at the Pinnawala State orphanage. The elephant suppliers, those who capture them in the forest literally exploding entire families, are sentenced to short stays in prison that can be avoided by paying a fine of 100,000 or 200,000 rupee (\$ 655 or 1310 US). .../...

These arrangements that put at ease political, judicial, and religious spheres where captive elephants turn in circles until their death are adversely criticised by national and international environmental communities.

Elephants definitely do not have the good life in Sri Lanka. A disputed inventory mentions 6000 individuals on 65,610 km<sup>2</sup>. For the recent years, the elephant annual losses due to accidents, conflicts with humans, or cruelties like the one reported below, amount to 250. The Hambantota forest is falling under the blades of chainsaws, and the Maduru Oya forest is already the next in line to become harvested for the industrial wood. They are among the last elephant habitats in Sri Lanka.<sup>102</sup>

**April 2017**

**Omanthai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka**

The backhoe opens a trench so the elephant can leave the water hole where they were trapped. Out of danger, one of the elephants hits the articulating arm of the backhoe. A man shoots from a window and kills the 2 survivors. The shooter is a forest guard. He claims he was acting in self defense. Three separate investigations are opened by police, Wildlife Conservation Department and the Ministry of Sustainable Development.<sup>104</sup>

**April 12, 2017**

**Galmamuna, Kurunegala District, North West Province, Sri Lanka**

One male shot dead. A hunter, an attempted capture of a baby elephant that went wrong or an attempted but aborted poaching for ivory trafficking?<sup>103</sup>

## THAILAND

**June 30, 2017**

**Province of Chanthaburi, Thailand**

Arrest inside a hotel room of Mory Sacko, a citizen from Equatorial Guinea. The 315 kg of ivory seized on 27 March 2016 in Bangkok (see.

"On the Trail" n°12 p. 96) were intended for him. On the run, there was an arrest warrant against him.<sup>106</sup>



**April 26, 2017**

**Thailand**

The osteology laboratory of the Chiangmai University has developed a new process using fluorescent x-rays to detect at a 72 to 95% accuracy rate real ivory from fake. The official and black market for ivory are indeed flooded with counterfeits. The counterfeiters are also very active on the rhino horn black market. Scientifics in Thailand have used the fluorescent X-ray technique on fake elephant ivory made from bones, teeth, horns, wood, synthetic resin or minerals. The process is accurate for counterfeits made of bone. Accuracy reaches 95% except if the material is actually elephant bone in which case the rate lowers to 72%. The process is more volatile regarding ivory counterfeits made from a wood or mineral base. Performance rates average then between 25 and 85%. Researches find at least 3 advantages to their technique. It is non destructive, inexpensive and fast, it enables to make a first selection before proceeding to genetic analysis that is long and prohibitively costly.<sup>105</sup>

## VIET NAM

**April 19, 2017**

**Pleiku, Gia Lai Province, Viet Nam**

Arrest of a man in possession of 1,633 objects and pieces of jewelry made of ivory at the Café Gia Le, 97 Le Loi Street, in Pleiku. Nguyen Ba Tung was under surveillance by the Forest Management Department and the Economic Police Department, following a tip from those who live in the province. Wednesday night, around 9 p.m., police officers saw him arrive in Le Loi Street by motorcycle with a blue bag and then go inside to a table in café Gia Le. Apparently, he was waiting for one or more clients. Without waiting, the police officers intervened, seizing the bag and arresting the man. In the police station, Nguyen Ba Tung admitted to having bought all the necklaces, bracelets, pendants, beads, rings and statues of Buddha for 100 million dong (\$ 4,000 US). In the absence of any legal documents, all of it was confiscated by the police.<sup>107</sup>





**May 4, 2017**

**Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Sentencing to 12 months prison time for Pham Van Luat. On 12 August 2015, he was stopped at the Hanoi Airport coming from Angola with more than 50 kg of ivory in his luggage. He had escaped but turned himself into police in December 2016.

Following orders from a certain Quang he met in Angola, he had made several trips between Luanda and Hanoi earning each time \$ 200 US for illegally transporting a few kilos of ivory.<sup>108</sup>



**Beginning of June 2017**

**Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Mrs. Thanh trading in craft objects agreed in to meet a certain Mr. Hung who wanted to sell her some ivory, in June 2016. Upon examining the pieces, Mrs. Thanh decided to buy 49 kg at 4.5 million dong per kg (\$ 198 US), and 6 kg at 12.6 million dong/ kg (\$ 555 US). She hid them all in her Nhi Khe shop, known for its beads, bracelets, necklaces made of wood and other materials, that attracted flocks of Chinese tourists. It is here that Kieu Thi Nuan, local Mandarin interpreter, met a potential buyer and introduced him to Mrs. Thanh. The deal ended with 50 kg of ivory sold for 13.9 million dong per kg (\$ 612 US). It was when Mrs. Thanh's nephew and one of his friends was going to deliver the merchandise to the Chinese buyer in the Thanh Tri district, that Mrs. Thanh was taken in by the Division of Economic Crimes. The 5 Vietnamese, aged 25 to 38, appeared before the People's Court of Hanoi, and are awaiting trial. The ivory was of African origin.<sup>109</sup>

**EUROPE**

**UNITED KINGDOM**

**April 4, 2017**

**London, United Kingdom**

**Fiscal Court**

Returning from an antique fair in Hong Kong, a tea set from the Qing dynasty (19<sup>th</sup> century) contained, in the handles and lid, a few grams of ivory in addition to several kilos of silver.

The tea set contained less than 1% ivory but, according to CITES regulations and English law, must be accompanied by a export or import permit each time it crosses the borders of the Kingdom. The director of the Mayfair gallery recognizes the error, but has asked the justice to order the restitution of the 6 pieces, which "are a part of the cultural history of China." The judge remained unmoved by this argument and pointed out that the gallery was responsible for the completion of all regulatory import formalities. The Mayfair director, while affirming to the court that "the last thing we want to see is these animals become extinct," recognized a logistical error and is considering appealing.<sup>111</sup>

**May 2017**

**Derby, Derbyshire County, United Kingdom**

A 30-year-old man has been charged. Several packages destined for the Middle East were opened by customs. They contained worked ivories. A raid at the suspect's house revealed additional ivory and other suspicious materials.<sup>112</sup>

**July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**European Union**

**Good News.** The European Commission's recommendation to its 28 member States to suspend the export of raw ivory has entered into force. "Suspending the re-export of raw ivory from the EU will ensure that tusks of legal origin are not mixed with illegal ivory and help destination countries implement their actions to reduce the demand for ivory, which constitute an important step in addressing illegal trade in ivory and the current elephant poaching surge."\* France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Sweden, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have already stopped issuing permits to export raw ivory. Other countries, like Belgium, are oppose. See "On the Trail" n°5, p. 105 (Ivory from the Past), n°8 p.68 (All together for the elephants) and n°14, p.96 (Surging European Union Pre-CITES Convention Ivory Exports to Hong Kong, a Cause for Concern).

**Patience.** Robin des Bois and numerous other NGOs are pushing for intra-European trade in both raw and worked in ivory, and exports from the European Union of worked ivory also be illegal, or at least exceptional. The European Commission is thinking about it. Numerous cases of illegal trade in Europe and of ivory seizures outside of Europe of ivory bought on the European Market are presented in "On the Trail."<sup>110</sup>

\* Commission Notice - Guidance Document. EU regime governing intra-EU trade and re-export of ivory. (2017/C 154/06).

# It's moving

## AFRICA

### South Africa - Botswana

**April 2, 2017**

Twelve rhinos left South Africa for Botswana. 15 hours of travel by truck, plane, and helicopter.

"It is genetic insurance against extinction," enthusiastically declares Les Carlisle, the leader of the project "Rhinos Without Borders".

The poaching statistics in Botswana are the lowest in Africa. The transfer cost \$ 45, 000 US a head.<sup>1</sup>



**Early May 2017**

### Tiémélékro, Moronou Region, Côte d'Ivoire

The reactions are mixed. In Frondobo -Télébo, for the widow whose husband is said to have been "crushed" by the pachyderm, his capture and move are considered a relief, even a blessing.

In Djamalabo, his departure is almost considered a curse and several residents testify to their attachment and even their compassion for the old rhinoceros trucked under the supervision of South African specialists.

The animal, showing great placidity in the pictures of the event, is now in N'zi River Lodge, 42 km from Bouaké.

As a preventive measure, the horns were sawn off. The nasal one was more than a horn, it was a tree. What has become of it? It was probably over 10 kg, worth some \$ 300,000 US referring to the quotation of Swaziland.<sup>2</sup>



### South Africa - United States of America

**May 2017**

Western Global Airlines has transferred 11 white rhinoceros on an MD-11 cargo plane from Johannesburg, South Africa, to a park in the eastern United States which location has not been revealed.

Western Global Airlines is pleased to have transferred in collaboration with Animal Defenders International 33 ill-treated lions in South America to a refuge center in South Africa. The operation Spirit of Freedom Flight took place in April 2016. Cf. p. 62 of this issue.<sup>3</sup>

**June 2017**

### Malawi

Resumption of resettlement led by African Parks (see "On the Trail" n°14, pp. 75-76) to the Nkhotakota Reserve on the shores of Lake Malawi

- 50 elephants from Liwonde.

- 150 from Majete.



A few days after his arrival, one of the elephants died under blurry circumstances. He was either killed by local residents in the buffer zone of the Reserve or got stuck in the sludge because a lack of ground's knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

.../...

**June 7, 2017**

### **South Africa to Akagera National Park, Rwanda**

Transfer by truck and airplane of 18 black rhinos from South Africa to the Akagera National Park in Rwanda. They were sedated and dehorned on departure to avoid wounds during the trip and lower the risk of poaching on arrival. The management of the outcoming horns is not subjected to official protocol. During the civil war, the Park was invaded by refugees. The government has not made them leave. The Park area has been divided in half. It covers now only 1200km<sup>2</sup>. Wildlife though has been divided by 10. All the rhinos were hunted and eaten during the civil war. The Park is managed by African Parks. "A canine anti poaching unit generously offered by the Howard G. Buffet foundation will contribute to protection of the transferred rhinos" proclaims African Parks.

A Hungarian member of the reintroduction team, Krisztián Gyöngyi, was killed by one of the rhinos in unspecified circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

**June**

### **Zimbabwe-Mozambique**

The trucks carried their wildlife cargoes on 600 km of chaotic and dusty roads.

Elephants, giraffes, buffaloes and zebras change countries and functions.

In Zimbabwe, in the Sango Wildlife Conservancy run by German businessman Wilfried Pabst, the animals were the target of international hunters. In Mozambique, they will repopulate the Zinave National Park desertified by the civil war of the decade 1980-90. The relocated will not have to undergo the mortal blows of super armed and guided hunters, they will have to thwart the traps of the lonely and tenacious poachers.

Pabst says it is by means of hunting license money that he can afford to manage his estate in Zimbabwe and give surplus wildlife to Mozambique. Pabst asserts that if hunting permits were suddenly banned in Zimbabwe, his domain that stretches over 600 km<sup>2</sup> and forms an (almost military) base for the Big Five in southern Africa, would become bankrupted in a few months and that most of the 200,000 wild animals would be poached in a year. The cost of the "Rewilding Caravan" is estimated at more than \$ 2 million US. It is covered by the Peace Parks Foundation based in South Africa. The plan is to transfer 7,500 mammals in 3 years. Pabst's donation is dubbed by the government of Zimbabwe (cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.97).<sup>6</sup>

The doctrine of Pabst is opportunely taken up by Celso Correia, Minister of Environment and Rural Development of Mozambique. He wants to revive sports hunting in the country. Sport hunting is one of the country's major conservation vectors, Correia said.

The species donation from Zimbabwe to Mozambique will later serve to attract hunters from around the world. In 2016, hunting permits have brought the country a little over \$ 600,000 US. Promising but insufficient according to Correia.<sup>7</sup>

## **ASIA**

**April 3, 4, and 5, 2017**

### **Nepal**

Transfer begun for 5 rhinos from the Chitwan Park, going to the Shuklaphanta National Park, 450 km away. 30 elephants, 30 elephant riders, 30 assistants, and 10 park administrators and soldiers are standing at the ready. The first day, only one male could be located, anesthetized, and loaded on a truck. The goal is to move 5 rhinos, 1 male and 4 females. The first rhino reproduction in Shuklaphanta Park was in 2001. It seems to have bore its fruits. The population has more than doubled in 16 years. Today there are 9 individuals.<sup>8</sup>



**April 2017**

### **Nepal-China**

After several difficulties, the terms and conditions are nearly worked out to donate 4 rhinoceros - 2 males and 2 females - to the Chinese government, as a sign of cooperation and friendship between the 2 countries. Five Chinese experts visited Chitwan Park in January 2017. After Nepalese experts visited China, the Chitwan Park director has decided that the Shanghai Safari Park and the Guangzhou "Research Center" are suitable habitats (see "On the Trail" n°12, p. 73).<sup>9</sup>



# Elephants and Mammoths

## AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**April 2017**

#### **State of Nevada, United States of America**

Why is Nevada envisaging to ban trade in raw and carved ivory from mammoths disappeared from North America 15,000 years ago and from Siberia 9000 years ago?

First because mammoth ivory can be sold under the label elephant ivory, that is what happens in Hong Kong (see "On the Trail" n°7 p. 88) and second because elephant ivory can be sold under the label mammoth ivory, that is what happened in New York (see "On the Trail" n°14 p. 88).

Law n°194 was voted by the State Senate. It must now be voted by Congress. It bans with very few derogations, purchase, sale or possession with the purpose to sale items made from, or in part from, lions, elephants, rhinos, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, pangolins, marine turtles, manta rays, mammoths, narwhals, walruses and hippos. Senator James Settlemeyer doesn't understand that the mammoth, who according to him disappeared around 1200 AD, be listed in among the animals concerned by this trade ban. Also, he is worried about what will happen to firearms that contain ivory. He and his republican colleagues voted against the act.<sup>1</sup>

## EUROPE

### RUSSIA

**June 2017**

#### **Zabaykalsky, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia. Border to China.**

The freight train was about to exit Russia and enter China when the Leo, border control dog, froze in front of one of the wagons. Near the axels 34 kg of fossilised mammoth tusks were found. In Yakutia, mammoth tusk extraction is conditioned to archaeological permits delivered by the Russian authority. Evidently, pillaging of mammoth tusks has been developing since the years 90-2000 when international trade in elephant ivory came under ban or restrictions.<sup>2</sup>

# Other Mammals

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**June 10, 2017**

#### **Kei River, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Four men chased by a drone were arrested in a State ranch with 2 dead blue duikers (*Philantomba monticola*, Appendix II) and 5 firearms.



Robert, Steven, Jonathan Armstrong and Dane Smith appeared before the Komga court. They were informed of their right to appoint a lawyer of their choice, to benefit from juridical aid or to defend themselves by their own means.<sup>1</sup>

### ZAMBIA

**June 8, 2017**

#### **Zambia**

The Government has suspended Lechwe antelope (*Kobus leche*, Appendix II) hunting. They were about 250,000 of them in 1930. Today, they are 10 times less numerous and mostly clustered in the Lochinvar National Park (428 km<sup>2</sup>). Through poaching and hunting, 1000 Lechwe are killed every year. The species is endemic in the Kafue Basin, a tributary of the Zambezi. Lechwe are in danger of becoming extinct.<sup>2</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

**April 18, 2017**

### **Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe. Border with Botswana**

Rescue of a painted dog (*Lycaon pictus*), also named painted wolf because of its beautiful fur. Freed from a trap by Larry Patterson, veterinarian, with the help of Elephants without Borders and of the Imbabala Zambezi Safari Lodge.<sup>3</sup>



Jacques Laurent Agasse (1767–1849)

## AMERICA

### ARGENTINA

**June 13, 2017**

#### **Lavalle, Corrientes Province, Argentina**

Ten birds and one armadillo were seized by the rural police (the 2 species living in Argentina are listed in the CITES: *Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II et *Priodontes maximus*, Appendix I) in the trunk of a car. Two arrests and 11 instant releases.<sup>4</sup>

### BRAZIL

#### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**April 4, 2017**

#### **Riachinho, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil**

Seizure of collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), firearms, and traps. A 50-year-old woman was taken to the police station. The entire family is involved in this business.<sup>5</sup>

**April 17, 2017**

#### **Boa Vista, State of Roraima, Brazil**

A collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), firearms and narcotics seized during a night raid. Five people are in detention.<sup>6</sup>

**April 19, 2017**

#### **Ariquemes, Rondônia State, Brazil**

In a car, seizure of 2 dead hairy armadillos (*Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II), a 22-caliber firearm and ammunition. Caught in the act, the man was driving with very high blood alcohol content.<sup>7</sup>



**May 19, 2017**

#### **Rubiácea, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure of a firearm and 51 kg of frozen capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). 25,000 real (\$ 6500 US) in fine.<sup>8</sup>



### MEXICO

**April 15, 2017**

#### **Emiliano Zapata, State of Morelos, Mexico**

In the Sierra Montenegro Reserve a man was transporting a 13.5 kg bag filled with white-tailed deer meat (*Odocoileus virginianus*).<sup>9</sup>

### PERU

**June 1, 2017**

#### **Ayacucho, Huamanga Province, Peru**

In a tavern, a plains viscacha's skin (*Lagostomus maximus*), a Colpeo fox skin (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II) and a white tailed deer skin (*Odocoileus virginianus*), were seized.<sup>10</sup>



*Lagostomus maximus*

**June 8, 2017**

**El Tambo, Junín Department, Peru**

Skins and parts of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) were seized, they were stuffed in the Los Conquistadores and Esperanza restaurants.<sup>11</sup>

**ASIA**

**CHINA**

**June 2017**

**Aksou Prefecture, Xinjiang Autonomous Region, China**

Seizure of a long-eared jerboa (*Euchoreutes naso*).



She is said to be the Mickey Mouse of the arid Mongolian high plateau and north-western China. The tip of the tail is black and white. The stomach is white. They live 2 to 3 years and feed on insects. They locate them by perceiving vibrations and sounds. They can leap up to a meter high. The ears are true satellite dishes. They are 1/3 bigger than the head. To survive in the desert, they dig 4 dens, 2 dens for daytime hunting and night-time hunting, and 2 dens for their summer and winter quarters. An old IUCN document says the population has lowered by 80% in 10 years (1996-2006). Data on international trade are missing.<sup>12</sup>

**INDIA**

**April 18, 2017**

**Rangani, State of Odisha, India**

Arrest of a poacher 20 years after the event. Meat from chitals (*Axis axis*) trapped in the Bhitarkanika National Park had been found at his home, near the Park, but Niranjan Dalai had run away. He found a job as a plumber in Delhi. On a visit back home he was arrested. He had been reported.<sup>13</sup>



**April 29, 2017**

**Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Chamara Nagar, State of Karnataka, India**

The deer (*Cervus unicolor*) was grazing on the hillside when it was savagely attacked by 4 poachers. In the morning, the forest service investigated a neighboring farm and assembled proof of the skinning and butchering of the victim. Three accomplices took off. Shivappa, the farmer is in detention. He is a regular poacher.<sup>14</sup>

**May 22, 2017**

**Chennai, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Deadly revelations!

220 deer and 4 blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal) died on the Technology Institute campus between 2014 and 2016.

Various reasons are put forward.

-Waste disposal off all sorts in particular plastic on the whole campus covering 50 hectares contiguous to the Guindy National Park. All the animals have gotten into the habit of eating it. The campus is a real dump.

-Car traffic especially during the Shaastra and Saarang festivals invades the campus and disturbs the does with their young or collide with them.

Thanks to a formal request from the RTI (Right to Information) by Antony Clement Rubin member of the Animal Welfare Board that it all was made public. Mr. Rubin has seized the National Green Tribunal. He wants the Technology Institute directory to be coerced by justice into eliminating the waste, restoring the Park and referring it to a silence area.<sup>15</sup>

**SINGAPOUR**

**May 17, 2017**

**Bedok neighborhood, Singapore**

The four-toed hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*) is originally from tropical Africa. In Singapore, they are considered an exotic species that represents a risk of infection for humans and the animal species



on the island. Raymi Thye Mustafa was spotted through an advertisement on Gum Tree, "For sale – Hedgehog, 700 dollar (\$ 500 US)." An agent from AVA (Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority) under an anonymous cover set up a meeting with the vendor. "I'm interested," he said.

The meeting took place at the Bedok metro station. The vendor tried to escape when he understood it was a trap. At his house, 4 other hedgehogs were found. Raymi was sentenced to a fine of \$ 2200 S (\$ 1580 US).<sup>16</sup>



## SPAIN

June 25, 2017

**Alicante International Airport, Province of Alicante, Spain**

Fine for a hunter from the Netherlands who was trying to go back to his country with a Barbary sheep head dripping with blood wrapped in plastic and tape. The man didn't have a hunting license and during the hot season as now the organs could be a source of infection.

There are 2 species of wild sheep in Spain listed by CITES, the Asian wild sheep (*Ovis arabica*, Appendix II) and the Barbary sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*, Appendix II) well appreciated by trophy hunters. Both species were introduced into the country.<sup>17</sup>



## RUSSIA

Between March 20 and April 3, 2017

**Central Siberia Nature Reserve, Krasnoyarsk Region, Russia**

The conclusion of the mission carried out over 1500 km by agents of the Reserve and by the authorities in charge of hunting and poaching is devastating. 20,000 reindeer were killed during the winter by unidentified groups equipped with snowmobiles and other all-terrain vehicles. Several hundred open mass graves were found in the taiga. According to Ivan Mizin, arctic coordinator of the WWF, "we expected to find poaching in Central Siberia, but the reality is terrifying." "It is imperative to reinforce controls, to have better knowledge of the reindeer migration routes, to identify poaching hot spots and to modifying the laws regarding reindeer hunting," he adds. In 15 years, the population of Taimyr deer has been reduced by half: one million in 2000, less than 500,000 today. The deer that have been massacred are from the southern branch of the Taimyr population. "In 2020, if nothing changes," estimates Leonid Kolpashchi, the undisputed reindeer expert in Siberia, "there will be no more than 150 to 200,000." During the next hunting and

poaching season, Putin plans to deploy 5000 soldiers. Infectious epizootics during the summer after the snow melts are a concern. Most of the carcasses had their tongue cut out. Deer tongue, and now reindeer tongue, are considered an invigorating culinary delicacy in Asia. Chinese mythology represents deer as companions of the gods, and gives them a lifespan of 5000 years. Hunted for thousands of years and threatened by the fragmentation and encroachment of their preferred habitats, sika deer (*Cervus Nippon*) have practically disappeared in China.

Certain reindeer carcasses have only their antlers cut off. Investigators suspect export networks working with clandestine laboratories. Cut in fine slices or crushed, deer antlers are transformed into dietary supplements, pills, juice, tea, sprays or gels. Consuming antler extract has the false reputation of increasing or maintaining physical, mental, and sexual performance in old age. According to new rumors, the products derived from deer antlers can be used to treat after-effects from chemotherapy and to better muscular performance. They are used for competition sports. When will reindeer antlers be listed as doping substances?<sup>18</sup>



April 12, 2017

**Vladivostok Airport, Primorsky Krai, Russia**

A South Korean traveler was spotted by a sniffer dog. He was trying to get through security with more than 12 kg of musk deer (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I) preputial glands in coffee bags.<sup>19</sup>



## Multi-Species

**Like the international traffickers who fill containers with ivory mixed with scales of pangolins, the first links of the traffic chain are multi-products. They are caught up on roads or markets: live gecko with rhino horn, leopard skin with gall bladder, condors with colpeo foxes. At the end of the line, in traffic warehouses, Customs finds a mess of wine bottles, shark fins, swallow nests and thousands of mobile phone screens.**

### AFRICA

#### SOUTH AFRICA

**May 30, 2017**

**Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Sentencing of Feng Yang Mei to 10,000 Rand (\$ 760 US) in fines for having been surprised, in the middle of the street in the Cyrildene quarter, in possession of lion teeth, drugs and slices of rhinoceros horns. The two people with him were not worried.<sup>1</sup>



**End of May 2017**

**Johannesburg, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

**Disappearance of fine money paid in cash to the court registry.**

On February 24, 2 Chinese citizens sentenced to 10 years prison for illegal possession of abalones (*Haliotis* spp.), ivory and rhino horns, or to the payment of a fine worth 1.1 million Rand (\$ 85,000 US) immediately chose this second option.

They paid the fine in 50 and 100 Rand small notes, piled in 2 shoe boxes.

Problem. This money has disappeared just as the register reporting all fine payments since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2017.

The total amount of the vanished fines would reach 24 million Rand (1.850 million US\$).<sup>2</sup>



#### BOTSWANA

**May 2017**

**Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana**

Results of a study led by 5 university researchers and 3 NGOs and private institutes show that about 1800 poachers gather each 320 to 1000 kg of bush meat each year in the delta's 20.000 km<sup>2</sup> area. Impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*), kudus (*Tragelaphus strepsicero*) and zebras are the most sought out followed by jackals, civets and wildcats (*Felis silvestris*).

Traps, air-pressured guns for birds and for 3 or 4 years now chasing animals on horse back riding are the most common methods. Large carnivores such as lions are the first rank victims of this human predation. To compensate for the food shortage, they can be compelled to approach domestic herds and fall victims of supposed or real conflicts with shepherds. According to the report, it may be asked if poaching rural communities are always in the need. The existence of a collective organization and a lucrative economic channel is suspected. It underlines that progressive decline of wildlife is weakening touristic activities.<sup>3</sup>

#### CAMEROON

**April 13, 2017**

**Maroua, Diamaré Department, Cameroon**

According to "l'Oeil du Sahel," the northern newspaper, the Alpha operation forces, in charge of the war against Boko Haram, or at least for some of its members, were involved in trafficking endangered species, with the collaboration of elected officials, including one who was engaged in negotiations with Boko Haram to free hostages. At least 4 West African crowned cranes (*Balearica pavonina*, Appendix II) and 5 gazelles of an undetermined species were intercepted in a suspicious pick-up, near Maroua in the Far North. Under order of the Minister of Forests and Fauna, the captive fauna was liberated in the Waza National Park (see "On the Trail" n°2 p.36, n°3 p.64, n°5 p.86, n°8 p.94), undoubtedly where they are from.<sup>4</sup>

**June 8, 2017**

**Yaoundé, Central Region, Cameroon**

In early morning arrest at the bus station of a man transporting 45 kg of pangolin scales and a leopard skin.<sup>5</sup>





## GUINEA

### GANG FAMILY AFFAIRS

**April 12, 2017**

#### **Coyah and Tabouna, Kindia Region, Guinea**

Ibrahima Bangoura, colonel in the Guinean army, alias Magnianga or Manguiana, has been in the crosshairs of the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Water and Forests and the WARA Conservation Association since 2013. Operating a secret “zoo” in the village of Tabouna for 10 years, he worked with international wildlife traffickers. Following a long investigation, two simultaneous raids were conducted on his properties by officers of the Brigade de Répression du Banditisme (BRB) and by Interpol, backed by agents from the Ministry and WARA members. The operation was meant to be impressive: Reuters news agency and Guinean television channels took part. In the “zoo,” they discovered 4 chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I), 9 crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I in Guinea), a mongoose (*Herpestes spp.*, Appendix II), 1 civette, 3 furrowed turtles, 2 trionyx turtles (*Trionyx triunguis*, Appendix II), 2 pelomedusa turtles (*Pelomedusa subrufa*), and 2 crowned cranes (*Balearica pavonina*, Appendix II). While they were trying to get him out of a water hole, a crocodile bit one of his rescuers.

At the colonel’s house, in Coyah, they found a serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), 1 Guinean baboon (*Papio papio*, Appendix II), more crowned cranes and parrots. The animals were set free in the Badiar and National Park of Upper Niger, and in Capatchez. The 4 chimpanzees were handed over to the Chimpanzee Conservation Center in the Upper Niger Park, where they were given medical exams before being taken back to the forest. Three jailers were arrested during the searches, Naby Laye Moussa Bangoura (the colonel’s brother-in-law), Mamady Kpoghomou and Mamady Koulibali. Afterwards, the colonel turned himself in to Interpol.<sup>6</sup>

**June 4 and 20, 2017**

#### **Dalaba, Dalaba and Mamou Prefecture, Mamou Region, Guinea**

Trial of a policeman. Alhassane Bangoura has been accused of collusion in the escape of the trafficker Mamadou Tounkara, surprised by Water and Forest Agents and police officers in the possession of panther and crocodile skins. Bangoura admitted to the facts, but underlined that in the incriminating circumstances, he had no gun nor baton, or colleague to prevent the suspect from climbing the toilet wall and disappearing. The prosecutor has requested 6 months of prison, including a 4-month suspended sentence.<sup>7</sup>

## LIBERIA

### **Beginning of April-Beginning of May 2017**

#### **Sapo National Park, Sinoe County, Liberia**

Two rangers killed. Four hurt. They were part of a patrol of 40 rangers on a surveillance mission in the Park.

They were victims of retaliation on the part of clandestine gold diggers, poachers, and tree-cutters. Sapo covers 13,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to elephants, pangolins, pygmy hippopotamuses and chimpanzees. At least 1000 squatters are there. The rangers were killed or hurt by machetes and archaic pistols. One month earlier, another ranger had been beaten to death in similar conditions. The director of the Forestry Development Authority has requested assistance from the army. His rangers are not armed.<sup>8</sup>



## MOZAMBIQUE

**Beginning of June 2017**

#### **Maputo International Airport, Mozambique**

Interrogation of a 44-year-old Chinese citizen, boarding a Maputo-Qatar flight. In a suitcase, under several cellphones, he had lion teeth and claws, as well as worked ivories.<sup>9</sup>



## NIGERIA

### **FAMILY AFFAIRS REPEATED OFFENSE**

**May 19, 2017**

#### **Yankari Game Reserve, State of Gombe, Nigeria**

Abdulumuni Hassan Shira was arrested by Reserve guards despite his claims to be under a protective charm that makes him invisible. The guards also nabbed his son, weapons and poaching gear.<sup>10</sup> See “On the Trail” n°7 p. 80-85, n°10 p. 56, n°12 p. 103, n°14 p. 84.

## REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**May 22, 2017**

#### **Djambala, Plateaux Department, Republic of Congo**

Seizure during two different incidences of African gray parrot feathers (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix II), 2 leopard skins, 2 elephant tails and the skull and the hand of a young gorilla (*Gorilla spp.* Appendix I). Arrest of Nazert Kinzele, Marien Gniorouba, and Bertrand Ngomene.<sup>11</sup>





## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**May 5-8, 2017**

### **Itombwe Reserve, Province of South-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Anselme Matombo, second in charge of the Reserve guards, died of his wounds. The convoy came from Mwenga. He fell into a trap. A French spokesman from the Wildlife Conservation Society was taken hostage for 3 days. A \$ 20,000 US ransom would have been paid. Hostage-takings are increasingly frequent around this Reserve and in this region suffering from elephant and gorilla poaching, rare earth and diamond mining and logging.<sup>12</sup>



## TANZANIA

**May 23, 2017**

### **Ruvuma Region, Tanzania**

The gamekeepers of the Ruvuma Elephant Project arrested a man with zebra meat, another with hippopotamus meat and seized 2 tusks found buried in the ground that are suspected to have been smuggled over the south border from Mozambique.<sup>13</sup>



## TOGO

### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**June 26, 2017**

### **Dapaong, Savannah Region, Togo**

Two brothers, Togolese smugglers, Kanfèngne and Ménobe Kamyabre, were arrested after being denounced to police in Dapaong, just as they were going to deliver in a hotel 4 tusks, 2 ratel skins (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III in Botswana), a civet skin (family Viverridae), 2 serval skins (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) and a jackal skin. They arrived onboard 2 motorcycles coming from Burkina Faso, the border to which is 35 km away. The tusks were hidden in a TV screen box and the skins in a backpack. The 2 brothers are good connoisseurs of the smuggling tracks between the 2 countries and selected the passing



points considered to be "safe" in Pogno, Djambendi and Cinkassé. They were supplied by a collector in Burkina Faso. The older brother is also a butcher in Lomé. He is specialized in donkey meat.<sup>14</sup>

## ZAMBIA

**June 15, 2017**

### **Itezhi-Tezhi District, Southern Province, Zambia**

Arrest of a police officer, Bradley Muswema, for the illegal possession of 2 elephant tusks, cut in 4 sections, and the skin of a serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II). The trophies were in the trunk of his car.<sup>15</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

**May 15, 2017**

### **Matobo National Park, Southern Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe**

At sunrise, a blue wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*) and 2 greater kudus (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) were shot and killed. Then followed a shootout between rangers and poachers. One of them was hurt and taken to the hospital. Three others escaped in a Mazda BT50. The fifth stayed. He is helping the police in the arrest of his 3 accomplices.<sup>16</sup>

### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**May 31, 2017**

### **Chirisa Safaris, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe**

The director of a primary school in Chirisa, 46 years old, and his son, 19, had gone poaching in the neighboring Chirisa Safaris hunting reserve. Lions, Baboons, jackals, elephants, leopards, antelopes, and birds, the teacher and his son had a wide array of choices. They were well equipped: an AK47, a high-caliber firearm, the proper ammunition, a hatchet, a knife, a screwdriver and several kilos of food and cooking tools. Arrested by gamekeepers, Stanley Masukuma and his son were turned over to the police.<sup>17</sup>

## AMERICA

## ARGENTINA

**April 12, 2017**

### **Rio Gallegos, Santa Cruz Province, Argentina**

Weekend police inspection:

- Seizure of common rhea meat (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II), a 22-caliber firearm in a Ford Ecosport pick-up, with 4 people inside, including a minor.
- Seizure of 3 dead animals, including a guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), 2 common rheas (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II), along with a 22-caliber firearm in the trunk of a Dacia Sandero Stepway. The driver and 2 passengers were interrogated.<sup>18</sup>

**May 4, 2017**

**San Fernando, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina**

Search of the house of horrors. Joint operation led by the Minister for agriculture, the Wildlife Department and the Protected Areas' Administration.

Seizure of 50 bird: yellow-billed cardinals (*Paroaria capitata*, Appendix II), diademed tanagers (*Stephanophorus diadematus*), cardinals (genus *Cardinalis*), hooded siskins (*Carduelis magellanica*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), passerines (genus *Sicalis*), blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*). All were in pitiful state. Seizure of several animals stuffed after poaching: 3 marsh deer heads (*Blastocerus dichotomus*, Appendix I), a long-tailed otter (*Lontra longicaudis*, Appendix I), a Geoffroy's cat (*Leopardus geoffroyi*, Appendix I), a caiman (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II), falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), a wild Asiatic buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*), a cocoi heron (*Ardea cocoi*), snakes, a roseate spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*), a golden-billed saltator (*Saltator aurantiirostris*), owls, saurians, a vulture turkey (*Cathartes aura*), a capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and an anteater.<sup>19</sup>



**BRAZIL  
REPEATED OFFENSE**



**April 17, 2017**

**Londrina, State of Parana, Brazil**

Seizure of a blind Blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 7 turtles, 4 white throated capuchins (2 living, 2 dead) (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II), 7 baby red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II) and 4 iguanas, at a man's house. He was selling them from home. He had already been arrested in January with 5 monkeys in Sao Paulo.<sup>20</sup>

**April 20, 2017**

**Salinas, Bahia Stae, Brazil**

Seizure of 2 young deer raised as pets, 2 parrots (*Psittacidae* spp, Appendix I or II), and 60 liters of Chinese pesticides that had been brought into Brazil secretly, through Paraguay.<sup>21</sup>



**GANG**

**May 16, 2017**

**States of Minas Gerais and Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Joint operation between the police of 2 States. They were being watching carefully. The police dismantled an international trafficking network that dealt in contraband snakes, iguanas, turtles, and birds. 44 animals were seized at a courier company, at the house of the gang leader and at the house of an accomplice. The animals included 23 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II), 14 young iguanas, 6 d'Orbigny's sliders (*Trachemys dorbigni*), and a parrot (*Psittacidae* spp. Appendix I or II).<sup>22</sup>

**May 18, 2017**

**Arapiraca, Alagoas, Brazil**

Seizure of birds, 2 South American yellow-footed turtles (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II) and a firearm at people's homes or at markets. The birds that were in good health were freed, and the others were transferred to CETAS, a specialized center in Maceió, the State capital. They were saffron finches, red-cowled cardinals, chingolo sparrows, and brisson bishops.<sup>23</sup>

**NOAH ARK OPERATION**

**June 1 and 6, 2017**

**Ananindeua and Belém, State of Para, Brazil**

- Seizure of 20 alive animals, among them a golden conure (*Guaruba guarouba*, Annexe I) and 2 parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) and caiman meat. Three suspects are being questioned. The meat was burnt.

- Seizure of 7 living animals, among them 3 exotic and invasive snakes and one Amazon river dolphin skeleton (*Inia geoffrensis*, Appendix II). They were all at the back of a room in a flat.<sup>24</sup>



*Guaruba guarouba*



**June 8, 2017**

**Palmas, State of Tocantins, Brazil**

Six birds, 5 cages and one agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III) were seized. The owner said the birds belong to a friend on holidays and the agouti has been ran over by a car. "I decided to bring him back home, but my dog killed him". Fine of 3500 real (\$ 1070 US).<sup>25</sup>



**June 15, 2017**

**Taiobeiras, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil**

Eighteen birds were seized, and among them there was a golden-crowned conure (*Aratinga aurea*, Appendix II), a parrot (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) and 15 cages. A man of 59 years old is under examination.<sup>26</sup>



**June 25, 2017**

**Moreira Salles, State of Parana, Brazil**

Four kg of collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) meat was seized and also 20 kg of capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) meat, and 6 firearms and ammunitions from an individual. The suspect was not there, but the mother was there, she had malaise during the raid.<sup>27</sup>

**CANADA**

**April 19, 2017**

**Edmundston, New Brunswick, Canada**

Sentencing to 7 days in prison and a fine of \$ 18,000 CA (\$ 13,250 US) for illegal hunting, possession of illegal trophies and illegal sale of hunting permits. Daniel Dyer is a poacher of bears and moose. He has connections with another terror to large mammals in North America, the ex-singer Ted Nugent (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 40, n°9 p.55.)<sup>28</sup>



**COLOMBIA**

**OPERATION HOLY WEEK**

**April 18, 2017**

**State of Antioquia, Colombia**

Seizure of 500 animals, 603 m3 of wood, 20.000 ornamental plants (against 7000 in 2016) and 6122 kg of fish.

Examples: in Corpourabá, 35 blue crabs (*Callinectes sapidus*), 20 turtles belonging to the *Trachemys callirostris* species and 10 parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and in Medellin, 3 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) and 2 spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II).<sup>29</sup>

**Antioquia Department, Colombia**

**May 24, 2017**

Under the motto "Let them live free and in peace!", environmental police under the direction of Alexandra Arenas, saved 32 animals from captivity including macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), squirrels, a South American mussurana (*Clelia clelia*, Appendix II), a woolly monkey (*Lagothrix* spp., Appendix II) and a falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II).<sup>30</sup>



*Clelia clelia*



The Mussurana is a South American carnivorous. It moves at dusk and during the night. Its favorite prey is the poisonous bothrops or fer-de-lance snake. He uses his camouflage to go unnoticed under the carpets of leaves and in the bushes. Its average length is from 2.50 m to 2.70 m.

**May 26, 2017**

**Huila Department, Colombia**

Seizure by police of a white-lipped mud turtle (*Kinosternon leucostomum*), a wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), a yellow-fronted amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) and a kinkajou (*Potos flavus*, Appendix III in Honduras).<sup>31</sup>



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**April 20, 2017**

### **Agate, Elbert County, Colorado, USA**

Eleven venerable representatives of endangered species finished off for reasons of climate safety. Three lions, 3 tigers, and 5 bears were spending peaceful days in the Lions Gate Sanctuary, to the south of Denver, except that the site was subject to regular flooding and their safety was not guaranteed.

The two site managers filed a request to relocate the refuge. The Elbert County administrators considered the potential protests from local residents, stressing the lack of an emergency plan in case one or several of the animals escaped, and categorically refused their request.

The managers of the Lion's Gate Sanctuary said that they had no other choice but to put down the 11 animals, who were too old and handicapped for a long voyage. That is why the offer from the Keenesburg Refuge, 108 km from Agate, was refused. Keenesburg is home to 450 animals.

Joan Laub and Peter Winney founders and operators of the Lion's Gate Sanctuary would like to transfer the 11 refugees to an 18-ha terrain, near Elizabeth, 89 km from Agate. The flooding is an example of the external aggressions to which captive wild animals in zoos or shelters are exposed.<sup>32</sup>



**April 21, 2017**

### **Tacoma, State of Washington, United States**

Court appearance of Tim Davis, 55, for between May 2006 and June 2015 having bought and sold at least on 74 occasions ivory from sperm whales, walruses, and elephants.

He put his offers to buy and sell on Etsy, eBay, and Craigslist.

Between 2012 and 2015, he sold a collection of sperm whale teeth for \$ 2,000 US and bought 4 walrus tusks from an undercover agent from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Davis pled guilty.<sup>33</sup>



## GUATEMALA

**May 15, 2017**

### **Sumpango, Sacatepéquez Department, Guatemala**

Seizure by police and DIPRONA (Division de Protección a la Naturaleza) of 21 pairs of deer antlers, antelope and moose trophies and a stuffed lynx (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II).<sup>34</sup>

## MEXICO

**April 16, 2017**

### **Pachuca de Soto, State of Hidalgo, Mexico**

Seizure at an individual's house of 9 wild animals including a Deppe's squirrel (*Sciurus deppei*, Appendix III in Costa Rica) and a golden pheasant (*Chrysolophus pictus*).<sup>35</sup>



**April 22, 2017**

### **Mexico, Mexico**

Seizure on the La Morelos market place of 42 turtles including common snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III in the United States of America), 6 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 5 African large-grain lizards (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II), an imbricate alligator lizard (*Barisia imbricata*), 6 vipers, 25 thorny dragons (*Moloch horridus*), 2 white-fronted amazons (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), 152 plateau tiger salamanders (*Ambystoma velasci*), 7 tarantulas including Mexican fireleg tarantulas (*Brachypelma boehmei*, Appendix II) and Mexican flameknee tarantulas (*Brachypelma auratum*, Appendix II), an emperor scorpion (*Pandinus imperator*, Appendix II), 4 geckos, 25 ball pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) and carpet pythons (*Morelia spilota*, Appendix II), 13 rattlesnakes (genus *Crotalus*), a veiled chameleon (*Chamaeleo calytratus*, Appendix II), a Gaboon viper (*Bitis gabonica*) and 4 frogs. 318 animals in all. Three arrests.<sup>36</sup>

## **OPERATION DIA DA CAÇA (HUNTING DAY)**

**May 5, 2017**

### **States of Pernambuco, Parana, Santa Catarina and Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Dia da Caça is an outcome. 170 illegal hunting scenes posted on social networks were analysed by the IBAMA agents. Weapons, hunting equipment, computers and cell phones, feathers, mammal skins in majority agoutis, opossums and pacas were seized at the end of searches carried out in the towns of Arcoverde, Campo Largo, Joinville, Cruzeiro and Lorena.<sup>37</sup>

## OPERATION FRONTERA

May 30, 2017

State of Campeche, Chiapas, Quintana Roo, Tabasco and Yucatán, Mexico

-35 roadblocks, 39 forest missions, 23 surprise inspections of logyards and wood-processing workshops, 4 inspections by UMA- Unit for wildlife management and conservation.

-Seizure of 2 tons of charcoal, 2500 m<sup>3</sup> of tropical wood such as mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*, Appendix II), Nicaraguan Rosewood (*Dalbergia retusa*, Appendix II), cedarwood (*Cedrela odorata*, Appendix III in 5 Latin American countries) and leadwood (*Laguncularia racemosa*).

-Seizure of 27 turtles, a crocodile, a parrot and 6 parakeets, 30 kg of armadillo meat, crocodile meat, jaguar skins and puma skins and deer antlers.

The operation mobilized for 5 days 70 inspectors from the PROFEPA and 210 environmental police officers.<sup>38</sup>

## PARAGUAY

May 25, 2017

Paraguay

Bush meat for sale by the side of the road linking San Ignacio (Neembucu Department) and Pilar (Misiones Department).

Seizure by the SEAM (Secretaría de Ambiente) of caiman (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II), armadillos (family Dasypodidae), marsh deer (*Blastocerus dichotomus*, Appendix I) offals.

To avoid risks of infection, the meat was buried.<sup>39</sup>



*Blastocerus dichotomus*

June 23, 2017

Fernando de la Mora, Central Department, Paraguay

Seizure of a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), of a gray brocket (*Mazama gouazoubira*) skin, of marsh deers' (*Blastocerus dichotomus*, Appendix I) antlers, of 4 shell of armadillos and 4 skulls of caimans (*Caiman yacare*, Appendix II).<sup>40</sup>

*Mazama  
gouazoubira*



June 28, 2017

Nanawa, Presidente Hayes Department, Paraguay

Seizure of an Argentine tortoise (*Chelonoidis chilensis*, Appendix II), a southern tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*) and of a southern three-banded armadillo (*Tolypeutes matacus*). They have been spotted by the rescue team after a heavy flooding period.<sup>41</sup>



## PERU

May 14 and 17, 2017

Juliaca, Province of San Román and Puno, Province of Puno, Peru

Seizure on the market places of 4 screaming hairy armadillos (*Chaetophractus nationi*), 2 Andean condors (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I), an Andean wolf (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II), all alive, an Andean wolf skin, 27 Darwin's Rhea feathers (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I), condor and rhea wings, plains viscacha tails (*Lagostomus maximus*), set up butterflies, insects and ants. All the animals or animal parts come from poaching in Peru and Bolivia.

Elena Saravina was convicted for having killed 23 wild animals and was sentenced to 3 years prison time and 5000 Sol (\$ 1500 US) in fine.<sup>42</sup>



May 25, 2017

José Leonardo Ortiz, Lambayeque Department, Peru

Seizure inside the Miguel Ángel Buonarroti highschool of 6 South American yellow-footed turtles (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II) and 16 birds including a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) and a hawk. They were shipped to the Jayanca and Lima zoo. The director claims locals give him animals to care for because the school has an outdoor park.<sup>43</sup>



**June 15, 2017**

**Cuzco, Cuzco Province, Peru**

Four parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), one red-  
lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix  
II), a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II),  
deer skins, fox and boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*,  
Appendix II) skins and a tortoise shell were seized.<sup>44</sup>

**ASIA**

**CHINA**

**Beginning of April 2017**

**Zhongshan Port, Guangdong Province, China**

During customs inspection, several passengers  
from Hong Kong were intercepted with endangered  
species hidden in their bags. Sea cucumbers,  
seahorses, and a little more than a kilogram of  
pangolin scales were confiscated.

The traffickers had arrived in Hong Kong by plane,  
and then taken a boat to Zhongshan.<sup>45</sup>

**GANG**

**April 11, 2017**

**Shenzhen Bay Control Point, Shenzhen,  
Guangdong Province, China**

**Yuen Long and Fanling, Hong Kong Special  
Administrative Region, China**

Following a surveillance operation that lasted 2  
weeks, the "Syndicate Crimes Investigation Bureau"  
of Hong Kong dismantled a trafficking gang with  
multiple activities: smuggling of alcohol, electronic  
equipment and endangered species. The first  
seizure took place at the Shenzhen Bay control  
point aboard 2 vans heading toward continental  
China, carrying swallow nests and bottles of red  
wine, for an estimated worth of \$ 800,000 HK (about  
\$ 103,000 US). Four men were arrested.

After this first step, the police officers conducted  
a raid in a warehouse in the logistics zone of Yuen  
Long, where they arrested 5 people and found  
3 additional vans, each one containing multiple  
cartons of wine bottles and bags of swallow nests.  
Working their way up the network, the police then  
searched a warehouse in Fanling, used by the group  
as a place of storage and packaging. Another even  
larger stock of swallow nests, shark fins, red wine,  
automobile parts and cellphone screens was taken,  
and an accomplice was arrested.

In total, 9 men and 2 women are now behind bars.



Results of the operation included 235 kg of swallow  
nests, 64 kg of shark fins, 400 bottles of red wine,  
and 41,000 cellphone screens, all totaling to an  
estimated market worth of \$ 30 million HK (about  
\$ 3,860,000 US). Six vehicles were added to the  
takings. The investigations continue and other  
arrests are possible.<sup>46</sup>

**May 2017**

**Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China**

The customs officers eyed the 2  
packages very suspiciously. The  
x-ray images showed 2 crescent-  
shaped objects and some blurred  
shapes resembling carpets. Inside,  
there were 2 ivory sculptures and  
2 bear pelts. The shipper's home  
was in Japan. The recipient was  
sentenced to one year on probation  
and a one-year suspended prison  
sentence.<sup>47</sup>



**May 17, 2017**

**Guangxi Autonomous Region,  
China**

At his home, the police confiscated  
6 toucans (*Ramphastidae* family),  
4 otters (*Lutrinae* spp. Appendix I  
or II) and 20 boa constrictors (*Boa  
Constrictor*, Appendix II). He was sentenced to 5  
years in prison for selling wild animals. The man,  
named Wei, was also sentenced to a fine of 20,000  
yuan, the equivalent of \$ 4000 US.<sup>48</sup>



**May 18, 2017**

**Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture,  
Yunnan Province, China**

Dismantlement of an Internet network selling live  
animals or their parts.<sup>49</sup>



**June 14, 2017**

**Tianjin Binhai International Airport, China**

A parcel coming from abroad was intercepted,  
it contained fish gelatin, deer tongues, dried sea  
cucumbers, deer antlers with velvet. Total weight  
29.5 kg, total value 100,000 yuan (\$ 14,600 US).<sup>50</sup>



## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**March-May 2017**

### **Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**

Federal law n°22 has been in effect since the beginning of the 2017. It forbids individuals from possessing animals that are hazardous to public order or that could transmit infectious diseases to people or domestic animals. In the last 3 months, 14 animals, including lions, snakes and parrots, have been taken from private residences and farms. The offenders risk a fine of \$ 27,215 US.<sup>51</sup>

**June 2017**

### **Elebriddi Wildlife Park, Central Region of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates**

The Emirate, under the authority of his highness Mohammed Al Qasimi, wishes in a close future to open the largest wildlife park outside the African continent. It will cover 14 km<sup>2</sup> naturally planted Acacias and Avicennas. For such, 288 animals have been imported from South Africa, 15 giraffes (*Giraffa* spp.), 5 rhinos, 16 gemsboks (*Oryx gazelle*, Appendix I), 12 common elands (*Taurotragus oryx*), 8 black wildebeests (*Connochaetes gnou*), 24 blue wildebeests (*Connochaetes taurinus*), 36 impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*) and hundreds of antelopes. Arrangements for the animals and accommodation and other leisure amenities for the public are under construction. The first new comers are presently acclimating to their new home. The arid climate does not spontaneously meet all the rhinos' needs. A few months ago, the Emirate opened to the public the Al Hefaiyah conservation zone in the Hahhar Mountains. Covering 12 km<sup>2</sup> this protected zone under surveillance is attempting to aggregate and consolidate a sustainable population of Arabian leopards (*Panthera pardus nimr*, Appendix I).<sup>52</sup>

## INDIA

**April 18, 2017**

### **Dehradun, State of Uttarakhand, India**

Raghubir was transporting 9 leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 2 bear gall bladders (*Ursus* spp. Appendix I or II) and a deer antler. An individual residing in Chamoli had asked him to deliver the goods to Dehradun. An intervention team rushed to Chamoli as quickly as possible to try and trap the provider.<sup>54</sup>



**April 21, 2017**

### **Silaria, Nagaur District, State of Rajasthan, India**

A poacher was killed and 8 police officers were hurt when a fight broke out in the hamlet of Silaria, between the inhabitants and the police. Pusa Ram was the object of an arrest warrant for poaching. According to Paris Deshmukh, police commissariat in Nagaur, when a team of police officers arrived that night to capture Pusa Ram, members of his tribe, the Banbaagri, attacked them with wooden batons. The police officers



replied by firing shots in the air, but the assailants continued to hit them. In firing to defend himself, a police officer injured Pusa Ram in the thigh, and he died a little while afterwards of a hemorrhage. The independent member of parliament, Hanuman Beniwal, questioned the Rajasthan Minister of the Interior about this affair during a series of questions to the government at the State parliament. He was astonished that the police officers had used their arms against the aggressors equipped with bats, and that a man had been killed, while the police were only slightly hurt. The MP asked that compensation be awarded to the victim's family, which includes ten children, and that they be rehabilitated. Two complaints were registered, one for violence against police and the other for the death of Pusa Ram.

The nomadic tribe of Banbaagris has a reputation for poaching wildlife in the semi-desert regions of Rajasthan. They hunt birds and small animals to eat, and provide various animal skins to leather makers.<sup>55</sup>

### **India-China**

Contraband of wild animals, dead or alive, is increasing between India and China. The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the military unit that controls the border with Nepal and Bhutan, 2450 km North of India, notes that contraband is skyrocketing.

The live ones are often tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*), clear water or land turtles, peacocks (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), hares, mongooses (*Herpestes edwardsi* Appendix III in Pakistan), sand boas (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II), common bulbuls (*Pycnonotus barbatus*).

Animal parts are most often rhino horns, skulls and deer antlers (*Cervus elaphus*), leopard skins and paws (*Panthera pardus* Appendix I), Indian muntjac skins (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and elephant trunks (*Elephas maximus* Appendix I). Between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2017 value of fauna and flora seizures amounts to 1.21 billion rupee (18.7 million US\$) according to the SSB and 53 smugglers were stopped. Most of the seizures were done in Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In 2010, a full year, wildlife seizures were worth 10.6 million rupee (240,000 US\$) according to the SSB and 2 smugglers were arrested. A high rank official of the Tamil Nadu forest department, in the South of India, regrets lack of funding for national intelligence that according to him are decisive in detecting crimes and misdemeanours and get reliable information regarding wild animal killings. Shekhar Kumar Niraj also regrets lenience in convictions of smugglers. "The current conviction rate is between 2.5 and 3 per cent. It is a very poor rate. If it increases, the crime will automatically go down."

On beginning of June, the SSB has stopped 2 individuals in possession of a gecko tokay (*Gekko gecko*) and a rhino horn. They were going to cross the border to Bhutan on foot.<sup>53</sup>

**April 23, 2017  
Bijnor, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

The State's new government wants to put a damper on poaching and illegal logging in Bijnor District. On its request, a detailed list of 12 poachers and 17 forest gangs was provided by local authorities. Underground loggers target in priority catechu acacias (*Senigalia catechu*) to extract the catechu entering in the making of paan, a form of chewing gum with digestive properties. Shala trees (*Shorea robusta*) and North Indian Rosewood trees (*Dalbergia sissoo*) are also illegally cut down in the Amangarth tiger Reserve and the Rajpur elephant Reserve. "A joint operation, including police and forest department, will be launched soon to nab the mafias".<sup>56</sup>



## FAMILY AFFAIRS

**Sunday April 30 and Monday May 1, 2017**

**Meerut District, Uttar Pradesh and Indira-Gandhi International Airport of Delhi, India**

-Seizure at the homes of Devendra Kumar Bishnoi, 71 years old, a retired colonel, and of his son Prashant Bishnoi, of a leopard skin, feline fangs, blackbuck antelope trophies (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan), Sambar deer (*Cervus unicolor*), horns, deer antlers and skulls, 117 kg of frozen meat, a knife with an ivory handle, a hundred illegally imported firearms and 200,000 cartridges. Prashant, the son, is a sharpshooter who always does well in national firing competitions. In 2016, he participated in the scheduled elimination of 500 Nilgai antelopes (*Boselapahs tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the State of Bihar. He is on the run.

-The day after this stunning seizure of ammunition and arms, and related to it, 3 Indian citizens and a Slovenian, Boris Sobolic Mikolic, were intercepted at the Delhi airport getting off a Turkish Airlines flight coming from Ljubljana, via Istanbul. In addition to one million rupee in cash (\$ 15,000 US), the 4 men were transported 25 firearms for a total worth of 4.5 million rupee (\$ 67,000 US). The trio had used the pretense of being professional sharpshooters to bring the weapons into India, but the declared number of arms and their value was unclear. The 3 men are being kept in custody for 2 weeks.<sup>57</sup>



**Beginning of May 2017  
Between Guptakashi and Kalimath, Rudraprayag District, State of Uttarakhand, India**

Seizure of 4 leopard skins and of 2 Himalayan black bear gall bladders (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). Chandru Lal and Virender Lal say that they found the loot "in a cave." The investigation is looking for a more believable explanation. Chandru, 72 years old, is a shepherd. He is known for taking his troop of sheep graze in to the Kedaranth wildlife sanctuary. He took advantage of his stays there to poach, using traps. Forest services started tracking Lal a couple of months ago after they seized a leopard skin and a leopard cat skin (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I), and following the confessions of a trafficker. A network of poachers, butchers and tanners works in the villages around the sanctuary.<sup>58</sup>



**May 7, 2017**

**Sirsi, Uttara Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India**

Abdul Karim and Abdul Majid were transporting antlers and deer cut into quarters. Four stooges live in the same village, Andigi, and are on the run. Mr. Veeresh, an animal protection activist, notes that in the past year, the poaching of blackbuck antelopes (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and in Pakistan), spotted axis deer (*Axis axis*) and Sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) has been on the rise.<sup>59</sup>

**May 8, 2017**

**State of Jharkhand, India**

Protest against the tribal festival Sendra also called Bishu Shikar during which men and women armed with arrows and other traditional tools invade the Dalma wildlife sanctuary and harass petcocks and deers. See "On the Trail" n°5 p. 123.<sup>60</sup>



Dalma Forest



## INDONESIA

**April 4, 2017**

**Pejaten, South Jakarta, Indonesia**

**Instagram/ Instafauna**

The police raided the house of a business man and seized 3 babies: a clouded panther (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I), a sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) and an orangutan (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I) purchased respectively for 60 million rupee (\$ 4500 US), 15 million rupee (\$ 1100 US) and 25 million rupee (\$ 1800 US).

The raid took place in January. For the needs of the investigation, it was not revealed until April. The vendors have not yet been identified.<sup>61</sup>

**April 28, 2017**

**Lahat Kabupaten, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia**

A macabre seizure of 7 Sumatran serow heads (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I), a Bengal Leopard Cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), the skull of a great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*, Appendix I), an African golden cat (*Profelis aurata*, Appendix II), 3 Indian muntjac skins (*Muntiacus muntjak*), and 8 bones or bone fragments from a Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*, Appendix I), and a Sumatran tiger.

He sold and bought things on Facebook. The operation was carried out by the Lahat police, with support from Animals Indonesia and from the Center for Orangutan Protection (COP).

*Capricornis sumatraensis*, see "On the Trail" n°11 p.89, n°14 p. 43 and 101.<sup>62</sup>

**May 10, 2017**

**Bumi Emas, Bengkayan Kabupaten, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Seizure in a store room of a slow loris (*nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), a Bengal leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), a Javan hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus bartelsi*, Appendix II), a Wallace's hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus nanus*, Appendix II), and a Crested hawk eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II), 31 Crested hawk-eagle feathers and a dead baby Crested hawk eagle. The live animals were tied up in cardboard boxes. They were ready to be delivered. They were all stressed. One eagle had an injured leg due to the bonds that tied it up.

The network had been active for several months. He sold or offered to buy birds and lorises on Facebook. The principle suspect, Herry Saputra, had already been interrogated by the police in February. Three eagles were confiscated at that time. Saputra had received a warning and an order to stop all wildlife trafficking.<sup>63</sup>



On the Trail #17. Robin des Bois/Robin Hood

## NEPAL

**May 22, 2017**

**Chitwan National Park, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Destruction by fire of 357 rhinoceros horns, 67 tiger skins (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 418 fragments of leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), stuffed animals, python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II), red pandas (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I), tiger claws, bear gall bladders, musk deer preputial glands (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I or II), leopard bones, elephant tails, tortoise and pangolin scales, dried seahorses, white panther skins (*Panthera uncia*, Appendix I) - 4000 skins in all.

An auto-da-fé of seized animal parts of such dimension has not taken place in 20 years. Firewood, ghee (clarified butter) and kerosene were used to fuel the fire.

The 1100 kg of ivory was not burned because Nepal does not have an incinerator capable of reaching 900 °C. Ten rhino horns and 5 tiger skins were kept. They will be used for investigations or scientific research.<sup>64</sup>

## GANG

**May 23, 2017**

**Chabahil and Kalanki, Katmandu District, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Dismantling of a gang, 5 Nepalese and an Indian national, in the Chabahil and Kalanki quarters, 7th and 14th neighborhoods of Katmandu. They had a tiger skin and 44 kg of pangolin scales.<sup>65</sup>



## THAILAND

**June 30, 2017**

**Bangkok, Thailand**

The remains that were being sold on Facebook are all that is left of a Leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), a rhinoceros hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*, Appendix II), a helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I), an Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) and a bear (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II) poached in the Bala Hala National Park.

Jenarong Sainark, 27 years old, his wife 22 years old and Opas Pumpuay were caught at home on Ngamwongwan road. The pseudo to sell under was "Yennom".<sup>66</sup>





## VIET NAM

**April 20, 2017**

### **Cat Tien National Park, Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam**

A Park ranger patrol in Cat Tien National Park encountered a group of 4 hunters and 3 dogs. During the attempted arrest, ranger Vinh was stabbed. Doctors consider his current medical state to be critical.<sup>67</sup>



**May 13, 2017**

### **Cau Giay District, Hanoi Province, Viet Nam**

Two men were arrested as they were getting off a bus from Ha Tinh to Hanoi. They were transporting 3 pangolins (*Manis javanica*, Appendix I) and a two-banded monitor lizard (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II) that had been ordered from Laos. The animals were in bad condition, but were saved from the kitchen knives. They were destined to be served at a banquet among friends.<sup>68</sup>

**May 22, 2017**

### **Moc Chau District, Son La Province, Viet Nam**

Seizure of a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and a stump tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) in a karaoke bar.<sup>69</sup>

**End of June 2017**

### **Vinh Hai, Province of Ninh Thuan, Viet Nam**

Liberation of a crested serpent-eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II) and a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) held captive in an "ecotourism center".<sup>70</sup>

## EUROPE

## FRANCE

**June 19, 2017**

### **Caen, Calvados Department, France**

Sentenced to a fine of € 10,000 (\$ 11,400 US), including € 5,000 in suspended fine, for the possession and unauthorized sale of non-domestic and endangered species. With her taxidermist husband, now deceased, the 75-year-old woman had an internationally famous collection of about 4,000 stuffed animals, including jaguars (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), lynx



(*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II), scarlet ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*, Appendix II), cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I), wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I or II), anteaters (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*, Appendix II), red pandas (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I), and 1285 hummingbirds (*Trochilidae* spp., Appendix I or II). The auctioned sale of 1405 specimens, in April 2013, was cancelled. Government services and the ONCFS had noticed that certain animals lacked documents of origin. Forty of them were permanently seized.<sup>71</sup>

## NETHERLANDS

**May 2, 2017**

### **Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport, Province of North Holland, the Netherlands**

The Russian passenger is in transit. He's coming from Brazil going home to Russia. Inside his backpack customs found 16 pit viper snakes (*Bothrops asper*), 11 lizards, 16 frogs including 10 venomous all alive and packed in plastic boxes. The man was taken into custody. In waiting for exact identification of the species, he is at first indicted for cruelty to animals.<sup>72</sup>



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## UNITED KINGDOM

**April 19, 2017**

### **London, England, United Kingdom**

Sasko Bezovski was sentenced to a fine of £ 4000 (\$ 5000 US) for having tried to sell the rostrum of a common sawfish (*Pristis pristis*, Appendix I), the shell of a Greek tortoise (*Testudo graeca* Annex II) and the skull of a crocodile (*Crocodylus* spp., Appendix I or II). None of the parts of these animals listed by CITES were accompanied by permits. The vendor must also pay £ 85 (\$ 105 US) in court costs and £ 170 (\$ 210 US) in taxes.<sup>73</sup>



# Donkeys

“On the Trail» detected as early as January 2016 a worldwide flood of donkey skins traffic. The sinister trend continues. It should be noted that in South Africa, farmed tiger skins have been found in a stock of donkey skins. The disappearance of domestic donkeys seems to be under way along with an agrarian revolution with numerous and non anticipated consequences in Africa, Asia and South America.

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

### SOUTH AFRICA

May 10, 2017

**Benoni District, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Anatic Trading exported 12,776 donkey skins between July and December 2016. Durban was the export port. The exports are illegal. These skins were of unknown origin. The 3 slaughterhouses that are authorized to slaughter horses in South Africa deny any responsibility in this traffic. “The donkey skins are from livestock stolen from unknown individuals,” says a spokesperson for the general prosecutor after the tax department finished a long inquiry into the Benoni donkey affair (see “On the Trail” n°16, p. 109).<sup>1</sup>

May 2017

**Burgersfort, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Warning: donkey thefts! The spokesperson for the provincial police has put out a general warning regarding the large number of donkeys stolen and killed around Burgersfort. Owners are being told to be particularly vigilant.<sup>2</sup>

Fin mai 2017

**Putfontein, Province of Gauteng, Benoni District, South Africa**



Seizure of 1000 donkey skins and 7 tiger skins. The suspects ran when sworn in agents from the SPCA entered the premises.<sup>3</sup>

June 17, 2017

**Kgabalatsane, North-West Province, South Africa**

When Thembisile Baloyi woke up that Saturday morning she realized 4 donkeys had disappeared. With the help of a few she followed the hoofprints that led right to the door's neighbour whose principal and illegal occupation is to sell meat without possessing any qualification as a butcher. “The man wasn't there”, explains the grieving gogo [in Zulu and Xhosa languages, a gogo is a grand mother]. “When we went inside, we found the donkeys had already been chopped into pieces.” The SPCA spokesman said it was not the first time such an incident had occurred. Now many of those living in the north of town are wondering if they have eaten donkey instead of beef.<sup>4</sup>



### BOTSWANA

June 28, 2017

**Botswana**

After Niger, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Gambia, Botswana is the 6<sup>th</sup> African country to suspend donkey skin and other donkey by-products exports. The Minister of Agricultural Development and Food Security, Geoffrey Pheko denounces “an indiscriminate and cruel massacre of donkeys whose skins are exported towards the lucrative Asian markets”. He asked farmers to be extremely vigilant and report any donkey thefts to local authorities (See “On the Trail» n°16 p. 110-111).<sup>5</sup>



## EGYPT

**May 17, 2017**

**Berket El Sabaa, Governorate of Menufeya, Egypt**



On the side of the road, near the ambulance parking lot. The municipal council plans to take all the necessary precautions in burying the carcasses, to avoid any risk for the population. According to the Egyptian press, sexual stimulants made in China from donkey gelatin are very popular in Gulf countries. According to statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture, there were 2.5 million donkeys in the country in 2015.<sup>6</sup>

## ETHIOPIA

**April 19, 2017**

**Ethiopia**

The Chinese community in Ethiopia is very interested in the donkey livestock in the country. Around 7 million individuals. Chinese business men wish to open 2 slaughterhouses, each one having a capacity of 200 donkeys per day. The slaughterhouse in Debre Zeit, near Addis Abeba, has suspended its activities, following protests from residents.

The Sino-Ethiopian chamber of commerce plans to file a lawsuit against the government's decision to ban the domestic market of skins or other donkey parts.<sup>7</sup>

## KENYA

**April 13, 2017**

**Mwingi, Kitui County, Kenya**

Skinned, emasculated, dozens of donkeys are victim to the new madness. The mystery dwells in the use of genital parts.

Local residents are afraid that their donkeys will be sold to them as meat at the butcher shop, without their knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

**May 8, 2017**

**Limuru, Kiambu County, Central Province, Kenya**

Police raid at the heart of the forest. Discovery of an underground slaughterhouse and 30 men armed with knives and machetes relentlessly butchering at least 35 donkeys. Only 2 arrests. The others started running. The meat was burned the next day. The donkey skins are exported to Asia, the meat is sold to restaurants and cafeterias. The market is

booming at an incredible rate. Donkey meat is sold under other names.

The Kenyan Veterinarian Association (KVA) call for an inspection of all accredited slaughterhouses in the country. The KVA names in first rank the donkey slaughterhouse of Navaisha where in the courtyard the dead and dying donkeys are all piled together. An order to interrupt activity has come through. The donkey slaughterhouse of Nakuru also causes the veterinarians' indignation.<sup>9</sup>

Donkeys in Kenya, cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.109.



## MALI

**June 2017**

**Yorosso Circle, Sikasso Region, Mali. Border to Burkina Faso**

Donkey thefts are multiplying in eastern Mali. The bodies are found in the bush. The skins cross over to Burkina Faso and would have been sent off to China despite the ban.<sup>10</sup>

## UGANDA AND KENYA

**May 3, 2017**

**Districts of Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Abim, Kotido and Kaabong, Northern Region, Uganda and Turkana County, Kenya**

The hustlers abandon bovines, goats, sheep, camels and rush on the donkeys. The Chinese charlatanism has contaminated northern Uganda. The donkeys in the area are sucked in by the new slaughterhouse just opened in Turkana County in eastern Kenya. Around this establishment run by Chinese, worry is heavy. "There a lot of donkeys are killed every day and this is a threat to our nomadic way of life. The donkey is our only means of transport".<sup>11</sup>

## TANZANIA

**May 21, 2017**

**Tanzania**

Charles Tizeba, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fish, has decided to ban the slaughtering of donkeys starting this July. The government wants to protect an animal that helps more than 560,000 people, notably women in the rural regions.<sup>12</sup>



## AMERICA

Donkeys in South America, cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p. 112.

### PERU

**April 7, 2017**

**Lancones, Sullana Province, Piura Region, Peru**

The inhabitants of a village found 2 dead donkeys. They had been killed and skinned on private property.<sup>13</sup>

### SAINT-KITTS-AND-NEVIS

**May 2017**

**Saint-Kitts-and-Nevis**

For unknown reasons a dozen donkey carcasses lay in a sort of dump near the Bath village and near the sea. Dogs flood in. The Island would be faced with a donkey over population who in their roaming damage agriculture and tourism. Claiming to have run out of solutions, the government will surely find one provided by the Chinese industrials.<sup>14</sup>



## ASIA

### PAKISTAN

**End of April 2017**

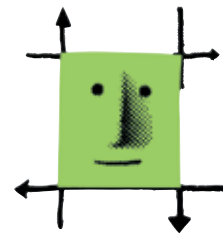
**Sind and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces, Pakistan**

Seizure of 4736 donkey skins in 592 bags. Arrest of 7 people, including 1 Chinese and 6 Pakistanis.

The police believe that donkey skin trafficking attracts all sorts of criminals in search of financial gain. The value of the seized stock is estimated at 118 million rupee (\$1,825,000 US). Before being skinned, the donkeys are poisoned. Over and above religious practices, consuming the meat would be dangerous to health.

The government of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is trying to put an end to the anarchy of the trade by instituting a legal trade within the framework of CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor). Nearly 10,000 skins were exported in 2011, nearly 100,000 in 2015.<sup>15</sup>

**ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL**



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## Main Sources

Sources are available on request by email to [contact@robindesbois.org](mailto:contact@robindesbois.org) indicating the "On the Trail" issue number, section and reference of the event.

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