

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

ROBIN DES BOIS

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling

n°18 / Events from the 1<sup>st</sup> July to the 30 of September 2017

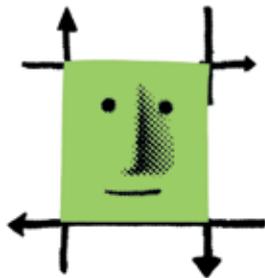
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Original version in French

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ROBIN DES BOIS

# ON the TRAIL

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



and of the Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition, France

## Previous issues

**n°17 / 1<sup>st</sup> April - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

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

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**Special Edition – 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CITES - September 2016** (pdf - 6 pages. 1,1 Mo)

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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°18

ROBIN DES BOIS  
Non Governmental Organization  
for the Protection of Man and the Environment  
Since 1985  
14 rue de l'Atlas 75019 Paris, France  
tel : 33 (1) 48.04.09.36 - fax : 33 (1) 48.04.56.41  
www.robindesbois.org  
contact@robindesbois.org

#### Publication Director :

Jacky Bonnemains

#### Editor-in-Chief:

Charlotte Nithart

#### Art Directors and coordination :

Charlotte Nithart, Jacky Bonnemains  
and Elodie Crépeau

#### Writing:

Jacky Bonnemains, Jean-Pierre Edin  
and Charlotte Nithart

#### Research and assistant editor:

Elodie Crépeau, Tamara Vilarins,  
Amutha Rock and Eirann Cohen

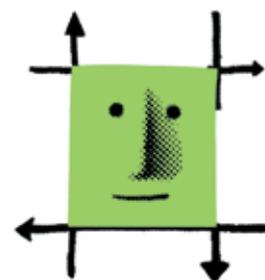
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Emilie Courtin, Laurence de Bodinat,  
Eirann Cohen and  
collective work by Robin des Bois



ROBIN DES BOIS

## Seahorses

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

### AMERICA



*Hippocampus erectus*

### MEXICO

September 30, 2017

**La Puntilla Beach, Ciudad del Carmen, State of Campeche, Mexico**

Local distribution! Near Puntilla beach, he was selling the 166 seahorses that he had just poached.<sup>1</sup>



### ASIA

### INDIA

August 13, 2017

**Near Siliguri, District of Darjeeling, State of West Bengal, India**

Seizure of 55 kg of dried seahorses, valued at \$3,680, from a man named Gauta Roy (\$ 67 US/kg. The freight, which comprised 5,500 specimens, was heading toward Jaigaon, on the Bhutan border.<sup>2</sup>

## Corals

### AFRICA

### ALGERIA

July 10, 2017

**Kerkera, Wilaya of Skikda, Algeria**

A team of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) looters has been arrested by wilaya security. The three men, aged 21 to 43, lived in a shack near Ben Zouit beach. They had a motor boat and diving equipment. 14.5 kg of red coral were seized in their shack and 150 branches in a vehicle. The trio was placed in pre-trial detention. Ben Zouit beach, in Kerkera, is well known to divers. In 2014 the Algerian Underwater Hunting Championship was held there. It is also famous for drownings.<sup>1</sup>



### AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 23, 2017

**Porto Rico, United States of America**

The trial of Aristides Sanchez - the owner of the aquarium business "Wonders of the Reef" in Arecibo - started today. He is accused of trafficking coral (genus *Ricordea*), sea anemones (order Actiniaria) and zoanthids (sea anemones living in colonies) in and from the United States. He harvested them in Porto Rican waters with a hammer and chisel, eroding the local reefs; he also had suppliers. He placed the animals in plastic bags filled with water, and sent them out via FedEx and UPS. The packages were declared as containing "animal supplies", "aquarium supplies", and "LED light bulbs". He preferred payment via PayPal. The investigation began in March 2015, when the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources seized a package containing *Ricordea*. The clues led to Aristides Sanchez, who was charged with sending 130 shipments between January 2013 and March 2016. *Ricordea* are highly sought after by aquarists the world over, for their colors that are bright under daylight and UV lighting. These marine invertebrates are sold for \$ 25 US and \$ 50 US each, depending on their color and size. Sanchez's trafficking between 2013 and 2016 is said to have been worth between \$ 800,000 US to \$ 1,200,000 US. The verdict will be announced on 20 December.<sup>2</sup>

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 20, 2017

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

A federal grand jury ruled on the cases of three individuals and two companies from Los Angeles and Orange counties accused of trafficking coral meant for aquarists. According to the bill of indictment, "Special agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service investigated a complex scheme where live coral were illegally ripped from coral reefs, hidden in air cargo shipments and imported at odd hours in an attempt to smuggle them into the United States."

- The companies Renaissance Aquatics, Inc. and Lim Aqua-Nautic Specialist, Inc. based in Inglewood, and Chet Bryant (37 years old) from Houston are being sued for the illegal import of CITES-protected coral from Viet Nam, seven times over a five-month period. Coral was hidden in the middle of shellfishes.

- The company Renaissance and a certain Bryant were also charged with attempting to export coral.

- Jose Torres (42 years old), a Gardena resident, was charged too with the attempted export of 20 species of live coral protected by CITES by falsifying declarations to the USFWS, and with underestimating the weight of the freight.

- As for him, Jorge Vazquez, from Garden Grove, thought it would be clever to fill up containers of Pringles chips with protected coral to send them off to Mexico. The officers of Los Angeles International Airport didn't fall for it. He had hidden the containers of chips in his mother's luggage. Jorge Vazquez is 39 years old.

The five natural persons and legal entities will appear in a district court. Each of the charges is punishable by 10 years in federal prison. Chet Bryant is charged in seven smuggling cases and faces a maximum prison sentence of 20 years.<sup>3</sup>

## ASIA

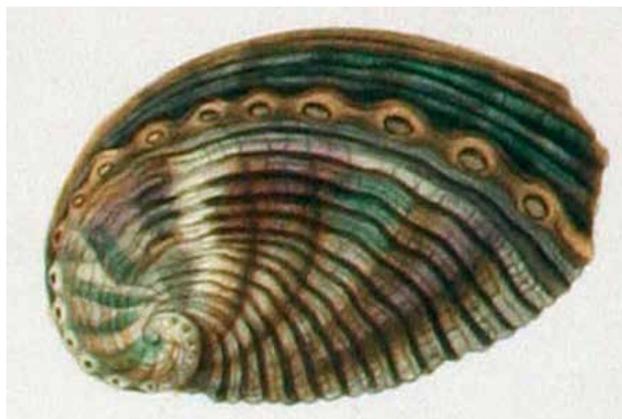
### CHINA

July 25, 2017

#### Nanchang Changbei International Airport, Jiangxi Province, China

Coral is seized from the luggage of a traveler arriving from Bangkok. The local press insists on the fact that coral grows very slowly: 1 cm in 20 years.<sup>4</sup>

## Abalones



### KO and Ciao abalones (*Haliotis* spp.)

**On August 7, the South African Department of Fisheries discontinued the granting of fishing licenses. Abalone catching falls into the hands of Cape Town gangs and the Chinese mafia. On the local marketplace, the price per kg has hit \$400 US. It was \$40 US in 2008. Violence and corruption are almost alone to flank the exploitation and then smuggling of the marine gastropods. Even the farms are looted.**

**The European Union, and in particular France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and the United Kingdom, would be well-advised to carefully examine this black market, which started originally from recreational and subsistence fishing. They can learn from this example, in order to prevent the extinction of abalone and other rocks and tidal flats dependent species.**

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

July 10, 2017

#### Brackenfell and Milnerton, Western Cape province, South Africa

Police forces struck a hard blow against abalone traffickers in the suburbs of Cape Town. On Monday night, they raided a farm in Brackenfell where a packing unit of abalone was hidden. 6,878 fresh shellfish and 24,922 dried shellfish were seized, as well as equipment. Two suspects, aged 43 and 46, were arrested. A little later in the evening, a refrigerated truck was intercepted near Milnerton. It was carrying 213 bags of frozen abalone with an approximate weight of five tons. Four suspects, a 23-year-old woman and three men aged 24, 26, and 37, were arrested.<sup>1</sup>



**July 14, 2017  
Brackenfell, Western Cape Province,  
South Africa**

Another seizure in Brackenfell, this time in the Okavango Business Park. A police patrol found 40 cartons of dried abalones in a pick-up truck. Three suspects of 27, 27 and 37 should be brought before the Blue Downs court.<sup>2</sup>



**August 3, 2017  
Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

The police and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) are stepping up their operations against trafficking. Two processing workshops were dismantled overnight in the Table View neighbourhood. In the first, a man was arrested with 23,357 dried abalones and 3915 fresh ones ; all material and gear was seized. In the second, 10,919 dried abalones and 4340 fresh ones were discovered. A 25-year-old man was arrested.<sup>3</sup>



**GANG  
August 8, 2017  
On the Overberg coastline, Western Cape Province,  
South Africa**

It is a slaughter on the southeast coast of the Cape from Danger Point in Walker Bay to Buffeljags. On Tuesday, police and some overwhelmed agents from DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Forestries and Fisheries) counted at least 126 poachers around Danger Point. The divers operated near the Aquunion aquaculture farm in Gansbaai, which produces 200 t of abalone per year. The agents let it go, but returned the next day in the early morning and seized 37 bags containing 3100 "perlemoen", the local designation.

In a second raid, the police got hold of wild abalones in Buffeljags, again in the vicinity of an aquaculture farm belonging to Viking Aquaculture. A gray Toyota Quantum was confiscated. Three suspects arrested at the scene are believed to belong to the "Gang 28" from Cape Town.

The inhabitants of Kleinbaai, a small port close to the dive points towards Danger Point, are exasperated. They created the Community Against Abalone Poaching (CAAP) group. One of it's members said: "Poachers are so arrogant now that they are walking down the street or being dropped off in full diving gear in broad daylight...". Police and DAFF backup had been promised last March, following the arrival of an official delegation. But nothing has been done. A report published in early August by the Parliament of the Province highlights the involvement of gangs. For Beverley Schäfer, president of the committee of inquiry, "Perlemoen poaching is closely linked to gangs and drugs. The value of the poached abalone runs into millions of rand and the income generated is used to manufacture drugs such as methamphetamine".<sup>4</sup>

**August 15 and 22, 2017  
Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

- Two arrests, aged 44 and 45. Seizure in a shack of 483 kg of dried abalone, which the Hawks spokesperson estimated to be worth 2.4 million rand, or \$ 184,000 US.

- Two arrests, aged 24 and 31. In the secret workshop, 32,000 abalones whose estimated value is 10 million rand (\$ 766,000 US) were drying. Abalones are easier to fraudulently export when they are dried. When they arrive in Shanghai or other large Chinese metropolises, they are resoaked in water for eight hours.

Abalone fever rages on in the coastal waters of Cape Town everyday. Despite the gradual extinction of the mollusk, 800 to 1,000 divers are in operation. An anonymous source from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said to the local press, "It's absolute chaos ... poachers are even poaching abalone the size of a 10c coin "... There are a few guys that still want to do the [anti-poaching] job and other people just take their pay and that's all." Between Rooi-Els and Kleinmond (35 km of linear coastline), 150 poachers operate each day, and there are only eight officers on patrol. "The 28s gang" requires divers to pay a "protection fee" and seizes the abalone if they refuse to pay. The pick-up truck drivers who group together and transport the abalones are

all armed with rifles and revolvers whose numbers have been rubbed off. 50% of the budget devoted to the coast and coastal waters management would come from the sale of seized abalone.<sup>5</sup>



**August 24, 2017**

**Norkem Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

A sniffer dog team from Benoni turns up at a suspect's home whose nationality is unspecified in the police report. Seizure of a white Jaguar (\$50,000 US) and a stock of dried abalone with an estimated worth of \$600,000. Three people were arrested. Norkem Park is 1,500 km away from the abalone habitat off the Western Cape province.<sup>6</sup>

**August 27, 2017**

**Hawston, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Arrest of a 28-year-old man. He had 500 kg of abalone in 14 bags, worth 900,000 rand (\$ 69,000 US) on the black market.<sup>7</sup>

**September 4, 2017**

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

The companies Rapitrade 109 PTY LTD and Syroun Exports PTY LTD were run by two Chinese men who were able to leave South Africa in 2008 and 2013 thanks to release on bail. Yet Yu-Chen Chao and Yen-Chang Ku are wanted by Interpol.

The case dates back to 2006 when over 100,000 sea snails were seized in cold storage in the port area of Cape Town, in a farm in Rawsonville and in fish processing workshops based in all of the Province. The network exported sea snails to China in containers officially transporting frozen sardines. Nine accomplices of the Chinese smugglers were found guilty.<sup>8</sup>



**September 8, 2017**

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

Industrial smoke was coming out of a family home. The police patrol invited itself over to the illegal workshop for cooking and processing abalone. The cargo was impressive, put into bags and on a pallet. It's estimated to be worth \$ 460,000 US. Arrest of 2 men.<sup>9</sup>

**September 12, 2017**

**Paarl, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

The campaign against abalone poaching and exports, launched by the police and the provincial K9 unit, is going strong. This time, it was in the city of Paarl that a 40-year-old shopkeeper was arrested following a tip-off. He was storing 175 bags of 17,237 abalones in 5 of the freezers of his vegetable store. Some bags of the mollusks had just been wrapped up. Their estimated market value is 4.3 million rand, or \$ 330,000 US.<sup>10</sup>

**September 19, 2017**

**Table View, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Today a Peugeot on Wood Drive attracted the attention of a patrol. A search of the vehicle revealed 200 kg of abalones.<sup>11</sup>

**September 29, 2017**

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

A resident reported the presence of suspicious vehicles in the parking lot of a shopping mall to the police. The police came to the scene quickly and were able to search the vehicles. Under the false floor of one car's boot, they discovered 16 bags filled with 1,573 abalones, estimated to be worth 786,500 rand (\$ 57,000 US). The animals and two Volkswagens were seized. Two men aged 43 and 47 were interrogated.<sup>12</sup>



**End of September, 2017**

**Gansbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

A huge robbery of abalone from a warehouse in the outskirts of Capetown. Three guards were taken hostage and released by the gangsters a few kilometers away.<sup>13</sup>

## Giant Clams, Triton's Horns, Noble Pen Shells

ASIA

CHINA

**July 21, 2017**

**Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China**

Customs officers seize four giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) from the possessions of a passenger coming from Hong Kong. The largest of the clams weighs 4 kg.<sup>1</sup>

**August 29, 2017**

**Fangchenggang, border with Viet Nam, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China**

Seizure of three giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) in a truck. The largest weighs 100 kg, the smallest one weighs 50 kg, and the medium one weighs 68 kg.<sup>2</sup>



## EUROPE

### SPAIN

**August 29, 2017**

**Granada, Province of Granada, Spain**

Seizure of 17 triton's horns (*Charonia lampas*) and four noble pen shells (*Pinna nobilis*). Triton's horns are listed in Appendix II of the Barcelona Convention. They live in rocky seabeds interspersed with sandy areas. Triton's horns are the largest shelled gastropods in the Mediterranean Sea. They feed on echinoderms. Triton's horns would be controlling the starfish populations if they were not dramatically declining due to trawl nets accidentally catching them, and divers deliberately catching them. At this rate, there will be soon more Triton's horns on shelves than in the sea.



Noble pen shells can be up to 1 m high. They are the largest bivalves in the Mediterranean. They live in sandy sediments and seagrass beds and filter plankton and organic matter. *Pinna nobilis* was farmed by the Ancient Romans for its pearly interior, which was used to make buttons. According to legend, the Golden Fleece was woven with the strands of its byssus. Queen Victoria also wore gloves made from the byssus of noble pen shells. They are listed in Appendix II of the Barcelona Convention, and in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive of the European Union. In France and in most European countries, it is prohibited to destroy, capture, remove, preserve, sell, purchase, and transport noble pen shells, dead or alive. Noble pen shells are threatened by the souvenir industry and by the decline in posidonia and eelgrass beds, and by open berth by pleasure crafts that break the shells.<sup>3</sup>



## Sea Cucumbers

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

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

## AMERICA

### MEXICO

**August 12, 2017**

**Between San José and San Judas Tadeo, State of Sonora, Mexico**

Seizure of several kilos in an icebox in the back of a pick-up truck.<sup>1</sup>

**September 29, 2017**

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

Seizure of 511 kg in 25 iceboxes coming in from Tijuana (2,500 km) on the platform of a parcel service company.<sup>2</sup>

## ASIA

### CHINA

**September 5, 2017**

**Shekou, Nanshan District, Guangdong Province, China**

Seizure of nearly 6 kg of sea cucumbers. The Chinese national had bought them in Mauritius to "give" them to friends and parents. The authorities reiterate that as the mid-autumn festivities approach, transporting, mailing and trading in exotic animal species protected by the law or potentially posing a health risk should be avoided.<sup>3</sup>

### INDIA

#### REPEATED OFFENSE

**July 2, 2017**

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

Irregular fishing is in full swing along the Tamil Nadu coast. This Sunday before dawn, a Mandapam police patrol checked an auto-rickshaw that turned out to contain 180 kg of freshly caught sea cucumbers by local fishermen. Even before this find, one of the two passengers jumped out of the vehicle and fled at the sight of the police officers. Identified as Sadam, alias Salim Malik, he dropped his accomplice, Sheik Abdul Kadhar (22 years old), a disabled person who had previously been arrested for the same trafficking.

A few hours later, the forest rangers acting on the basis of intelligence, hunted down a minibus suspected of transporting nearly 200 kg of sea cucumbers. After 4 km of chase, they saw him leaving the highway and heading towards the village of Vedalai. The vehicle was found parked in a street and turned out to be empty: the traffickers had had enough time to disappear with their booty.<sup>4</sup>

**August 10 and 17, 2017**

**Mandapam and Dhanushkodi, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

–Seizure of 300 kg from an alongside boat.  
–Seizure of 100 kg. The two responsible individuals intended to export them to Sri Lanka. They were in the process of loading a fishing boat. Estimated value: \$155 US/kg.<sup>5</sup>

**September 26, 2017**

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

In a coastal hamlet, the Uchipuli police confiscated 260 kg of sea cucumbers intended for smuggling to Sri Lanka. The officers were well-informed. They surrounded the house, but three suspicious chaps managed to escape. Three accomplices were arrested on the scene - K. Sabarirajan, K. Vijayanand, and M. Adaikalam. Sea cucumbers, one van, and three motorcycles were handed over to officers of the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park.<sup>6</sup>

**SRI LANKA**

**July 12, 2017**

**Off Trinqueimalay, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka**

Seizures of 18 sea cucumbers, diving equipment and 250 m fishing net. Arrest of 11 fishermen and boarding of two theppams boats off Pigeon Island and York Island.<sup>7</sup>



**August 16, 2017**

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

A ship from the Northern Naval Command intercepted a craft with three crewmen illegally fishing 7.5 nautical miles north of Point Pedro Lighthouse. On board, the soldiers found 1,911 sea cucumbers weighing 578 kg in all. The crew, the animals, the dinghy and the equipment were handed over to the Fisheries Inspector of Point Pedro.<sup>8</sup>

## Fishes and crustaceans



**The pirate barometer**

**Kg of totoaba swim bladder (Appendix I): \$14,000 US**

**Kg of hammerhead sharks fins (Appendix II): \$103 US**

**Kg of eels (Appendix II): \$2,440 US**

AMERICA - ASIA

**ECUADOR / EAST TIMOR**

**August 13 and 29, 2017**

**Galápagos Marine Reserve, Ecuador**

- Boarding of the *Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999* east of San Cristobal Island in the Galápagos archipelago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Ecuador.

- In the refrigerated holds of the ship were found 6,623 sharks including scalloped hammerheads (*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II since September 2014), silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*), bigeye threshers (*Alopias superciliosus*), and pelagic threshers (*Alopias pelagicus*). These three species have been listed in CITES Appendix II since October 2017. Shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) were also found.

*Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999* is a 100 m long mother ship tasked with transferring the catch of fishing boats, out at sea. The two "feeder" vessels are said to be the Taiwanese boats *Hai Fang 301* and *Hai Fang 302*. Taiwan is denying.

Ecuador seized *Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999* and plans to auction it off, with the proceeds going to environmental protection initiatives in and around the Galápagos archipelago. .../...



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 29, 2017

**Bastian Bay, State of Louisiana, United States of America**

Seizure of a ton of shrimps on two boats caught in illegal fishing action. The shrimp fishing season in coastal waters has been closed since June 23rd. The three poachers risk a fine of \$ 950 US, 120 days imprisonment, 40 hours of community service and the taking of all equipment by the State. The shrimp seized were sold at auction. This case comes at a time when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announces a record extension of the "dead zone" off Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta, an area of about 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> deprived of oxygen by the decomposition of toxic green algae at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. All or almost all marine organisms die on the spot or swim away when they can. The "dead zone" slows down shrimp growth. The NGO Mighty Earth accuses Tyson Food of dumping into the Mississippi basin the residual effluents from its farms and slaughterhouses where 35 million chickens and 125,000 heads of cattle are put to death every week.<sup>3</sup>

August 23, 2017

**Lagrange, Dutchess County, New York State, United States of America**

Discovery of seven living grey sandbar sharks (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*), two dead leopard sharks (*Triakis semifasciata*) and one dead hammerhead shark (family Sphyrnidae, three species in Appendix II) in an underground pool with a 4m diameter. The fishes, ranging in length from 40 to 120 cm, were transferred - the alive to the Long Island Aquarium, the dead to the knackery.<sup>4</sup>

## MEXICO

July 8, 2017

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

Seizure of 375 totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) dried swim bladders, 25 to 30 cm long. Total weight: 26 kg 464 g. Estimated value on the local black market: \$ 370,000 US or nearly \$ 14,000 US / kg. The plane came from Mexico City. The packages had Shanghai as their final destination. For unknown reasons, the flight was canceled and all luggage were taken out of the baggage hold. Only six suitcases remained on the carousel. They contained the swim bladders.<sup>5</sup>

## PERU

July 4, 2017

**Iquitos, Department of Loreto, Peru**

Seizure aboard the *Gran Loretana* on the Itaya River, a tributary of the Amazon, of 347.4 kg of giant arapaïmas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) smaller than the minimum allowed size (1.60 m long) and of 190 kg of meat from white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), lowland paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and deer.<sup>6</sup>

Hua Chunying, the spokeswoman of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced that China objected to all illegal fishing, and that there is zero tolerance for all illegal trafficking of endangered species and their body parts. China hopes that Ecuador will impartially handle the offense, in accordance with the rights of the Chinese crew.

The crewmen were sentenced to one to four years in prison, based on their degree of responsibility in operating the ship. The damages were set at \$ 5.9 million US. Experts are surprised that *Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999* did not shut off her AIS (Automatic Identification System) when she entered the Galápagos Marine Reserve without authorization. This navigation "error" allowed the Ecuadorian authorities to detect the intrusion and to immediately dispatch the marine and air patrols. Like Cocos Island off Costa Rica, the Galápagos archipelago is in a marine corridor frequented by several shark species and international fishing fleets. This is not the first time that "On the Trail" has reported illegal activities around the archipelago (cf. n°10 p.7, n°11 p.6 and n°13 p.10). Costa Rica is regularly involved in shark fin trafficking.<sup>1</sup>



© Ecuadorian Ministry of the Environment

The *Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999* with her big black fenders allowing the transshipment from other ships.

## REPEATED OFFENSE

September 9, 2017

**Timor Sea, East Timor**

Hong Long Fisheries, owner of *Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999*, would operate 15 other fishing boats in the Sea of Banda and the Timor Sea as a joint venture with Pingtan Marine Enterprises. The NGO Sea Shepherd, in conjunction with the marine police of East Timor, follows the flotilla and searches the holds. 95% of the catch is sharks. The flotilla is driftnetting. The pirate fishers are backed up by local complicities. They manage slip through the law.<sup>2</sup>



© Jake Parker/Sea Shepherd

## ASIA

### CHINA

**September 18, 2017**  
**Hong Kong, China**

Customs officers have done well in targeting this container coming from the United Arab Emirates. It concealed 350 kg of hammerhead shark fins (family Sphyrnidae, three species in Appendix II) and oceanic whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*, Appendix II), valued at \$280,000 HK (\$36,000 US) or \$ 103 US/kg.<sup>7</sup>

### INDIA

**July 29, 2017**  
**Kochi, Ernakulam District, State of Kerala, India**

Seizure of 6 tons of shark fins from a warehouse of seafood products. The accounting documents were also confiscated by the police, who acted on confidential information.

The local press insists that, most of the time, the fins are removed from living sharks before they are dumped at sea. After this mutilation, the sharks are unable to move, suffocate, and are attacked by predators with no way to defend themselves.<sup>8</sup>

### SRI LANKA

**July 7, 2017**  
**Beruwala, Western Province, Sri Lanka**

Seizure in the port aboard a trawler of several oceanic whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*, Appendix II). Six interpellations. Confiscation of the boat.<sup>9</sup>



**July 20, 2017**  
**Tangalle, Southern Province, Sri Lanka**

After a tip-off the coast guard surprised seven people at the fishing port loading a three-wheeler with 70 kg of thresher shark (*Alopias* spp., Appendix II). The fishes, the vehicle and the seven suspects were handed over to the Fisheries inspector of the area.<sup>10</sup>

**September 4, 2017**  
**Negombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka**

At the Negombo fish market, a joint intervention of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the coast guard uncovered 272 kg of thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp., Appendix II), and resulted in the arrest of one person.<sup>11</sup>



**September 30, 2017**  
**Port of Oluvil, Ampara District, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka**

The coast guard raided the fishing port. They arrested four sailors who did not throw back to the sea the oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*, Appendix II) that they had caught "unintentionally". The fisherfolk, the trawler, and various equipment that were seized were handed over to the Fisheries Inspector in Palamunei.<sup>12</sup>

**East-Timor cf p.10.**

## EUROPE

### SPAIN

**August 2, 2017**  
**Spain**

The Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and the Environment has inflicted fines adding up to 6.1 million US\$ to six Spanish citizens and six companies involved in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Southern Ocean. Also, the companies and their directors will not be allowed fishing activities for 14 years. The fines are the outcome of Operation Sparrow of which the first phase had resulted in conviction of the Vidal Armadores clan, fined for 21 million US\$. Yet the latter had not been confirmed by the supreme Court that declared itself incompetent (see "On the Trail" n°11, p.5, n°12 p.10, n°15 p.8).<sup>13</sup>

## FRANCE

**August 16, 2017**

### **Bay of Biscay, off Lorient, Morbihan, France**

Seizure of 45.5 t of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), 3.6 t of porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*, Appendix II) and 242 kg of undersized swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) aboard the *Vila do Infante*. The Portuguese longliner was arrested by the French Navy in the Bay of Biscay 200 km off the island of Oléron. With his ten crewmen, he had been fishing for a month and a half.



The catch and marketing of bluefin tuna and swordfish are subject to ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) quotas and to authorizations which were not available on the *Vila do Infante*. Porbeagle shark fishing is prohibited in the waters of the European Union.

The seized fish were processed into meal. The ship left the port of Lorient after the payment of a deposit of 22,500 € (\$ 26,400 US). The captain and the shipowner acknowledged the reality of the facts, alleging ignorance of the regulations. The trial is scheduled for December.

If Portuguese fishermen catch tons and tons of forbidden species, it is because when they return to Sagres in Portugal, fish wholesalers were willing to pay and market them illegally.<sup>14</sup>

### **September 12, 2017 Nantes, Loire-Atlantique Department, France**

Ten glass eel (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) poachers received sentences ranging from a five-month suspended sentence to one month in prison without remission, and fines of between € 600 to € 2,000. The prosecutor explained that one kilo of poached glass eels sells for 110 to 400 €/kg there, and in the Middle East, they can sell for between 1,000 and 2,100 €/kg (\$ 1,160 and 2,440 US/kg). The accused were nonchalant. One of them said that when he was arrested, he was doing his morning jogging. That was at 3:20 AM.<sup>15</sup>



### **October 2017 Pond of Leucate, Occitanie Region, France**

The seasonal dams in Corrèze and Saint-Ange, intended to favour professional fishing in the pond, are in place until December. It's a yearly feast for poachers who climb the gates, install themselves

under the "fishing prohibited" signs, and in single file, plunder the gilthead seabreams (*Sparus aurata*) and other species caught in their downstream migration. The 30 citations issued in 2016 did not demobilize the gang.<sup>15bis</sup>

## ITALY

**September 19, 2017**

### **Messina, Region of Sicily, Italy**

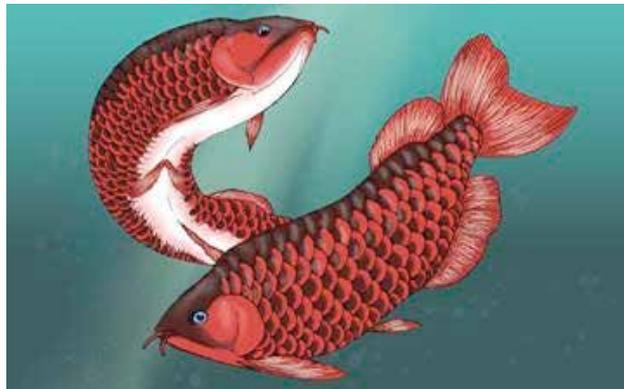
Onboard a fishing boat, a marine patrol seized a 30 kg bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), caught beyond allowed times.<sup>16</sup>

**Mid September 2017**

### **Fiumicino, Metropolitan City of Rome, Lazio Region, Italy**

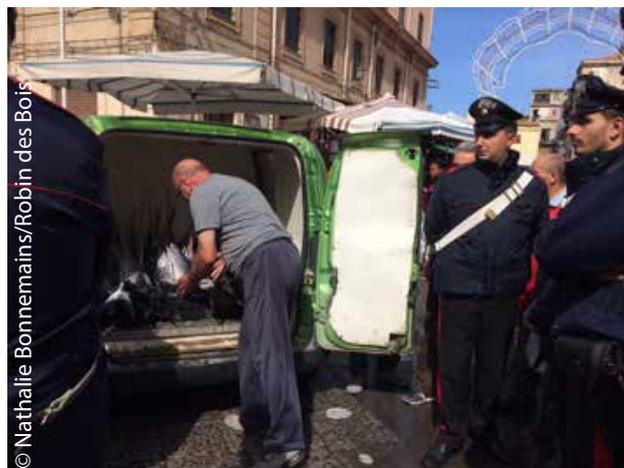
Seizure of an Asian arowana (*Scleropages formosus*, Appendix I), or a dragonfish, in an aquarium that was too small for it.

The conditions of his import are not known. An adult specimen of this multicolored freshwater fish sells for \$ 50,000 US. Cf. "On the Trail" n°5 p.7, 8 p.6, 11 p.6.<sup>17</sup>



### **September 24, 2017 Palermo, Sicily Region, Italy**

Police officers seized 51 swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) caught beyond allowed times on the Sunday market of Ballarò.<sup>18</sup>



**September 22, 2017**  
**Brighton, East Sussex**  
**County, England, United Kingdom**



**Bad Karma for Buddha**

To celebrate master Hai Tao's presence at the sea resort, Zhixiong Li and Ni Li pictured a rite releasing animals. The believers had rented three boats. 711 crustaceans were bought from a Chinese seafood wholesaler in Greenwich the day before the expedition. Before long, it became clear on the quays that the 711 prisoners who have been released were representatives of exotic and invasive species - American lobsters (*Homarus americanus*) and crabs. The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) spent quite a lot of money (20 £, or \$ 30 US per specimen), for the fisherfolk to bring back the intruders into its tanks. Among the 323 individuals that have been fished out thus far, some lobsters were carrying viable eggs. This shows that they were able to adapt, and that the invasion was starting. Ni Li was sentenced to pay £ 5,300, or \$ 6,900 US, and Zhixiong Li was sentenced to pay £ 500, or \$ 645 US. They were sentenced to pay £ 9000, or \$ 11,600 US more, which will be devoted to marine restoration initiatives.<sup>19</sup>



© Ken-ichi Ueda

American lobster is much more voracious than East Atlantic lobster. It weighs up to 20 kg.

**Marine Mammals**

Polar bears cf. page 65.

**AMERICA**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**September 6, 2017**  
**Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America**

First appearance under law 96 - which entered into force in July 2016, prohibiting the purchase and sale of ivory items, except for special exemptions: Anthony James Buccola, the owner of Antonio's Bella Casa, was selling 2 m long narwhal whale tusks (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) for \$ 35,000 US each.<sup>1</sup>

**September 14, 2017**  
**Takoma, Washington State, United States of America**



David L. Boone, director of Boone Trading Company, was Logan's partner in crime (cf. below). Boone was accused to have bought narwal whale tusks (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) at Logan as well as at a Tennessee resident between the years 2006 and 2008. He knew the tusks had fraudulently been brought into the United States. Boone engaged in other violations of the Marine Protection Act, too. In 2011 and 2012, he traded sperm whale teeth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) in addition to walrus skulls and tusks (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada), most notably selling them to an undercover agent from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

"We have an obligation to the international community to prosecute those who seek to profit from illegal trafficking in protected species such as the magnificent narwhal," said the attorney.

Boone, however, benefitted from his cooperation in providing information on Logan's case. He was sentenced to six months in prison with no detention warrant and a criminal fine of \$25,000 US. The prosecution had called for 16 months.

The value of a narwal whale tusk depends on its length. In Canada, they sell on the black market for \$50 US per inch (2.54 cm). The value of the 38 tusks that Boone bought at Logan between 2006 and 2008 is estimated at \$400,000 US.<sup>2</sup>



© U.S. Attorney Office

**September 20, 2017**

**Maine, United States of America**

Continuing the Logan case (cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p. 11). The retired Royal Canadian mounted police officer was sentenced to 62 months in prison for smuggling in conspiracy and for money laundering. Logan and his accomplices brought at least 250 narwal whale (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) tusks into the United States between the years 2000 and 2010, totaling an estimated value of between \$1.5 and 3 million US. Logan and his accomplice, Zarauskas, engaged in the selling and delivering of tusks across the United States, from a parcel delivery service in Ellsworth, Maine. Logan was paid by check or money transfer. For this reason, he maintained a post office box in Ellsworth and an account at a bank in Bangor, another town in Maine. He guaranteed the legal origin of the tusks with fraudulent certificates that came from a so-called private collector in Maine. Trade of narwal whale tusks is banned in the United States. Logan obtained the narwal whale tusks from the Inuits. Glen Ehler, on behalf of the Canadian environmental ministry (Environment Canada), simply declared that "the previous verdict and conviction in Canada [much lighter – editor's note] is a strong sign that these types of crime will no longer be tolerated."<sup>3</sup>



**MEXICO**

**July 25, 2017**

**Morelia, State of Michoacán, Mexico**



A suspicious package had attracted the attention of some passers-by on a private street in the Felix Ireta housing estate. On the spot, the Urban Police and Civil Protection extracted a young fur seal (*Arctocephalus* spp. Appendix I or II), still alive, from a wet and shredded cardboard box. The rescued animal was entrusted to the zoo of the city. Morelia

is 200 km far from the sea.<sup>4</sup>

**August 2, 2017**

**Mexico, Mexico**

Local elected officials have decided to ban dolphin exhibitions and use of dolphins for therapeutic purposes.

To this day, in the Mexico City, there are two dolphinariums, Six Flag and Feria Chapultepec.

This is only the beginning. The decision doesn't extend to the whole country. There are over 30 dolphinariums in all of Mexico that hold about 300 dolphins. The two dolphinariums in Mexico have three months to enforce the required measures. Six Flag is listed 6<sup>th</sup> worst dolphinarium of the American continent. Dolphins can swim 160 km per day, of course, a performance that the tiny basins do not allow them to do.<sup>5</sup>

**ASIA**

**SOUTH KOREA**

**July 18, 2017**

**Off the coast of Jeju Island, Jeju Province, South Korea**

Two large Indo-Pacific bottlenosed dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*, Appendix II) were released off Jeju Island after nearly 20 years of captivity in an aquarium in Seoul Grand Park. The mayor, Park Wan-soon, made the decision last April following a campaign by the Korean association HotPink Dolphins calling on the authorities to ban the importation of dolphins and to strengthen regulations on dolphinariums. The death in February in Ulsan of a female barely arrived from Japan has also raised the pressure (cf. "On the Trail" n°16 p.12). The two released dolphins, Geumdeung and Daepo, were caught by fishermen in 1997 and 1998 off Jeju. They were first exhibited in the dolphinariums of the island and then were transferred to the zoo of Seoul. Aged 23 and 26, the two dolphins were first placed for 2 months in a marine enclosure off the port of Hamdeok. On July 18, the enclosure was opened and the animals disappeared, perhaps to join the group of a hundred dolphins living off Jeju.<sup>6</sup>

**SRI LANKA**

**July 15, 2017**

**Kudawella, Southern Province, Sri Lanka**

Seizure of two dead dolphins (*Delphinidae* family, Appendix I or II) on two motorcycles. One had net shreds on his flippers. The trade of dolphins is prohibited in the country. Captured by fishermen, they had been left with two accomplices in charge of selling the meat. An investigation is underway to trace back the whole network.<sup>7</sup>



## EUROPE

### ICELAND

**August 2017**  
**Iceland**

Iceland is missing Minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I with reservation from Iceland and Norway). The season was "catastrophic". Only 17 whales were caught. About 50 whales are needed to meet the local demand. Many tourists uninformed of the cruel practices will eat whale in supposedly gastronomical restaurants. It is unlikely the whalers will be able to fill the shortage because of bad weather conditions in the North Atlantic. Iceland will probably be forced to import whale meat from Norway.<sup>8</sup>

## Sea Birds

## OCEANIA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**July 6, 2017**  
**Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii, United States of America**

The environmental court sentenced Christian Gutierrez (19 years old) to 45 days in prison, 200 hours of community service, and a \$1,000 US fine for having participated in the massacre of 15 Laysan albatross (*Phoebastria immutabilis*) in a nature reserve. Together with his friends, Carter Mesker and Raymond Justice (both 17 years old at the time of the crime), they engaged in an outburst of violence against the birds while they were camping at Kaena Point on the night of December 27-28, 2015. Armed with a baseball bat, a machete, and a pellet gun, they attacked the albatross, tied them up and threw several into the ocean, destroyed 17 nests and smashed the eggs. They had also cut off the legs of the dead birds to remove their identification rings and stolen \$3,400 US worth of cameras that they had taken for surveillance cameras but were actually intended for nest observation. In his defense, Christian Gutierrez declared that he had killed "only" two albatrosses and had not cut off any legs.<sup>1</sup>



## Marine Turtles

### Turtle break-ins and breakages

The forecast is very poor for marine turtles. They are lusted after as a whole: eggs, meat, scales, shells. No ocean is spared. The black market is violent. A new protector of leatherback turtles on the beaches was murdered in Central America. The largest seizure was made at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, demonstrating once again that Europe, contrary to popular belief, is a trafficking hub.

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*).

## AMERICA

### COLOMBIA

**August 25, 2017**  
**Riohacha, La Guajira Department, Colombia**  
125 kg of marine turtles seized from a secret cutting workshop. The culinary tradition is deeply rooted in the area. 700 turtles are massacred each year to be served in the restaurants.<sup>1</sup>

### COSTA RICA

**Early July 2017**  
**Pococi - Tortuguero National Park, Province of Limon, Costa Rica**

- Naturally, they arrive from the ocean, climb on the beach, dig in the sand, lay their eggs and return to the water. For this one, it did not happen like that. She was harpooned at the shell-fin joint but instead of being towed underwater to avoid attracting the attention of the curious and coastguards, her dead body drifted and was washed up on the beach.

Green turtles are sought after by the human race for their meat and scales from which are made glasses, brooches and other fashion accessories.

- Naturally, baby turtles hatch after 45 to 70 days incubation and head for the ocean facing their first waves. But an egg thief on Tortuguero beach in the Tortuguero National Park cut short the green turtles breeding cycle.

Costa Rica is cruel to sea turtles and their protectors (cf. "On The Trail" n° 2 p.14, n°5 p.15, n°6 p.9, n° 8 p. 10, n°10 p.10 et 11, n°14 p.14).<sup>2</sup>

## MEXICO

**July 20, 2017**

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

Seizure of several dozens of eggs in two backpacks and a cardboard box. Just before the roadside check, the three packages had been dumped from the bus in the ditch by two passengers. They have been heard by the federal police.<sup>3</sup>

**July 22, 2017**

### **Tecoman, State of Colima, Mexico**

Seizure in a minibus on the Acapulcan-Tecoman road, a few km from the beaches, of 400 eggs of Kemp Ridley's turtles in a bucket. They sell on the markets 50 to 100 pesos a dozen or \$ 4 to 8 US.<sup>4</sup>

**July 27, 2017**

### **Alvarado, State of Veracruz, Mexico**

Discovery of a poached turtle put to death on Liberty beach by members of the ROLAMLL (Red de Observadores Locales de Amenazas Marinas de La Libertad). She had just laid her eggs.<sup>5</sup>

**August 3, 2017**

### **Tonalá, State of Jalisco, Mexico**

Police raid a seafood restaurant. Eggs - cooked, or fresh and still covered with sand—were seized. Crime punishable by imprisonment from one to nine years and a fine between 300 to 1000 days of salary. The Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (Profepa) fights against the trafficking of the loggerhead turtle, the green turtle, the Kemp's Ridley turtle, the hawksbill turtle, the pacific Ridley turtle, and the leatherback turtle.<sup>6</sup>

**August 18, 2017**

### **Lagunas de Chacahua National Park, State of Oaxaca, Mexico**

The biologist Gabriel Ramos Olivera was shot dead. He was watching over leatherback turtles along the beaches of Chacahua to keep them safe. His body was found early in the morning.<sup>6 bis</sup>



**September 12, 2017**

### **El Rosario, State of Sinaloa, Mexico**

When they saw "the uniforms" coming, the two men charged off, leaving behind two Pacific ridley sea turtles and 80 eggs. The two mums and their eggs were initially handed over to Mazatlán Aquarium.<sup>7</sup>

**Sunday, September 17, 2017**

### **State of Guerrero, Mexico**

It's the peak season for harvesting eggs. PROFEPA is doing what it can to curb the zeal of the pillagers. 1,605 Pacific Ridley turtle eggs were seized. Half of them were considered as viable and reburied on beaches considered to be safe.<sup>8</sup>

**September 18, 2017**

### **Compostela, State of Nayarit, Mexico**

Seizure of 253 eggs in a backpack. The man was combing the beach of Boca de la Bahía.<sup>9</sup>

## SALVADOR

**August 25, 2017**

### **San Martin, San Salvador Department, El Salvador**

An egg fanatic was taken in for questioning. He had 38 sea turtles eggs, three parrot eggs, and eggs from unidentified species in his possession.<sup>10</sup>

ASIA

## CHINA

**August 23, 2017**

### **Futian Port of Entry, Guangdong Province, China**

Seizure of 246 scales of hawksbill sea turtles in the West Indies, weighing 9 kg in all.<sup>11</sup>

**September 5, 2017**

### **Fuqing, Fujian Province, China**

The fisherfolk say that they captured it by accident. The green turtle—145 cm long, 90 cm wide, 150 kg—was returned into the water by the local fishing administration.<sup>12</sup>

## INDIA

**July 2, 2017**

### **Dahanu, District of Palghar, State of Maharashtra, India**

A reward equivalent to \$ 77 US and a decoration is promised to anyone who will give information on sea turtles nesting sites. The appeal is addressed in particular to local fishermen. The initiative launched by the Forestry Department and several NGOs aims to locate the last nesting sites and create sanctuaries. "For the past ten years, there has been no sign of a single egg in the area. In the past there were plenty" regrets Nanasheeb Ladkas, Dahanu Divisional Forest Officer.<sup>13</sup>



## MALAYSIA

**August 9, 2017**

### **Sungai Batu Putih, State of Pahang, Malaysia**

As maritime police approached, two pump boats sped straight toward the mangrove, where the crews disappeared. On board, seven sacks contained 3,300 marine turtle eggs - an estimated value of \$1,550 US. The two pump boats were also seized.<sup>14</sup>

**August 23, 26 and September 30 2017**

**Tawau, Pulau Bum Bum Island and Pulau Mabul, State of Sabah (East Coast), Malaysia**

- On August 23, four Philippine fishermen aged 24 to 50 years old received prison sentences ranging from two months to two years, depending on the media sources, and were sentenced to nine additional months if they fail to pay a fine of 100,000 ringgit (\$ 23,400 US) each. In their boat, a marine patrol seized 18 sea turtle plastrons, meat, and shells.

- Nine dismembered green turtles were grounded on the beach. It seems that the fishermen threw them overboard.

- At the end of September, seven other green turtles, with their plastrons removed, were found on the beaches of Mabul Island.<sup>15</sup>



## PHILIPPINES

**July 6, 2017**

**Off Dumarán, Province of Palawan, Philippines**

A fishing vessel intercepted by police near the coast of Dumarán carried 70 dead hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) packed in plastic bags. Fishing master Rico Gonzales Jr. and sailor Kim Aristotiles were on their way to Balabac, an island south of Palawan known for being a swap and transit spot for poached species. The animals had been captured around Maytegued, north of Palawan.<sup>16</sup>

## SRI LANKA

**August 14, 2017**

**Ulhitiyawa, North Western Province, Sri Lanka**

The coast guard and police arrested a man trying to sell 10 kg of turtle meat.<sup>17</sup>

**September 28, 2017**

**Velani, Jaffna District, Northern Province, Sri Lanka**

A patrol from the North Naval Commandment caught a man who was in possession of live sea turtles, and seized his dinghy. The man was handed over to the Fisheries Inspector of Kyles, which will determine his fate.<sup>18</sup>



## VIET NAM

**August 9, 2017**

**Vung Tau, Ba Rịa-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

Too late. The stuffed hawksbill turtle had been hung in the lounge of a hotel in town. She has been taken off.<sup>19</sup>

**August 11, 2017**

**Thanh Hóa Province, Viet Nam**

The green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I) returned to the sea with the help of the Fisheries Department. Her owner believed to have bought a soft shell turtle on the Internet. Realizing the deception, she contacted ENV.<sup>20</sup>



**August 22, 2017**

**Con Dao islands, Ba Rịa-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

Too late. The hawksbill turtle and the green turtle were dead and hung up on the restaurant walls. But it is never too late to fight against illegal capture. Threatened with a lawsuit, the owner gave them back to the Con Dao National Park authority.<sup>21</sup>

**September 15, 2017**

**Xuyen Moc District, Ba Ria Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

The Catholic church of Xuyen Moc was detaining a sea turtle prisoner. A good parishioner informed Education for Nature – Vietnam who contacted the clergy and environmental police. The turtle is free now, as the Fishery Department released her into the sea.<sup>22</sup>

**September 27, 2017**

**Da Nang, Viet Nam**

Four green turtles held in a restaurant were seized by the environmental police after being reported to the Education for Nature – Vietnam hotline. They were returned to the ocean after the owner accepted to separate from them.<sup>23</sup>

## EUROPE

### FRANCE

**July 19, 2017**

#### **Charles de Gaulle Airport, France**

Record seizure of 4,960 hawksbill turtle scales coming from Haiti and heading for Viet Nam. The customs unit targeting freight took an interest in the boxes that was said to contain "helmet and washer molds." The lot's value is estimated at 300,000€ (\$350,000 US). Customs officers point out that the shell of a hawksbill turtle is made up of 13 scales, thus this seizure represents 380 individuals, presumably poached in the northern Caribbean Sea around Jamaica.<sup>24</sup>



## Various Marine Species

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**July 14, 2017**

#### **Milnerton, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Seizure of abalones (*Haliotis* spp.) and shark fins with a local value of 5.5 million rand, or \$ 425,000 US, of 50,000 rand in cash and a small truck. Arrest of 14 people. The operation took place at night. Milnerton is in the suburbs of Cape Town.<sup>1</sup>

## AMERICA

### MEXICO

**September 9, 2017**

#### **Tijuana, State of Baja California, Mexico. Border with United States of America.**

Parcel delivery services in Tijuana are indeed feeling the seaside. In the industrial zone, 345 dried sea cucumbers and 205 shark fins were seized. The package was coming from the State of Oaxaca in southern Mexico.<sup>2</sup>

## ASIA

### SRI LANKA

**July 4, 2017**

#### **Northern Province, Sri Lanka**

Two suspects were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy, supported by Vankalai police, in possession of 553 kg of shark fins and 317 kg of sea cucumbers packed in 20 bags. They were transshipping them in a dinghy. Jaffna customs office is continuing the investigation.<sup>3</sup>

### TURKEY

**August 2017**

#### **Province of Antalya, Turkey**

The governor of the province calls for protection of loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I), green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I), common tower shells (*Turritella communis*), sea horses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and dusky groupers (*Epinephelus marginatus*). Professor Deval from Akdeniz University brings his support to the governor. "The five species are on the IUCN Red List." "There are only 2000 female loggerheads and 500 green turtles in the Mediterranean." "We estimate that 40% of loggerheads and the totality of green turtles lay on the Anatolia beaches and on the Eastern Mediterranean beaches near Mersin and Hatay"<sup>4</sup>

## OCEANIA

### FRANCE

**July 11, 2017**

#### **Moorea Island, Archipelago of the Society Islands, French Polynesia, France**

A 48-year-old man was arrested at his home by police officers acting on information. Two turtles were discovered, one alive with a fin injured by a harpoon, the other already consumed. All that remained was the plastron (underside). There were also 18 cannabis plants in the garden. The man explained that he bought the turtles from two local fishermen, aged 21 and 25, who were apprehended shortly afterwards. All three were released pending a decision by the prosecutor. As for the turtle saved from the stew - a green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), she was entrusted to the association Te mana o te moana, in Moorea, who treated her. Named Muto'j, she has been placed in a rehabilitation pond and is expected to be released at sea.

The consumption of turtle meat is a sensitive matter in French Polynesia. In April 2014, during the debate in the Polynesian Assembly on a bill on the traceability of certain marine species, MP René Temeharo asked his colleagues: "Poachers and turtles flesh eaters - I see some of them among us - are being singled out and, on the other side, we are given no solutions to preserve this species."<sup>5</sup>

# Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

## AMERICA

### BRAZIL

**September 26, 2017**

**Vila Alegre, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Sequestration of seven red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II). A fine of \$ 3,400 real, or \$ 1,070 US. The keeper is taking care of it until the release of the reptiles is validated.<sup>1</sup>



### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**August 22, 2017**

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

Three Louisiana residents pleaded guilty of poaching and trading in alligator snapping turtles (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix III). Travis Leger, Rickey Simon and Jason Leckelt were accused of catching in Texas over 60 alligator snapping turtles in the spring and summer of 2016, and taking them to a property in Sulphur in Louisiana, where they stored them in ponds before selling for \$ 500 US to \$ 1,000 US each. Simon tried to sell a specimen weighing over 50 kg to an undercover investigator from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 30 turtles were then seized in July 2016 in the house in Sulphur. Leger confessed to selling on the whole for between US 40,000 \$ to US 95,000 \$, and Leckelt for between US 15,000 \$ to US 40,000 \$. They could face up to 5 years in prison and US 250,000 \$ in fines.<sup>2</sup>

### MEXICO

**July 21, 2017**

**Mexico, Mexico**

The north bus station of Mexico city serves as a transit zone to wildlife traffic (see "On The Trail" n°17, p. 11). This red-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II) was found in a parcel in a courier company. "It was moving inside" one of the patrol members said.<sup>3</sup>



**August 23, 2017**

**Carmen Island, State of Campeche, Mexico**

Seizure of one desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*, Appendix II) in a pick-up truck. These turtles are native to the United States of America and northern Mexico. They have become decorative and pet objects. She will not be released - she will end her days in a zoo. The local wildlife director considers that the species is exotic.<sup>4</sup>

### PERU

**July 20, 2017**

**Tarapoto, Province of San Martin, Peru**

Seizure of 22 yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II) also called South American forest tortoises and 11 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II) at Luis Diaz Romero's house, a pet dealer. This looter of wildlife claims to be a breeder and tells the prosecutor not to have known that both species are protected by national law. The 33 turtles were placed at the Urkus refuge pending a court ruling on their release.<sup>5</sup>

**September 6, 2017**

**Iquitos International Airport, Loreto Region, Peru**

Seizure of eggs from yellow-spotted river turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) and South American river turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II), bushmeat, and souvenirs made of wild animals. What was edible was given to a charity.<sup>6</sup>

**September 29, 2017**

**Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil. Border to Peru.**

Seizure of a boat, 26 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) and 200 kg of wild meat. The meat was given to charities. The turtles will be released.<sup>7</sup>

## ASIA

### CHINA

**September 16, 2017**

**Xixiang, Bao'an District, Guangdong Province, China**

Chase of a speedboat which managed to flee. Interception of a van parked at the top of the beach. Discovery of 24 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) from the African Sahel.<sup>8</sup>

## INDIA

### FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENSE

July 4, 2017

Kalyan Station, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Following a tip-off, the agents of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) of Navi Mumbai intercepted a father and son at the Kalyan station, carrying 200 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) stuffed in sacks. Vijai Sageram (27) and his father (52) took the express train in Bangalore, Karnataka State, to sell the animals in Bombay. Both the accused had been arrested by the Karnataka forest department for a similar offence two years ago and were allowed to be released on bail. They were brought before the court of Kalyan, which kept them in pre-trial detention. According to Maranko, WCCB Regional Director, the two men revealed much information about the trafficker networks operating in Karnataka.<sup>9</sup>



August 22, 2017

Avadi, State of Tamil Nadu, India

2,515 Indian star tortoises seized (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), amounting to a value of 2.5 million rupee, or \$39,050 US. An arrest was made. The man says that he already transported 10,000 as part of an export industry. Sri Lanka is cited as one of the destinations. The victims were temporarily sheltered at a zoo in Chennai.<sup>10</sup>



September 18, 2017

Badaun District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Three traffickers transporting 108 live turtles were arrested late at night on board a vehicle. The police identified them as Sethi, Sanjeev and Oma. They were placed in detention.<sup>11</sup>

## PAKISTAN

September 13, 2017

Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

Seizure of three crowned river turtles (*Hardella thurjii*, Appendix II) and one brown river turtle (*Pangshura smithii*, Appendix II). They were released into Rawal Lake and the Indus River.<sup>12</sup>



September 19, 2017

Province of Sindh, Pakistan

Seizure of a postal packet heading for Hong Kong. There was 16 kg of turtle meat inside.<sup>13</sup>

## SINGAPORE

Beginning of August, 2017

Singapore

Imminent repatriation of 97 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II), seized in good health by the customs officers at the Singapore Airport. These lucky ones escaped from a fate as pet toys. They will be released into one habitat of Karnataka in India, where they had been captured. The operation is possible thanks to the participation of ACRES Singapore (Animal Concerns Research & Education Society), the forest service of Karnataka, and the NGO Wildlife SOS.<sup>14</sup>



## THAILAND

July 23, 2017

Bangkok, Thailand

Two Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) arrived this morning at the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT) hospital. They were bought at a market one year ago and lived in a small birdcage in their "owner's" house. Because he was moving, he got rid by giving them to the foundation. They were placed under observation.<sup>15</sup>



August 12, 2017

Thailand

Twenty elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) were set free in secrecy. The rainy season will provide them with food. It's the best time of year for the survivors of trafficking. They were waiting for liberty since last year.<sup>16</sup>

**August 31, 2017  
Thailand**

The thirteen turtles - eight South Asian Box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), one Malayan snail-eating turtle (*Malayemys macrocephala*, Appendix II), and four giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II) - were set free in a stretch of water kept confidential for safety reasons. The Wildlife Friends Foundation wants to avoid their recapture for sale in the domestic animal market or for fatal uses in traditional medicine.<sup>17</sup>



**VIET NAM**

**July 4, 2017  
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

Voluntary handing over to the environmental police by an ornamental fish merchant of a freshwater turtle called elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) a young female of 1.8 kg.<sup>18</sup>

**August 18, 2017  
Dong Thap Province, Viet Nam**

Voluntary handing over of a yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) by a Buddhist monk and release into the Tram Chim National Park.<sup>19</sup>



**September 15, 2017  
Nha Trang, Province of Khanh Hoa, Viet Nam**

Seizure of three Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora bourreti*, Appendix II), one keeled box turtle (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II), and one elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II), which were on sale on Facebook. They were in good condition and will be released.<sup>20</sup>



**Mid September 2017  
Thanh Chuong District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.**

Voluntary handing over of a 15 kg yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) caught a week earlier by the riverside.<sup>21</sup>

**EUROPE**

**GERMANY**

**August 16, 2017  
Frankfurt Airport, Hesse, Germany**

The 24 year-old passenger said to have "collected" the four Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in front of his family home in Algeria. He had hidden them in shoes inside his carry-on baggage. They sell for between 50 and 200 € each in Europe. Legal prosecutions have been initiated against the smuggler.<sup>22</sup>



**August 16, 2017  
Irschenberg, Bavaria, Germany**

The souvenirs from vacation were peculiar. At a rest stop, customs officials found a Greek tortoise (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) inside a cardboard box, as well as three red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) in a plastic bag, in the trunk of a car. The first species is protected by CITES. It was "picked up" in a forest in Turkey. The other turtles are invasive and banned from transit in Germany. The head of the household, who was heading back to France, is the subject of a legal proceeding and must pay a 1000 € deposit.<sup>23</sup>

**SPAIN**

**August 24, 2017  
Melilla, Province of Malaga, Spain**

66 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Annexe II) seized from a Moroccan citizen's car on a car-ferry, before it set sail to Almeria.<sup>24</sup>

## ITALY

**July 1st, 2017**

### **Galliate, Piedmont Region, Italy**

The turtle trader was denounced. The carabinieri seized in an enclosure three marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II) from Sardinia, five Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) from the Mediterranean basin and one radiated tortoise from Madagascar (*Geochelone radiata*, Appendix I). The trafficker does not have any CITES permits attesting to the legal origin of the nine specimens.<sup>25</sup>

**July 7, 2017**

### **Castrignano de Greci, Province of Lecce, Apulia Region, Italy**

Seizure of 295 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), a crimson rosella (*Platyercus elegans*, Appendix II) and a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) in the garden of an ex-convict.<sup>26</sup>

**July 27, 2017**

### **Port of Genoa, Liguria Region, Italy**

Repatriation in Tunisia of 19 Greek tortoises or spur-thighed tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) who survived a smuggling attempt. They had been discovered in May in two cars disembarking from a car ferry at Genoa.

They went back where they came from under the supervision of the commander of a car-ferry operating the regular liaison between Italy and Tunisia. This return to the country was organized through cooperation between the Customs of Genoa and the CITES offices of Italy and Tunisia.<sup>27</sup>

**Beginning of September 2017**

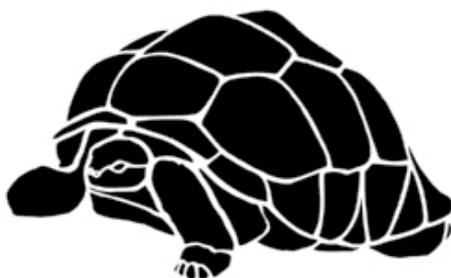
### **Savona Port, Region de Liguria, Italy**

Seizure of six common tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in the car of a Moroccan citizen who was living in Italy and returning from a stay in his home country.<sup>28</sup>

**End of September 2017**

### **Florence, Region of Tuscany, Italy**

Seizure of 62 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) aged 10 to 50 years old. The carabinieri uncovered a breeding farm and the starting point of a large-scale trafficking network. The farm owner is also a fanatic "collector" in the forests.<sup>29</sup>



## Snakes

### AFRICA

#### ZIMBABWE

**August 1, 2017**

### **Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

Nomsa Sabarauta was heavy handed on this case. He sentenced a 29-year-old man, Kingstone Gwenzi, to 9 years in prison for attempting to sell a python-skin belt (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix II). A Harare resident, the man was arrested on information last month in the outskirts of Budiriro. He was trying to sell the skin in a shopping street.<sup>1</sup>



### ASIA

#### INDIA

**July 25, 2017**

### **Bangalore, State of Kantaka, India**

Lokesh has been in the business for two years. When the police raided him, they found 12 snakes in large plastic jugs. Seven of the snakes were Cobras (family Elapidae, five species living in India listed in Appendix II) and one Russel's Viper (*Daboia russelii*, Appendix III) doomed to be used in black magic rituals, evidently in exchange for money. Lokesh and his accomplice, Ravi, were also involved in trafficking venom.<sup>2</sup>



**August 2 and 3, 2017**

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

- Tuesday. Some children playing in a parking lot spot a big snake in the back seat of a car. The sartra mitra, or local snake catcher, is alerted. The female driver was reluctant to hand over the car keys. As for the origin of the Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II), she stood evasive. It is only under the pressure of the crowd that the snake was caught.

- Wednesday. In the overnight Dashkin Express train, the rail squad intercepted a man who possessed an Indian sand boa. Aged 24, he belonged to the guild of snake charmers of Uttar Pradesh. He made his snake shows during the month of Shraavan (July 23-August 22). He pleaded guilty and was given a fine equal to \$8 US. The boa was intended to be released into a forest that Friday. Nicknamed 'double-headed' boas because their heads look like their tails, these non-venomous snakes fascinate almost everyone. Famous figures, astrologists, and businessmen all hope to have one at their home as a mark of their success or proof of their competence.<sup>3</sup>

**August 3, 2017**

**Bhinga, District of Shravasti, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

A motorcycle was stopped. Seizure of a sand boa (*Gongylophis conicus*, Appendix II) about 60 cm long, weighing 250 g. Arrest of Ghanshyam Gupta, 40 years old. He was attempting to smuggle the boa from Nepal.<sup>4</sup>



**September 13, 2017**

**GANG**

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

Three men suspected of belonging to an international trafficking gang were arrested in possession of three jars of cobra venom



(family Elapidae) that they intended to smuggle into China via the Siliguri Corridor. The venom was packaged in three forms: liquid, crystal, and powder. Narayan Das (26 years old), Debojyoti Bose (43), and Buddhadev Khanna (40) were busted during a joint intervention of the army, the Kolkata anti-drug unit, and the Barasat forest service, which were acting on a lead. According to a press release of the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs, the value of the seizure is disconcerting: one billion rupee or \$ 15 million US, on condition the venom be true. The Siliguri corridor is a particularly sensitive area in India, on the borders with Nepal, China, Bhutan and Bangladesh. It is an area where there are all kinds of trafficking.<sup>5</sup>

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**September 21, 2017**

**Howrah Station, Kolkata, State of West Bengal, India**

Arrest of two travelers about to board the Kumbha Express with 32 Russell's vipers (*Daboia russelii*, Appendix III). One of the two traffickers, Debanjon Mitra, is the son of Dipak Mitra, a reptile specialist. The Central Zoo Authority decided that he had to close his Kolkata Snake Park for trafficking and animal cruelty (cf. "On the Trail" n°11 p.18). Ever since the amusement park was closed, the Mitra family continues to indulge in snake trafficking.<sup>6</sup>

**THAILAND**

**Mid September 2017**

**Thailand**

Just in time, the WFFT adopted and released a female reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) about five years old and 3.6 m long. She had just been trapped by a small farmer who accused her of taking away part of his livestock, and who was preparing to beat it to death. A compassionate neighbor picked her up and took her to the refuge. A few minutes after she was taken out of a bag and put into a transit cage, she regurgitated four guinea fowls. The neighbor didn't lie. Shortly afterwards, she was released into a protected forest.<sup>7</sup>



**EUROPE**

**GERMANY**

**August 16, 2017**

**Munich, Bavaria, Germany**

Passed through the scanner, the parcel coming from Nigeria was suspicious. Upon opening, there was a noticeable stench as 20 boa's head weighing in the whole 3 kg popped out. The signs of decomposition were obvious. The heads were promptly incinerated to avoid risk of infection. Heads of boas are considered as delicacies in some African countries (cf. "On the Trail" n°17, p.23).<sup>8</sup>

**FRANCE**

**August 21, 2017**

**Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, Ile-de-France Region, France**

Seizure of a live ball python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) in the luggage of a traveler coming from Cotonou in Benin. We don't really know what happened to it. It was handed over to a pet shop.<sup>9</sup>



The locked wooden case was transporting "soft soap", according to its owner.

# Sauria

ASIA

## INDIA

July 25, 2017

### India

The trade in monitor lizard's hemipenis (*Varanus* spp. Appendix I or II) is increasingly scabrous. To extract them, the poachers roast alive the lizards and press on their back to remove the sexual organ and cut it. The hemipenis are sold under the magic name of Hatha Jodi to seduce fans of tantric rituals and naive people. Roughly, the false Hatha Jodi bring happiness, fertility and prosperity. They are sold on Amazon at an average price of \$ 60 US. If Amazon India has removed the questionable ads, Amazon US continues to display them. A spokeswoman for Amazon US justifies maintaining the ads by not having evidence that Hatha Jodi are fakes coming from animal torture. As a reminder, the true Hatha Jodi are the roots of plants (see "On the Trail" n° 17, page 24).

According to the Indian cyber specialist Pavan Duggal, Amazon US falls under the Indian Information Technology Act as Indian citizens can access it, and as a result are victims of fraud and helpers of cruelty to animals.<sup>1</sup>

July 1<sup>st</sup>, 3, 11, 17, 18 and 26, 2017

### West Bengal State, India

#### Haimiltonganj, Alipurduar District

A patrol of the 53rd Battalion of the SSB, accompanied by a forest services representative, intercepted a Maruti van and rescued seven tokay geckos (*Gekko gekko*) designated in local dialect as "keko saap". One arrest. The man resides in Assam. He says he wanted to sell lizards to an international network.

The adult tokay gecko lizard is 35 cm long. He's a prehistoric animal. He wears on the top of his head traces of a third eye that he is said to have used to adapt his activities to the intensity of natural light.

#### Kartika, Alipurduar District

A patrol of the 34th Battalion intercepts a 25-year-old man and rescues a tokay gecko.

The skin of the tokay is both grainy and velvety. The dominant colouring is grey with bright red spots and flecks. The tokay still has the double ability to darken or lighten its hide to blend in with the current environment and avoid being spotted by predators.

#### Bandani, Alipurduar District

A coordinated operation by the 53rd Battalion and the Dalmore Forest Service resulted in the arrest of one man and the rescue of three tokay geckos.

The mating season lasts four to five months. Males try to attract a female with a haunting and shrill scream. Ovoid eggs with an average height of 2 cm are kept until hatching by both spawners. A sign of deviance and frustration, in captivity tokay geckos eat their eggs.

#### Damanpur, Alipurduar District

A coordinated operation between the 34th Battalion and the Forestry Services resulted in the arrest of two nationals and the rescue of 11 tokay geckos. A distinctive feature of certain species of lizards is particularly marked in the gecko: it is the power to use its tail as a lure in the event of an attack. The tail detached from the body continues to twist for minutes allowing the lizard to escape. The tail grows back in a month, but not as long as the original.

#### Nimati, Alipurduar District

A coordinated operation of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and Forest Services led to two arrests, the rescue of five tokay geckos and the seizure of a motorcycle.



Tokay geckos are insectivorous and therefore useful. They are major consumers of cockroaches, locusts and tree insects. A special device called "fold of skin" allows them when they are lying flat on tree barks to show no shadow so to be unnoticed by its main predators, snakes and birds of prey.

#### Ninti, Alipurduar District

According to specific information, a 53rd Battalion patrol accompanied by the Forest Services arrested a man and rescued four tokay geckos.<sup>2</sup>

Across Asia, geckos are deemed by those who want to believe it and by those who sell them as harbingers of luck, prosperity and fertility. They are sought after for black magic rituals and as pets despite their painful bites. In India, they are considered threatened and are protected as such. However, international conventions are not yet interested in the gecko issue despite the pressure of the market and the decline of their habitats due to the industrial agriculture and forest fires.

**The Sashastra Seema Bal** -SSB- is responsible for monitoring more than 10,000 km of borders. Military control of external aggressions and infiltrations goes with assistance to populations in the event of earthquakes, floods, tsunamis and other natural, industrial or logistical disasters, as well as assistance to populations in thousands of remote villages for the construction of water reserves and distribution networks, medical clinics and public toilets. The SSB conducts educational workshops on the risks of drugs, AIDS and alcoholism. SSB forces number more than 80,000 people. Since February 2016 and for the first time since its creation in 1963, the SSB is run by a woman, Archana Ramasundaram.

One of SSB's missions is to fight poaching and smuggling of endangered species. The SSB's emblems are the snow leopard, the barasingha deer, the South Asian river dolphin, the Bengal tiger, the oriental pied hornbill and the rhino.



**August 2, 2017**

**Kumar gram, Alipurdua District, West Bengal State, India**

A patrol of the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion intercepts a man of Indian nationality from Nepal and rescues three tokay geckos.<sup>3</sup>

**August 3, 2017**

**Alipurdua District, West Bengal State, India**

Seizure by the 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of nine tokay geckos and a two-wheeler. One arrest. The geckos, the smuggler and his moped were handed over to the Damanpur forest services. In addition to the superstitions attached to them, the keko saap - a local name - suffer from being considered as multipurpose medicines. Their meat is also appreciated.<sup>4</sup>

**August 18, 2017**

**West Bengal, India**

Seizure of five tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*) by the 17<sup>th</sup> battalion of Sashastra Seema Bal. The SSB guards the border with Bhutan and Nepal (cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p.120).<sup>5</sup>

charged with the importation into Australia of four green tree pythons (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II). Craig James Pender was only fined 2000 Australian dollars (about \$ 1,500 US) by the court of Kyneton. One of his accomplices, Bard Alexander Meringen, was arrested in Norway in possession of more than 200 live reptiles in his home.<sup>6</sup>



**July 21, 2017**

**State of Western Australia, Australia**

Seizure of two eastern blue-tongued skinks (*Tiliqua scincoides*) from a Teddy Bear going out in the mail to a foreign country. The local value for each individual is between \$300-400 US and \$4,000 to \$10,000 in Asia. The two lizards, taped from head to tail, were still alive.<sup>7</sup>



**OCEANIA**

**AUSTRALIA**

**GANG**

**July 4, 2017**

**Gisborne, Victoria, Australia  
The International snaking**

The discovery by Italian customs of 13 lizards concealed in socks inside a loudspeaker sent from Australia led to the arrest of the shipper, Craig James Pender, a trafficker from Gisborne in the State of Victoria. The man would be part of an international network specialized in reptiles. The batch included five blue-tongued lizards (*Tiliqua scincoides*), four shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and four spiny-tailed skinks (genus *Egernia*). During the search at Pender's home, hog-nosed snakes (*Heterodon nasicus*) were seized. He was further



# Crocodylians

## AMERICA

### BRAZIL

July 26, 2017

Osasco, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of a baby Cuvier's dwarf caiman (*Paleosuchus palpebrosus*, Appendix II). It had been acquired through the Facebook page "Repteis Brasil". It was entrusted to the ecological park of Tietê.<sup>1</sup>

facebook



August 7, 2017

Pimenteiras do Oeste, State of Rondônia, Brazil

The driver said that he "picked up" the alligator head on a beach (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II). In the trunk of the car, he also had many kilos of frozen meat. All signs lead to believe that it comes from the beheaded alligator.<sup>2</sup>

## MEXICO

July 4, 2017

Altamira, State of Tamaulipas, Mexico

The crocodile, 1.5 m long, was raised as a family pet, tied up with a leash like a dog. The police was tipped-off by neighbors.<sup>3</sup>

July 27, 2017

Veracruz Airport, Veracruz State, Mexico

Seizure of 20 crocodile skins. The skins came from the State of Tabasco and were destined for the city of Leon, State of Guanajuato.<sup>4</sup>

August 18, 2017

Madero, State of Tamaulipas, Mexico

Four crocodiles (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II) were released in stages. Two of them, about twenty years old, were destined to be sold in La Puntilla market. The two others were 2.50 m long. Made into family "mascots," they had been enclosed in chicken coops for 10 years. They are incapable of hunting and will not be able to be released into the wetlands. They are being kept from now on in the maritime school.<sup>5</sup>

## ASIA

### INDIA

#### GANG

July 30, 2017

Panjipara, State of West Bengal, India



This incident took place through WhatsApp. Buyers from Bangladesh and the State of Sikkim, in northern India, participated in auctions. The two suspects were members of an international gang and sold gavial skins (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Appendix I).<sup>6</sup> Gavial, cf. "On the Trail" n°5 p.29, 8 p.18 and 12 p.25.

## Various Reptile Species

## AMERICA

### BOLIVIA

September 4, 2017

Beni Department, Bolivia

Seizure of 5,377 freshwater turtle eggs and 170 alligator skins (*Alligatoridae*, Appendix I or II) of various sizes.<sup>1</sup>

### BRAZIL

September 15, 2017

São Paulo–Guarulhos International Airport, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

In the luggage of a traveler coming from Madrid in Spain via Portugal, seizure of 18 snakes and 12 lizards, all undocumented.<sup>2</sup>

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 25, 2017

Los Angeles, California, United States of America

Court appearance of Rodrigo Franco. He is accused to have organized the smuggling of three living king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) between Hong Kong and Los Angeles in the month of March. The cobras measured one meter long and were packed in empty tin chip containers. The package also held three Chinese softshell turtles (*Pelodiscus sinensis*). At his home, in the kids' room, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents laid their hands on a live baby Morelet's (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I), alligator snapping turtles (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix III), a common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III) and five diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II).

During the same month of March, Franco tried to send six endangered turtles in the USA to Hong Kong - desert box turtles (*Terrapene ornata luteola*), three-toed box turtles (*Terrapene carolina triunguis*) and ornate box turtles (*Terrapene ornata ornata*)— but the package was intercepted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents.

Franco admitted having previously illegally imported 20 king cobras that, according to him, all died during the voyage. Based on the messages found on his phone, Franco was used as a mailbox. His mission was to transfer the animals to a relative of the shipper based in Hong Kong. This final recipient lives in Virginia.<sup>3</sup>



© US Attorney LA handout, EPA

## REPEATED OFFENSE

**August 11, 2017**

**Los Angeles International Airport, State of California, United States of America**

Chaoyi, the Canadian citizen, had so far gotten off not too bad. Arrested on 28 February 2014 during a stopover at the Chicago airport on a flight from Toronto to Shanghai, he was carrying 19 ball pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), eight Surinam horned frogs (*Ceratophrys cornuta*), two tiger-striped leaf frogs of the species *Callimedusa tomopterna*, four red-eyed leaf frogs (*Agalychnis callidryas*, Appendix II), five crested geckos (*Correlophus ciliatus*), four giant day geckos (*Phelsuma grandis*, Appendix II), one Fischer's chameleon (*Kinyongia fischeri*, Appendix II) and 10 Jackson's chameleons (*Trioceros jacksonii*, Appendix II). He had received then a \$ 5,000 US fine.

Two months later, on 22 April 2014, he was stopped by Canadian customs trying to enter in from the United States with live albino western hog-nosed snakes (*Heterodon nasicus*) hidden in his socks. According to his statement he intended on sending the snakes to China by mail.

The same day, he had found the time to send from Amherst, State of New York, under the pseudonym Ben Fan a parcel containing "rugs, candy and chocolate" registered worth \$ 80 US. In fact, the parcel opened by the US Fish and Wildlife on May 3 held in seven ball pythons still alive worth about \$ 3,300 US wrapped in clothing, hand warmers and isolation material. The pythons were turned over to a wildlife expert. Summoned before the Federal court in September 2014, he had decided to exempt himself.

But the US Fish and Wildlife still had him in its radars. After being informed on 11 August 2017 that Chaoyi Le had boarded a flight in Shanghai, destination Los Angeles, agents greeted him on arrival. He has pleaded guilty and faces up to 5 years prison.<sup>4</sup>

## ASIA

### CHINA

**Early July 2017**

**Xian of Mengla, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos**

Chinese customs officers intercepted a refrigerated vehicle arriving from Laos. In the cabin they found 34 kg of turtle shells and 100 dried geckos.<sup>5</sup>

### INDIA

**July 17, 2017**

**Kokrajhar District, State of Assam, India**

Seizure by the 31<sup>st</sup> battalion of two monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), a turtle and a fishing net in the Ripu forest reserve. The seized animals and the poachers were turned over to the Kachugaon forest services.<sup>6</sup>

### MALAYSIA

**July 6, 2017**

**Kampung Kolam, Terengganu State, Malaysia**

Seizure at the border crossing point of 58 bearded dragon lizards (*Pogona* genus) and eight African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II). Bearded dragons originate from Australia. Arrest of two Thai citizens, a woman and a man aged 28 and 24, and a Malaysian national aged 36.<sup>7</sup>



*Pogona minor*

© John Sullivan

## EUROPE

### FRANCE

**September 25, 2017**

**Chilly-Mazarin (near Paris), Essonne Department, France**

At the post office customs, seizure of 52 bags, belts, and various items made of African python skin (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) and African sharp-nosed crocodile skins (*Crocodylus cataphractus*, Appendix I), in parcels coming from Senegal and heading for Martinique (French West Indies).<sup>8</sup>

### ITALY

**September 23, 2017**

**Naples, Region of Campania, Italy**

B.G., 63 years old, was having shady dealings on the internet. Outside and inside his home, sworn officers found 66 turtles of three species: marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II), common tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II), Afghan tortoises (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II), and four small caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II).<sup>9</sup>

# Amphibians

## AMERICA

### PERU

July 14, 2017

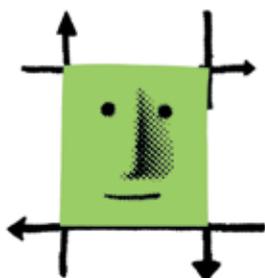
**Olmos, Lambayeque Province, Peru**

1,520 toads were seized in a bus of Turismo Dos Mil, on the route from Piura to Lima. They were in five sacks, none of which were claimed by any of the passengers or the driver. This is an opportunity to look at an old tradition and an old sham that survives in Peru and upholds a whole string of collectors, itinerant dealers, and bistro owners.

In Lima markets, the capital city, the juice of toads or Andes frogs - including the endangered species from Lake Titicaca *Telmatobius coleus* - mixed with honey and maca, a fruit of the Peruvian Andes, sells for about \$4 US under the name of Peruvian Viagra or frog vitamins. It is believed that the greenish beverage, derived from an on-the-spot sacrifice of at least one amphibian, cures tuberculosis and all respiratory problems, as well as enhances libido. Special and varied recipes are made in households and used for other health troubles. Latest update: the cruel juice also reduces stress.<sup>1</sup>



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ROBIN DES BOIS

# Insects and Arachnids

## EUROPE

### FRANCE

September 9, 2017

**Nord Department, France. Border with Belgium.**

Customs and the national hunting and wildlife commission (ONCFS: "Office national de la chasse et de la faune sauvage") seized seven poisonous trap-door spiders in the car of a collector from Finistère in Brittany (western France), that came from "Terraristika"—the insect, amphibian and reptile fair held three times a year in Hamm in northwestern Germany. Cf. "On the Trail" n°11 p. 97, n°14 p. 25.<sup>1</sup>

## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

Early July 2017

**Canberra, New South Wales, Australia**

For sale on "Gumtree", exotic ants, biting, climbing and invasive. The *Tetraponera rufonigra*, red and black ants are referred to as "bi-coloured arboreals". Their bites have triggered severe allergies in Thailand, sometimes fatal. After receiving critical information, a biosecurity team from the Ministry of Agriculture carried out a flash raid on a Canberra resident to capture and seize several specimens of bi-coloured arboreal ants and six other Asian invasive and allergenic species, including a reproductive colony. After the seizure, the home was treated with appropriate insecticides. On the Internet in France, they sell for 129 € the queen with 2 to 4 workers.<sup>2</sup>



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# Birds

## AMERICA

### ARGENTINA

**July 2017**

**Buenos Aires, Federal District, Argentina**

Seizure in a clandestine pet store of about a hundred animals including blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), iguanas and turtles. They were all coming from poaching operations. Stolen from nature, they could return to her after quarantine.<sup>1</sup>

**July 10, 2017**

**General Mosconi, Salta Province, Argentina**

Seizure of two toco toucans (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) for sale via social networks. They can no longer fly, the feathers of their wings and tails have been cut off. It will take a year to grow back. Then maybe...<sup>2</sup>

**July 25, 2017**

**Horco Molle Reserve, Province of Tucumán, Argentina**

Burglary of the only yellow cardinal (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II) known in the province. The bird was in transit in the so-called safe premises of the reserve before being directed near Buenos Aires where a breeding project is underway. A 2015 census counted just under 50 yellow cardinals across the country. The bird is highly sought after for its singing qualities and colours. It sells on the domestic black market up to 15,000 pesos (\$ 860 US). The victim who remains untraceable had been before seized from an individual's home by the Catamarca Wildlife Brigade.<sup>3</sup>



**July 29, 2017**

**San Pedro de los Milagros, Department of Antioquia, Argentina**

By consensus, the 68-year-old man handed over the two yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) to the police who had spotted them.<sup>4</sup>

**August 1, 2017**

**Ituzaingó, Corrientes Province, Argentina. Border with Paraguay.**

Two green-winged macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II) and two blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) are seized at the intersection of national highways 12 and 120. They were entrusted to a conservation center in Aguara and the biological station in San Cayetano.<sup>5</sup>

### BOLIVIA

**July 1, 2017**

**Cochabamba, Province of Cercado, Bolivia**

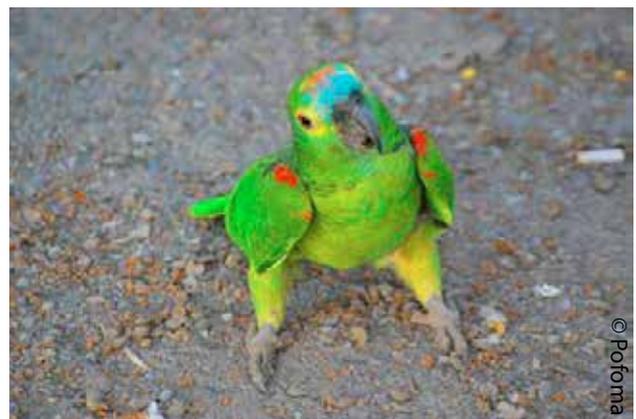
Seizure of 10 Chilean flamingos (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*, Appendix II). The 26-year-old man claims to be only a humble carrier. He transported them at night on the road from Oruro to Cochabamba, where they would have been sold at the Cancha market. He would have reached 1500 bolivianos (\$ 217 US) for the mission.<sup>6</sup>



**August 3, 2017**

**San Mateo, Cercado Province, Cochabamba Department, Bolivia**

Paola Adriana Sardina Pino was on the point to sell a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). The Pofoma (Policía Forestal de Preservación del Medio Ambiente) intervened.<sup>7</sup>



**August 24, 2017**

**Santa Cruz, Department of Santa Cruz, Andrés Ibáñez Province, Bolivia**

For sale on the Internet, a toucan (family Ramphastidae), "good condition - big beak - 800 bolivianos" (\$115 US). The seller was stopped. The bird was placed under observation. Raúl Rojas, on behalf of the ministry of the environment, says that the trade of wild animal is slowly transitioning away from the markets and concentrating on social networks.<sup>8</sup>

## BRAZIL

**July 18, 2017**

### **Macapa, Amapa State, Brazil**

Seizure in a slum of two orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II) and two pitbulls, one of which a skinny female covered with ticks and pregnant. The two men caught in the act of cruelty and detention of forest birds were nevertheless released pending trial.<sup>9</sup>

## REPEATED OFFENSE

**July 24, 2017**

### **Altônia, State of Paraná, Brazil**

Seizure of birds including a peach-fronted conure (*Aratinga aurea*, Appendix II). The man is a regular. He faces more than a year's imprisonment and a fine to the State Environmental Institute.<sup>10</sup>

**July 27, 2017**

### **Teodoro Sampaio, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Caught red-handed. He killed a scarlet macaw with a slingshot and took it home for plucking. At that moment, the police arrived. He confesses to the event and says that he wanted to use the feathers to make a picture. A personal use, so to speak. Or did he want to engage them in business instead? At the time of the crime, the macaw was peacefully eating fruit in a almond tree. A fine of 5,000 real (\$1,520 US).<sup>11</sup>



**August 18, 2017**

### **Curitiba, State of Parana, Brazil**

Robbery at the zoo of a parrots family, one chick and a pair of orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Annexe II).<sup>12</sup>



**August 20, 2017**

### **Peri Peri, Montes Claros rural region, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil**

Seizure of five parrot nestlings (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), two nets, and one gun.<sup>13</sup>

**August 22, 2017**

### **Luziânia, State of Goiás, Brazil**

The bar engaged in drug trade as well as wild bird trade. Seizure of one kilo of marijuana, 75 g of cocaine, a precision scale, and five birds including a parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II).<sup>14</sup>

**August 29, 2017**

### **Sao Paulo, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Theft of swans in Sao Paulo. Despite the security cameras and night security guards, the black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) and black-necked swan (*Cygnus melancoryphus*) vanished into thin air. An investigation for theft has been launched. As early as the end of June, five pastel green eggs of a black swan had quietly disappeared, without the shells breaking. Animal predation has been ruled out. Black swans sometimes lay their eggs on plant rafts. One black swan sells for between \$ 1,500 US and \$ 2,000 US.<sup>15</sup>



**August 30, 2017**

### **State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

At a tollbooth, seizure of a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), an armadillo, and 20 kg of meat of an unknown animal whose driver claimed that it was pork. Three interrogations.<sup>16</sup>

**August 31, 2017**

### **Paraíso, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil. Border Argentina.**

A fine of 10,000 real (\$ 3,155 US) for the detention of two "rare" parrots. The species was not cited. The environmental police have a lot of work in the area because of bird abuse. Not long ago, two other residents were sentenced with aggravating circumstances of cruelty. Two parrots were found with their heads cut off.<sup>17</sup>



**September 2, 2017**

**Samambaia, Federal District, Brazil**

Seizure of a toco toucan (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) hidden in a polystyrene box. Its keepers were trying to sell him. The bird was immediately put into a cage. He was then transported to the "Centro de Triagem de Animais Silvestres" (CETAS) of Taguatinga. Freshly caught, he seems to be in good shape. After the examination, he will be released.<sup>18</sup>



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**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**September 5, 2017**

**Jarinu, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

At home of a 67-year-old woman, seizure of three Amazon parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), one pionus parrot (*Pionus* spp., Appendix II), two giant cowbirds (*Molothrus oryzivorus*), one saffron finch (*Sicalis flaveola*), one pale-breasted thrush (*Turdus leucomelas*), two passerines of the genus *Turdus*, and one ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*). In 2016, the woman had already been ticketed for the same misdeeds.<sup>19</sup>



© Julian Londono

*Sicalis flaveola*

**September 14, 2017**

**Aquidauana, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil**

500 real fine (\$ 160 US) for a 41-year-old woman who was trafficking in parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) and drugs. The fine is for the environmental misdemeanor.<sup>20</sup>



**It's peak season for collecting parrot chicks (*Psittacidae*, Annex I ou II) in tree hollows**



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**September 5 and 21, 2017**

**Novo Horizonte do Sul, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil**

- At home of an 18-year-old woman and her companion who fled, seizure of 32 specimens between two and three weeks old, which were vulnerable and featherless. She was sentenced to pay 16,000 real (\$ 5,000 US) in fines. Her companion will receive the same sentence when tracked down.  
- Seizure of 112 fledglings. Arrest of a 26-year-old trafficker. He was sentenced to pay a fine of 56,600 real, or \$ 17,700 US.<sup>21</sup>



**September 13, 2017**

**João Pessoa, State of Paraiba, Brazil**

The young 21-year-old man was trying to sell the fledgling for \$ 190 US. He had bought it for the equivalent of \$ 15 US. The holder was sentenced to a fine equal to \$ 1,570 US.<sup>22</sup>



**September 16, 2017**

**Bataguassu, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil**

The suspects fled by car. They left 175 fledglings in a ditch. They were nearly dying of thirst, and were immediately put in the shade and ventilated by the environmental military police ("PMA"). They were then taken to the Campo Grande refuge. There are an increasing number of roadblocks around Jateí, Batayporã, Bataguassu, Ivinhema, Novo Horizonte do Sul, Anaurilândia, Santa Rita do Pardo, Nova Andradina and Brasilândia to deter collectors/hunters and to catch them in the act.<sup>23</sup>

**September 20, 2017**

**Goioerê, State of Parana, Brazil**

Seizure of 16 featherless chicks in two cardboard boxes. The woman said that her husband brought them, along with the 37 packets of cigarettes from Paraguay.<sup>24</sup>

**September 25, 2017**

**Firminópolis, State of Goias, Brazil**

A trafficker was arrested. The chicks were put in a safe place, in the wildlife refuge of Goiânia.<sup>25</sup>

**September 23, 2017**

**Itumbiara, State of Goias, Brazil**

In the car of a couple who was exceeding the speed limit, seizure of 159 birds: 21 parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II), 27 double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), and 111 canaries poached in the southern part of the State. The two individuals say that they paid 1,200 real (\$ 380 US) to move the cargo to Sorocaba. They are part of the official bird breeder guild, which includes breeders of fighting cocks in the city of Sorocaba.<sup>26</sup>

**September 24, 2017**

**Mogi das Cruzes, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure of one parrot (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II), one green-winged saltator (*Saltator similis*), and one double-collared seedeater (*Sporophila caerulescens*). A fine of 3,000 real, or \$ 150 US.<sup>27</sup>

**September 26, 2017**

**Japarutuba and Neopolis, State of Sergipe, Brazil**

Voluntary handing over of a few turtles (*Chelonoidis* spp, Appendix I or II), two agoutis (genus *Dasyprocta*) and about 390 captive birds, including golden-crowned conures (*Aratinga aurea*, Appendix II), blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), passerines of the genera *Sporophila* and *Turdus*, chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*), rufous-collared sparrows (*Zonotrichia capensis*), red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), and scaled doves (*Columbina squammata*). The preventive and educational operation was co-organized by 13 teams representing 29 institutions responsible for wildlife protection in the Sao Francisco River basin. The birds, reptiles and small mammals are to be immediately released in pre-selected natural environments.<sup>28</sup>

**September 28, 2017**

**Nova Andradina, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil**

The adults are also targeted by hunters/collectors. The man received a fine of 4,000 real (\$ 1,260 US). He was caught in the act of trapping by a river. In the cage, there were already two parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) and two saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*).<sup>29</sup>



**COLOMBIA**

**July 12, 2017**

**Suaza, Huila Department, Colombia**

Rescue in extremis of a black-chested buzzard-eagle (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*, Appendix II), victim of hunters. Between life and death, the hawk was taken in in her garden by Luz Adriana Ramírez then transferred to Neiva where it underwent surgery in a veterinary clinic to extract four gun bullets and reduce the fracture of the left wing. The bird could be back in the sky soon.

Black-chested buzzard-eagles are endemic to South America. In Colombia, they live in the highlands. The species suffers from fragmentation and disturbance of its habitats by humans. These disturbances include hunting.<sup>30</sup>



**July 30, 2017**

**Necolí, Antioquia Department, Colombia**

Seizure of parrots, parakeets (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II), canaries, 53 birds in total, by El Grupo de Protección Ambiental y Ecológica de la Policía Nacional, in coordination with El Corporación para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Urabá.<sup>31</sup>

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

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

**1 July 2017  
State of New York, USA**

A sheep breeder from the village of Addison was sentenced to two years probation and a fine of \$ 3,500 US for deliberately poisoning two bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), two red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II) and one rough legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*, Appendix II). In March 2015, William Wentling (68) had ordered his employees to pour Furadan on sheep carcasses to get rid of raptors. Furadan is the commercial name for carbofuran, an insecticide and nematicide very toxic to wildlife, banned in Europe since 2007 but still used in North America. The investigation was triggered by the discovery of a bald eagle's corpse in a field adjacent to the Wentling Farm. The bald eagle is not only endangered, but also the symbol of the United States! The judges were finally indulgent with the poisoner while the prosecutor had argued emphatically: "As a bird, the bald eagle is emblematic of our great Nation". One of the birds was an adult female which was incubating eggs in a nearby eery at the time of its death.<sup>32</sup>



**July 11, 2017**

**Norfolk, State of Virginia, USA**

Allen H. Thacker (62), a resident of Smithfield, pleaded guilty to shooting a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) with a rifle. He blamed the animal for fishing in a pond on his property. He said he first fired a warning shot with his 22-gauge Remington rifle, wounding the bird on one wing. He then killed him with a bullet in the head and confessed to running it over with his all-terrain vehicle.<sup>33</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**July 14, 2017**

**Beaumont, State of Texas, USA**

Mad on gunning and hunting, Joseph Frederick, 20, was sent to a federal prison for 111 months incarceration to be followed by a one year term of supervised release, after being caught hunting with an AR-15 assault rifle. He was already under sentence of five years of probation for slaughtering two whooping cranes (*Grus americana*, Appendix I) in January 2016, with a prohibition on possessing a weapon and fishing or hunting throughout the United States.<sup>34</sup>



**MEXICO**

**July 9, 2017**

**Xalapa, State of Veracruz, Mexico**

Thanks to the club of falcon friends, a dozen birds of prey, including an aplomado falcon (*Falco femoralis*, Appendix II), a grey-lined hawk (*Asturina nitida*, Appendix II), and a common barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) were pulled out of cages, examined by veterinarians and released into the wild as soon as their condition improved.<sup>35</sup>

**July 10, 2017**

**Guadalajara, State of Jalisco, Mexico**

Seizure of two keel-billed toucans (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II) during a routine police control. They were in a car. In a sorry state, they were taken immediately to vets.<sup>36</sup>

**July 15, 2017**

**San José Ticomán, Mexico City, Mexico City, Mexico**

Neighbours occasionally saw them flying over the courtyard of Andrés Iduarte Elementary School. The three hawks and another bird of prey were seized by a civil protection unit. The school caretaker hid them in his Grand Cherokee Jeep.<sup>37</sup>

**July 30, 2017**

**Acatlán de Osorio, State of Puebla, Mexico**

Seizure by Profepa (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) of 16 birds. Among them, three curve-billed thrashers (*Toxostoma curvirostre*), a slate-coloured solitaire (*Myadestes unicolor*), a brown-backed solitaire (*Myadestes occidentalis*) and a red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II). These four species are protected by national law or CITES and in the absence of legal documentation, there is every reason to believe that the birds have been poached.<sup>38</sup>

**August 4, 2017**

**Bahía de Banderas, State of Nayarit, Mexico**

240 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) in two crates in the back of a car that was checked on the road to Guadalajara. The trafficker intended to sell them in the market for 800 pesos each (\$45 US). The police stopped him on his mission.<sup>39</sup>

**August 7, 2017**

**Chilpancingo de los Bravo, State of Guerrero, Mexico**

99 orange-fronted conure fledglings in the back of a car on the road to Acapulco. While waiting for a better situation, they were transferred to the zoo.<sup>40</sup>

**August 11, 2017**

**Zapotlán el Grande, State of Jalisco, Mexico**

129 orange-fronted conures, feathers clipped in order to stop them from flying away to get back the forest. 15 others dead and dried out. One injured, the beak cut off. While waiting for a better situation, they were taken to the related facilities of the Michin Aquarium.<sup>41</sup>

**August 29-30, 2017**

**Motozintla, State of Chiapas, Mexico**

It happened during night. Four white-fronted amazons (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), two military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I), six scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), and one keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II) were thrown in the ditch by the car occupants when the vehicle approached a road inspection and turned back. Thanks to the calls of the birds, the PROFEPA officers were able to find the five boxes that they were piled into. The survivors were taken to the UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) of the El Fortín ranch.<sup>42</sup>

**September 2, 2017**

**Guasave, State of Sinaloa, Mexico**

Near the road block, 49 lilac-crowned amazons (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I) were discarded. 45 of them were alive, four were dead.<sup>43</sup>

**September 6, 2017**

**Monterey, State of Nuevo León, Mexico**

A street peddler and trafficker of green conures (*Aratinga holochlora*, Appendix II) and of other psittacidae was sentenced to two years in prison. He was also sentenced to pay a fine of 42,060 pesos (\$ 2,350 US), and veterinary costs of 1,600 pesos (\$ 90 US). And after all of that, the man must perform 600 hours of community work in La Pastora Zoo.<sup>44</sup>



**PERU**

**July 12, 2017**

**Belén, Iquitos, Maynas Province, Loreto Region, Peru**

The NGO Huellas de Rescate has sent photos to the regional press of boxes and cases full of various canary-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II) and other chicks for sale for five soles (\$ 1.5 US) per individual. "The police surveys the city market, but they do nothing for all those birds on sale". The pictures were captioned with bitter comments. "Wild animals are not commodities". The publication in the press may cause the town to take action.<sup>45</sup>

**August 23, 2017**

**Ayacucho, Huamanga Province, Ayacucho Region, Peru**

Sweepers find 60 dead red-masked conures (*Aratinga erythrogastra*, Appendix II), with their tail feathers clipped, near the Nery García Zárate market. It is presumed that they were for sale at the market and that the vendor abandoned them.<sup>46</sup>

**EL SALVADOR**

**August 24, 2017**

**San Francisco Menéndez, Ahuachapán Department, El Salvador. Border with Guatemala.**

Seizure of highland guans (*Penelopina nigra*, Appendix III in Guatemala) and dusky-legged guans (*Penelope obscura*). They were in a henhouse for one year. They had been grabbed in a protected area, and should be able to return there.<sup>47</sup>

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**August 2017**

**Trinidad and Tobago**

The national emblem, the scarlet ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*, Appendix II), is rapidly becoming extinct. It is poached and cooked at banquets for the elite and for fancy restaurants. Three men have just been arrested in the forest as they were poaching the emblem. They could face the equivalent of \$ 145 US in fines and/or three months in prison. Wildlife guards are complaining about the leniency of the sentences. They also say that there should be 42 guards, but there are only 16.<sup>48</sup>



**ASIA**

**CHINA**

**July 19, 2017**

**Municipality of Shanghai, China**

A poisoner was sentenced to three months jail for killing many birds by repeatedly placing food mixed with a pesticide in a forest on Chongming Island. He was eventually arrested by forest protection activists accompanied by the police. The search at his home resulted in the find of several rare live birds, such as the pale thrush (*Turdus pallidus*), and many carcasses and feathers.



Chongming Island is located about fifty kilometers north-east of Shanghai, in the Yangtze Delta. It is the largest alluvial island in the world, with an area of about 1050 km<sup>2</sup>. The Dongping Forest Park (360 ha) is located in the center. On its east coast, the Chongming Dongtan Nature Reserve (326 km<sup>2</sup> of wetlands) was established, a wintering and crossing area between Asia and Australia for 111 migratory bird species. It is included in the RAMSAR network of the UN Convention on Wetlands.<sup>49</sup>

**INDIA**

**July 17, 2017**

**Elayankudi, Sivaganga District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

During a routine patrol, the police noticed that three men were driving around with a barrel-loaded long rifle. The police decided to inspect them, and noticed that the rifle license had expired, and that B. Karthik, M. Pandi, and N. Muniasampayan were transporting a plucked peacock (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). They were arrested and should be appearing in the court of Elayankudi. In 1963, the bird was considered the symbol of India, because he is present in the country's three main religions. For the Hindus, Krishna travels by peacock; the peacock is one of the incarnations of Buddha; and the peacock symbolizes royalty in Islamic India. The national law that has protected peacocks since 1971 provides for a maximum sentence of three months in prison and 25,000 rupee (\$ 380 US) in fines for poaching them.<sup>50</sup>



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**August 20, 2017  
Ghazipur, State of  
Telangana, India**

A day farm worker is accused of killing the emblem. The feathers of the Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) have disappeared. In his bag, there is some Indian pittas (*Pitta brachyura* - picture).<sup>51</sup>



**September 9, 2017  
Sirumugai, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

During a nightwatch, officials from the Sirumugai reserve forest came across A. Ravi and N. Vellingiri, who were riding on a moped with an homemade gun. They tried to flee, but get caught. They were transporting two peacock remains (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), which were seized, along with the gun, bullets and the moped.<sup>52</sup>

**INDONESIA**

**July 14, 2017  
Pakisjajar, East Java Province, Indonesia**

Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) officials and Manang police carried out simultaneous nighttime raids on two animals traffickers living within 200 m of each other. The two operated in concert and were under surveillance. They were very suspicious, used social networks for bargaining and avoided meeting face-to-face. The animals were distributed in the two houses. A total of five Java hawk eagles (*Spizaetus bartelsi*, Appendix II), eight crested hawk-eagles (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II), three Asian black eagles (*Ictinaetus malayensis*, Appendix II), two eagles chicks too young to identify the species, one black-winged kite (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II), and a regal python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) were seized. According to the first statements of the suspects, the birds had been captured in West Java. They sold eagles on the Internet for 1 to 5 million Indonesian rupee (\$ 75- \$ 375 US) per individual. It is the biggest seizure of raptors carried out by the authorities of the island. The Java hawk-eagle is endemic, particularly rare and sought after by collectors. It is the emblem of Indonesia and also the symbol of endangered animals in the country. These raptors were lucky: transported to a refuge in Garut, they are in good health and all will be released.<sup>53</sup>



**September 5, 2017  
Port of Mataram, West Lombok Regency,  
Province of West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia**

1,313 sparrows of 11 species, including black drongos (*Dicrurus macrocercus*), chestnut-backed scimitar babblers (*Pomatorhinus montanus*), and white-headed munias (*Lonchura maja*) were stacked up in boxes and crates behind a truck which was about to board a ferry heading for the island of Bali. They are to be released in a sanctuary. Since the beginning of the year, in similar conditions, the port police have seized 6,106 birds caught on the island of Sumbawa.<sup>54</sup>



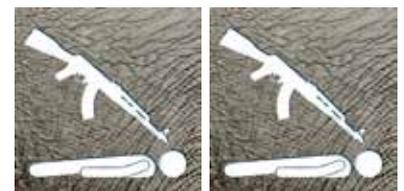
**MALAYSIA**

**July 25, 2017  
Pekan Bukit Jenun, State of Kedah, Malaysia**

The crested goshawk (*Accipiter trivirgatus*, Appendix II), the bat hawk (*Macheiramphus alcinus*, Appendix II), the crested hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II) and the collared falconet (*Microhierax caerulescens*, Appendix II) were part of the 12 birds of prey saved from captivity by the raid of the security forces at the home of a trafficker. They had their legs bound and were waiting, resigned to their fate. To release them under the best possible conditions, the investigation should determine where they were trapped.<sup>55</sup>

**PAKISTAN**

**September 20,  
2017  
Near Sialkot,  
Province of  
Punjab, Pakistan**



Muhammad Mushtaq Bhatti and Ahmad Manzoor were shot dead by an automatic weapon. The two officers of the Punjab Wildlife and Parks Department in Sialkot were trying to intercept the migratory bird poachers. Punjab is a falcon poaching mecca. The murderers are on the run.<sup>56</sup>

## THAILAND

**September 20, 2017**

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

A Chinese national was arrested as he attempted to smuggle 56 South American parrot eggs. The individual was coming in from Paraguay via Amsterdam. He had wrapped the eggs in cotton, and had hid them in a bag with a small heater to keep them warm and make easier the hatching.<sup>57</sup>



## EUROPE

## SPAIN

**September 2017**

### **Valencian Community and Region of Murcia, Spain**

The "Civil Guard" forces and SEPRONA (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) are on two fronts:

- Elche and Murcia. An illegal bird farm was supplying a pet shop in Murcia with forged documents. 34 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) and one military macaw (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I) were seized and handed over to Rio Safari, an amusement park in Elche, for lack of a better solution.

- Hondón de los Frailes. SEPRONA conducted a detailed inspection of a bird farm that a zoo had completed without permit. Out of 130 birds from 17 different species, 39 are of suspicious origin. They were put under writ of sequestration awaiting a court order.<sup>58</sup>

## ITALY

**July 5, 2017**

### **Porto Empedocle, Province of Agrigento, Italy**

The car was stopped by a roadblock. Inside, there were two men, nine goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and one greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) in five cages. There was also digital material to reproduce the songs of these passerines and attract other finches. The owner of the vehicle is subject to sections 2 and 30 of the Nature Protection Act from 1992 and the birds have been released in an appropriate place under the authority of the prosecutor.<sup>59</sup>

**July 16, 2017**

### **Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy**

Blitz on the Ballarò market (cf. "On The Trail" n°17 p.39 and n°16 p.36). The carabinieri seize 44 goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), three serins (*Serinus serinus*), four siskins (*Carduelis spinus*) and three common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*). All the owners ran off in all directions. The birds were released in Orleans Park. Let's hope they don't get caught again there by poachers.<sup>60</sup>



**September 24, 2017**

### **Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy**

At the Sunday market of Ballarò again, police officers seized 256 poached birds—European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), serins (*Serinus serinus*), and greenfinches (*Carduelis chloris*).<sup>61</sup>

## UNITED KINGDOM

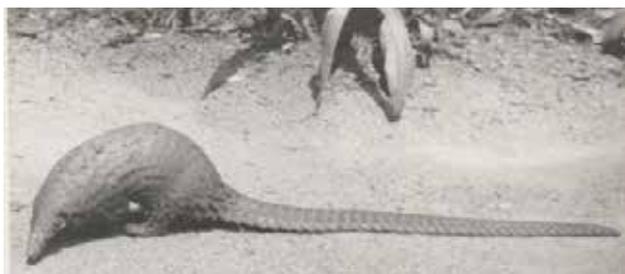
**September 28, 2017**

### **Preston, Lancashire County, England, United Kingdom**

In a preliminary audience, Preston Magistrates Court examined the case of James Hartley, a 33-year-old accused of shooting down a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) with a rifle, and of trapping another one on April 13 on Bleasdale Estate. That day, the camera installed near the nest by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - to observe a couple - recorded the arrival of an individual wearing camouflage clothing who was setting up what appeared to be a trap. The female flew away from the nest, and four shots were heard. She did not return. The male stayed in the nest all day. It was probably trapped. In the evening, a figure was seen very close by the nest. The next morning, the camera showed that the nest was empty.

Wearing a navy uniform in court, James Harley denied that he was the poacher in the video. The trial will be held on February 12, 2018, in the same court. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is sounding the alarm : peregrine falcons are still being killed. They are accused to predate homing pigeons by pigeon fanciers and to be competitors by hunters. Collectors steal the eggs and the young ones sometimes are robbed off the nest on falconers behalf.<sup>62</sup>

# Pangolins



The inclusion of eight pangolin species in Appendix I is in effect since January 2, 2017. At the same time, the amount of scales seized during the third quarter of 2017 reached 17,602 kg, a record since the launch of "On the Trail," far ahead of the preceding record set in the third quarter of 2016 at 9,888 kg of scales seized. The demand is very high and has a long history. In China, 716 establishments have been authorized to prescribe pharmaceutical pangolin scales products (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 43). Until that point, laboratories were supplied using genuine or falsified CITES permits.

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°18

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Réf.
Africa	Côte d'Ivoire	26	3
Asia	Malaysia	2,912	12
		3,000	3*

The value of a pangolin skin, according to media or official sources

Continent	Pays	US\$/skin	Réf.
Africa	Namibia	765	1*

\* Chapter Pangolins and Elephants

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

July 24, 2017

**Hoedspruit, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Five people arrested in a car carrying a live pangolin were brought before the court, which kept them in detention pending trial. Suspects aged 26 to 52 coming from Acornhoek, Mpumalanga province, had been reported.<sup>1</sup>

September 2, 2017

**Mankweng, Capricorne District, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**



On this day, two Zimbabwean nationals, Oliver Tambo (37 years old) and Kenny Mandebvui (31), were sentenced to three years in prison for illegal possession of a pangolin. As they were transporting the animal from Modimolle to Polokwane on October 27, 2016, the police and the Limpopo Environmental Department intercepted them.<sup>2</sup>

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

July 26, 2017

**Cocody, Abidjan Department, Ivory Coast**

Seizure of 3 tons of scales valued at 45 million CFA francs or \$ 78,000 US. Arrest of eight people from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Burkina Faso. The Ivorian Authority says that 4000 pangolins have been killed in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Burkina Faso for this bad business.<sup>3</sup>

## GHANA

### GANG

July 27 and 29, 2017

**Accra, Greater Accra Region, Ghana**

The intelligence unit of the Narcotics Control Board dismantled the so-called "oyster shells" network. One of its loads (393.5 kg of scales) was intercepted on June 15 at the Kuala Lumpur international airport (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 42). This was the second seizure of scales coming from Ghana in Malaysia. Alerted by the Associated Press dispatch, Accra police officers looked at the export documents and arrested Prosper Kumako, the forwarding agent, who confessed to having carried out at least three expeditions of "oyster shells" to Malaysia with the help of a colleague, Prince Anim. The last one had taken place on June 5. Kumako also denounced Robert Konu as the sender: he was arrested on July 29. He admitted having made five shipments of scales to Malaysia, twice in 2016 and three times since the beginning of the year. The scales would have been provided by a certain "Li" who sent them from Nigeria by bus. The telephone numbers of the so-called "Li" are known to the police. With such a fuzzy identity, he's likely to stay on the run for a long time.<sup>4</sup>

## ASIA

### CHINA

August 3, 2017

**Guangzhong Baiyung International Airport, Guangdong province, China**

Seizure of 35.84 kg of scales in two pillowcases packed in the suitcase of a traveler returning from Africa.<sup>5</sup>

**August 9, 2017**

**Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China**

63 frozen pangolins seized from the basement of a 22-story building. The biggest weighing 10 kg, the smallest 250 g. A man is arrested.<sup>6</sup>

**September 14, 2017**

**Qingdao, Province of Shandong, China**

Voluntary handing over of a pangolin that was exiled in the northern part of the country. He will be transported into the south soon and freed in a place where the habitat and climate are appropriate.<sup>7</sup>



**September 25, 2017**

**Wenshan, Province of Yunnan, China**

Seizure of a live pangolin, scales, and porcupine quills. Two arrests.<sup>8</sup>



**September 2017**

**Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Province of Shandong, China**

Customs discovered 855 grams of pangolin scales and two crocodile leather wallets in the luggage of an arriving passenger. Since the beginning of the year, 46 people in the possession of protected plants or animals have been inspected.<sup>9</sup>

**INDIA**

**August 7, 2017**

**Siliguri, Darjeeling District, West Bengal, India**

Seizure of one kilogram of scales and a living pangolin at the Phansidewa market. Sajjal Sarkar is stopped.



One of his accomplices, Chandan Ghosh, is wanted. He would be director of an ONG. The gang is based in Gangtok, in Sikkim. It specializes in Indian pangolins (*Manis crassicaudata*) and Chinese pangolins (*Manis pentadactyla*), species native to India. The meat is consumed on the spot.<sup>10</sup>

**INDONESIA**

**September 6, 2017**

**Bengkalis Regency, Province of Riau, Indonesia**

TH—whose real name is Tjing Huit, known as Aguan—was sentenced to two years in prison and a fine equivalent to \$ 7,500 US for trafficking in pangolin scales and skin.<sup>11</sup>



**MALAYSIA**

**July 29, 2017**

**Sepanggar, State of Sabah, Malaysia**

226 bags containing 8 t of scales were seized from two containers destined to China. Customs estimate the value at 100 million ringgits, or \$23.3 million US (\$2,912 US/kg).

It is the biggest seizure since the first issue of "On the Trail", followed by the seizures in Hong Kong of 7.3 t on July 19, 2016 and 7.2 t on May 29, 2017 (n°14 p. 33 and n° 17 p. 41), and busts of 6 t in Uganda and of 5 t in Cameroon in January 2017 (n°16 p. 37). All pangolin species have been listed in CITES Appendix I since January 2017.

A 43-year-old man is questioned by the police. He is the consignee of the two containers. The government says that the Sabah cannot be the sole supplier of these scales. Customs officers confirm this. Sepanggar is a meeting and transit point. The majority of the scales are suspected to come from neighboring countries. Their African origin cannot be excluded. From this affair, 16,000 pangolins, more or less, lost their lives.<sup>12</sup>



**NEPAL**

**July 18 and 19, 2017**

**Banasthali and Lalitpur, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Two arrests carried out by the Nepal Police Central Investigation Bureau around Kathmandu. On July 18, a 40-year-old man, Khamba Bahadur Lakai aka "Krishna", was trying to sell a 8.4 kg pangolin on the black market near the temple of Shiva in Banasthali. (.../...)

The next day Ramesh Rai, 44 years old, was caught with the skin a Himalayan tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*) in Lalitpur. The tahr is a large wild caprine endemic to the Himalayas, observed between 1500 and 5200 meters above sea level, with a predilection for 3000 to 4000 m levels. There is little information on its population. The tahrs live between northern India, Nepal and China.<sup>13</sup>



## THAILAND

**August 30, 2017**  
**Pran Buri District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand. Border with Malaysia**

Based on intelligence, the customs of the Pran Buri checkpoint were ready and waiting for him: two pick-up trucks full of pangolins and scales were stopped. They were coming from Malaysia, and the final destination of the animals was supposed to be China. 136 live pangolins and 450 kg of scales were seized, with a total overall worth estimated at over 2.5 million baht (\$ 75,000 US). A press conference in Bangkok was organized by customs management to showcase this seizure. According to director-general Kulit Sombatsiri, his officers have seized 2.9 t of pangolins and scales since the beginning of the year, worth 29 million baht (\$ 870,000 US).<sup>14</sup>

## VIET NAM

**July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**  
**Nam Giang District, Quảng Nam Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos**

Seizure in a blue backpack of a live pangolin and a frozen weasel.<sup>15</sup>

**July 6, 2017**  
**Port of Dinh Vu, Haiphong Province, Viet Nam**  
 Seizure of 700 kg of scales arriving from Pakistan officially designated as “rose petals”.<sup>16</sup>

**September 13, 2017**  
**Bac Son District, Lang Son Province, Viet Nam**  
 When the Vietnamese police and border guards approached his boat, the man plunged into the river, and fled toward China. He thus left behind 3 bags containing 15 live pangolins from Java, weighing a total of 55 kg. The animals were entrusted to the Mong Cai forest point. Ka Long River (“Beilun” in Chinese) marks the border between the two countries in this area.<sup>17</sup>

**September 26, 2017**  
**Mong Cai, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam**  
 Arrest of a woman transporting 10.8 kg of scales.<sup>18</sup>

**September 26, 2017**  
**Da Nang, Viet Nam**  
 Save Vietnam’s Wildlife rescued a male pangolin.<sup>19</sup>

## Pangolins and Elephants



AFRICA

## NAMIBIA

**GANG**  
**August 10-13, 2017**  
**Namibia**  
**Faunic news item in Namibia**

Kavango East Region  
 -A raid conducted by anti-poaching forces succeeded in arresting four men, one Angolan and three Namibians, as well as seizing eight elephant tusks, one pangolin hide, one hyena skin, and 26 rough diamonds.

-Three Namibians and one Angolan are stopped near the Ngandu Safari lodge in the Rundu district with three pangolin skins—an estimated value of 30,000 Namibian dollars, or \$2,300 US.

Otjozondjupa Region  
 -Three Argentine hunters, assisted by three Namibian guides, are set upon by a herd of elephants in the Kalkfeld district. One of them charged. Jose Monzalvez, an engineer at the Brazilian oil company Petrobras, didn’t have time to escape and was trampled to death.<sup>1</sup>

ASIA

**INDIA**  
**July 10, 2017**  
**Bargarh, State of Odisha, India**

Seizure on three men of raw ivory, pangolin scales and bear claws. Two are from Bargarh in the State of Chhatisgarh.<sup>2</sup>



© Odisha Crime Branch

## MALAYSIA

**Sunday, July 30, 2017**

### **Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia**

- Seizure in two packages stamped "food stuff" of 23 tusks (75.74 kg) on arrival of an Etihad Airways flight from Lagos to Nigeria with transit in Abu Dhabi. Value \$ 64,200 US or \$ 850 US/kg. Delivery addresses did not lead anywhere.

- Later in the day, seizure of six bags of pangolin scales (301 kg) on arrival of an Ethiopian Airlines flight from Congo. The bags were stamped "fish maw". Delivery addresses did not lead anywhere. Value \$ 902,000 US or \$ 3000 US/kg.

Traffic NGO notes that Malaysia is establishing itself as a country of transit and smuggling of elephant ivory and pangolin scales. It is true that in spite of the good work of the Kuala Lumpur Customs, it should be remembered that only 10 to 15% of wildlife smuggling is seized.<sup>3</sup>

**August 30, 2017**

### **Sepanggar, State of Sabah, Malaysia Replicas in the Sepanggar ring**

Seizure of 1,148 pieces of tusks, weighing 3 t total, and of 5 t of pangolin scales from two containers coming from Nigeria and in intended destination to China. The containers were supposed to be loaded exclusively with "peanuts." An investigation has been opened regarding money laundering and terrorism financing. The Director General of customs refused to cite the two ports through which the containers passed before landing in Sepanggar. However, he noted that one of the two is near the Strait of Malacca. "It's one of the busiest ports in the world," he says. Let's bet on Singapore!<sup>4</sup>



## Primates

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

### AFRICA

#### SOUTH AFRICA

**August 10, 2017**

### **Gugulethu, Western Cape, South Africa**

Discovery of a dead baboon (genus *Papio*, Appendix II) in a closet of an old woman's house. She claims that it is a gift from God. The remains was honored with a religious ceremony. The pastor remains unavailable for press interviews. The spokesperson for the SCPA of the Cape comments: "with no intention to offend anyone, my organization does not believe that the baboon appeared out of nowhere". "We are of the opinion that somebody caused harm to the baboon, killed him, and placed him in the cupboard."<sup>1</sup>

#### CAMEROON

**September 8, 2017**

### **Djoum, South Region, Cameroon**

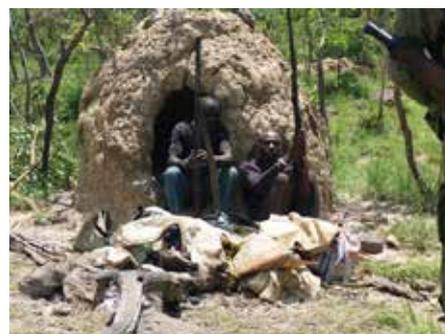
The man transported a baby chimpanzee in a small bag. He tried to sell it as a pet after slaughtering its mother, selling a part of the meat and consuming the offal. He looked after the baby chimp for several weeks while actively searching out a buyer. After having no luck finding a taker in Meyo, he went to Djoum, the hot spot for animal trafficking in the region. The officers from the Water and Forest station spotted and arrested him. The little chimpanzee was not in good shape: first aid treatment was necessary.<sup>2</sup>

#### NIGERIA

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

### **Yankari National Park, State of Bauchi, Nigeria**

Never seen before in "On the Trail"! Amos Bitrus and Danjuma Sale, senior poachers were hiding in a termitarium with a baboon (*Papio* spp., Appendix II) and 3 patas monkeys (*Erythrocebus patas*, Appendix II), butchered. They also had with them seven hunting dogs. Danjuma Sale and



Amos Bitrus were sentenced to 2 years and 6 months prison time.<sup>3</sup>

## BRAZIL

July 26, 2017

**Embu, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure of 19 primates including two golden lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus rosalia*, Appendix I), two black-striped capuchins (*Cebus libidinosus*, Appendix II) and 15 marmosets (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II). Arrest of a woman and fine of 34,500 real (\$ 10,500 US) for illegal possession of wild animals and ill-treatment.<sup>4</sup>



July 26, 2017

**Macapa, State of Macapa, Brazil**

Seizure of a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II) for sale on Facebook for 130 real (\$ 40 US). Questioning of the seller.<sup>5</sup>

## REPEATED OFFENSE

September 8, 2017

**Araraquara, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

A nighttime road inspection extricated three capuchin monkeys (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II) in the trunk of a car. A couple was interrogated. At their home, the police found trapping equipment and a fourth capuchin monkey. "We are trying to gather evidence on the existence of a gang and a capuchin monkey business. Or else the suspects will be released soon," said the lead investigator. This is the third time in one year that the woman has been involved in trafficking in wild animals protected by the law. On 18 June, she was arrested for trafficking 18 capuchin monkeys and callitrichinae.<sup>6</sup>

## COLOMBIA

August 4, 2017

**Lebrija, Department of Santander, Colombia**

The tamed howler monkey (*Alouatta* spp., Appendix I or II) had been abandoned on the sidewalk because he was eating the neighbor's flowers. The police retrieved him. As he is only two years old, it is impossible to release him into the forest.<sup>7</sup>

August 25, 2017

**Nuquí, Department of Chocó, Colombia**

The white-throated capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II) was to be transported to a health center in Barbosa. He died the day before of malnutrition and respiratory problems. The urban community reminds residents that wild animals stolen from their natural environment may suffer from mutilations, skin, scales and mucous membranes diseases, muscular atrophy, skeletal malformations or, what is worse, behavioral alterations which forever prevents their permanent recovery and deprives them of the right to live in their natural habitat.<sup>8</sup>

## MEXICO

July 10, 2017

**Tlalnepantla, State of Mexico, Mexico**

Despite the illegality of the detention, Profepa, after consulting experts, decided to leave the white-throated capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II) in his two cages, one inside the house and the other outside. He's been living there for 35 to 40 years. His advanced age, the loss of incisors and molars, alopecia on the back and his familiarization with a "relaxed" lifestyle do not guarantee his survival in a refuge or a zoo and exclude his release in the forest. His administrative situation has been put in order.<sup>9</sup>

August 24, 2017

**San Pedro Garza García, State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico**

Seizure of two Hamadryas baboons (*Papio hamadryas*, Appendix II), a male and a female about sixteen months old, bought without papers of origin in a pet store in the city and treated "without dignity and without respect". They were transferred to an enclosure in the Fundidora Park, in Monterrey.<sup>10</sup>

Septiembre 24, 2017

**Maxcanú, State of Yucatán, Mexico**

Seizure of two Geoffroy's spider monkeys (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II), a male and a female, of a ripe age, which had withered as very unfortunate pets, illegally detained in poor conditions. They were taken to Animaya Zoo.<sup>11</sup>

## PERU

**Mid-August 2017**

**Máncora, Province of Talara, Piura Region, Peru**

Seizure of a *Callithrix* that an Ecuadorian subject was in illegal possession of.<sup>12</sup>



ASIA

## CHINA

**August 29, 2017**

**Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China**

A slow loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) was spotted in the street, wounded and distraught. The teacher had been taking care of it for 15 days, to little effect. A recognized center then took care of this victim. It soon opened its eyes and ate a banana. That's a good sign.<sup>13</sup>

## INDONESIA

### ORANGUTANS

**July 11, 13, 17, 29 and August 4, 2017**

**Aceh Province, Sumatra, Indonesia**

A series of rescues in oil palm or rubber tree plantations clearly shows that the fragmentation of natural forests by the industry propels orangutans into artificial habitats or drives them into captivity.

- On July 11, the Human Orangutan Conflict Response Unit (HOCRU) intervened to evacuate a mother and her young lost among oil palm trees near the village of Bakongan. In torrential rain, the team struggled to get hold of the primates jumping from tree to tree. They were released on the same day in the Gunung Leuser National Park.

- On July 13, another mother and her baby about a year old are spotted in a rubber tree plantation in Dusun Kermal Tenggulun. Again the weather conditions are bad and the muddy trails hinder the progress of rescuers. They manage to put the mother to sleep with a sedative hypodermic syringe but the little one runs away. Half an hour later he is finally captured and reunited with his mother. She is about thirty years old and has three bullet scars on her face. His left eye is blind. A third orangutan was reportedly seen in the area but could not be found. The two survivors were released on the same day in the Gunung Leuser National Park.

- On July 14, it is again a mother followed by her child who are secluded in a rubber plantation in Mekar Makmur. The presence of ancient nests shows that the orangutans frequent the places. This mother too is a hard nut to crack: she wears twenty air-gun bullets scars and has lost an eye. They are captured and released at Gunung Leuser.

- On July 17, it is a 20-year-old male who is rescued in an oil palm plantation.

As for orangutans imprisoned as pets, the traffic does not slow down. On July 29, a poorly fed and dehydrated one-and-a-half year old female was rescued from an inhabitant of the village of Aunan who claimed to have found her very young on the farm. Her mother was probably shot.

On August 4, a female of about six years old kept for two years tied up to a tree in the garden of a house is finally released.

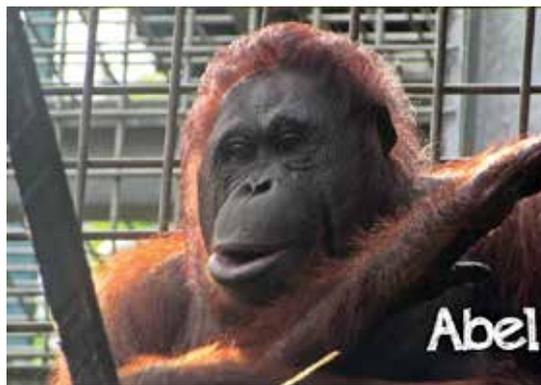
These two seized animals were taken to a quarantine and rehabilitation center.<sup>14</sup>



**July 10, 2017**

**Kehje Sewen Forest, Kutai Timur Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Seven adult orangutans returned to the forest that stretches over more than 8,000 km<sup>2</sup> (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 51). One of the oldest is a 22-year-old female who had been taken in 1998 by the BOS.<sup>15</sup>



**July 14, 2017**

**Riam Berasap Jaya, North Kayong Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

The IAR got on the case of an adult orangutan of about 17 years old, who started to be very poorly looked upon by the villagers. In a few weeks, he had destroyed 20 coconut trees in a community garden. It was time to intervene. Put to sleep by a hypodermic syringe, he was then transported in a wooden cage well within the Gunung Palung National Park that he left for unknown reasons.

After an hour walk, he was freed and - a good sign - he climbed to the top of a tree to make his nest. Karmele L. Sanchez, spokesman for the IAR, declares, "the strain of plantations on the orangutan habitats is unacceptable. The wild orangutan population is in decline due to the rapid forest loss."<sup>16</sup>



**July 29, 2017**

**Aunan, Kabupaten Aceh Tenggara, Aceh Province, Indonesia**

An undernourished female orang-utan about 2 years old was removed from a villager who claimed to have picked up her on his land. She was placed in quarantine at the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Program (SOCP) in Batu Mbelin and is expected to integrate a "socialization pen" together with some congeners prior to her release in the wild.<sup>17</sup>



**August 2, 2017**

**Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Anesthesia of 12 orangutans at the end of their re-training to wildlife by BOSF nurses before their transfer to Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park.<sup>18</sup>

**August 4, 2017**

**Paya Ketapang, East Aceh Regency, province of Aceh, Indonesia**

An orangutan that had been chained to a tree for two years near a house was rescued in the night by the OIC (Orangutan Information Center) and the BKSDA.<sup>19</sup>

**August 18, 2017**

**Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia**

Anesthetized and trapped in a net, an adult male orangutan that was pushed out of his home by industrial plantations and forest fires started to seriously annoy villagers, risking an end riddled with bullets. He was transported to a refuge in Ketapang. The team from International Animal Rescue is looking for the best place to set him free. "The best place" is harder and harder to find.

It is necessary to avoid forests that are in the process of clearing, and the remaining forests and national parks that could accommodate the exiled orangutans risk being overcrowded.<sup>20</sup>



**August 21, 2017**

**Pontianak, Borneo, West Kalimantan, Indonesia**

Profession: seller of orangutans on social networks. The man, age 19, held 2 orangutans in his garage—one female and one male aged from eight months to approximately one year. The mothers were killed during the kidnapping. The suspect sold them for three million rupee (\$225 US) each. He is known to have sold eagles and gibbons too. The orangutans would come from the Sintang District.<sup>21</sup>



**September 13, 2017**

**Nyaru Menteng Sanctuary, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Nicknamed Taymur, the very young orangutan was seized by the police of Kuwait City in November 2016 from the passenger seat of a driver under the influence of psychotropic drugs. The orangutan was finally repatriated to Indonesia in April 2017 after intense negotiations with the authorities of Kuwait through the Indonesian ambassador.

After being quarantined and cared for in a refuge in Bogor, south of Jakarta, Taymur was transferred to the Nyaru Menteng wildlife learning center in his home province of Kalimantan Central. It is possible, thanks to the expertise of the BOS (Borneo Orangutan Survival), that Taymur will one day regain its freedom. Cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 53.<sup>22</sup>

INDONESIA, except orangutans

**July 6, 2017  
Medan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia**

Two gibbons, Cingku - a male siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I) about 4 years old - and Franky - a female agile gibbon (*Hylobates agilis*, Appendix I) about five years old - were released from their cages by the competent body. They were handed over to the quarantine center of the Bodichita Foundation, 500 km away, and then released into the Barunum Forest in the southern Tapanuli kabupaten.<sup>23</sup>



**July 13, 2017  
Kediri, East Java, Indonesia**

Seizure of nine slow lorises ((*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) and one bar-throated wreathed hornbill (*Rhyticeros undulatus*, Appendix II). Four lorises had been sent to the trafficker like merchandise, in a single cardboard box. They were dehydrated, scratched up, and on the edge of suffocation. Three others already had their teeth pulled. The seller argues: "My lorises don't bite." The man had clients in China. On average, three slow lorises are captured each day in the country in order to supply the pet market. More and more, marketing is taking place on social networks.



The bar-throated hornbill lives in the primary forests of Southeast Asia. It's a gregarious bird that eats fruit as well as reptiles, insects, and crabs.<sup>24</sup>



**August 1, 2017  
Mont Sawal, province of West Java, Indonesia**

They had been chronicled in number 15 of "On the Trail," page 53. Rescued in October 2016, the ten slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) were released on Mount Sawal after a three-hours trekking. This release takes place after 10 months of care and training to the wildlife at the dedicated shelter in Bogor.<sup>25</sup>



**September 20-21, 2017  
West Java Province, Indonesia**

Rescue of nine slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) that were on sale on Facebook. One of them died due to their captivity in a confined space. The prognosis is good for the others. Their teeth had not been pulled out. They could be released after they receive care and are quarantined. Two arrests.<sup>26</sup>



**LAOS**

**July 2017  
Laos**

A female northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) had been raised for two years in a Buddhist temple where she ate a lot of sweets instead of the fruits and vegetables claimed by the monks. It was entrusted to the NGO Laos Wildlife Rescue which will try to integrate it with a group of macaques in one of its pens. Animals offered to temples are never refused, but many are poorly or badly fed and develop health problems.<sup>27</sup>

**July 31, 2017  
Vientiane, Laos**

An animal lover went shopping in various markets of the capital. He purchased one slow loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) and two Chinese water dragons (*Physignathus cocincinus*) and brought them home. He then contacted Laos Wildlife Rescue, who came to take care of the animals. The NGO formally advises against this kind of initiative, which makes the black market thrive. Luckily, the loris didn't have the canines torn out. This barbaric practice avoids keepers from being bitten because slow lorises are resistant to incarceration. It should be possible to release the animal in good health if Laos Wildlife Rescue finds a protected area. As for the two Chinese water dragons, they were undernourished. Placed in observation, they will be released in an enclosure and perhaps later in the wild.<sup>28</sup>



**August 8, 2017  
Vientiane Province, Laos**  
Laos Wildlife Rescue saves a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II), which is aged two to three months old and was for sale at the Vang Vieng market. She won't be freed tomorrow, though she needs to be bottle-fed for six months and then later taught how to hang onto branches in a play area for orphan macaques.<sup>29</sup>

**THAILAND**

**July 15, 2017  
Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand**  
Mass sterilization of several thousand macaques in the Hua Hin seaside resort. This population had become invasive. At first, the monkeys were exhibited by animal handlers or trained to ask for offerings in temples.<sup>30</sup>



**August 2, 2017  
Bangkok, Thailand**

A 6-year-old female white-handed gibbon (*Hylobates lar*, Appendix I) was taken over today by the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT). She was detained since a very young age in a house in Bangkok. As with most gibbons and other captured primates, her mother had been killed. But at six years old, it is the age to assert itself in the white-handed gibbon society, and perhaps to take revenge. She began to bite her "owner." She was first transferred to quarantine, the WFFT team hopes that she later can resocialize with others.<sup>31</sup>



**Beginning of August, 2017  
Bangkok, Thailand**

It was first necessary to use bolt cutters to remove the chain the squeezed the animal. A few more weeks and the long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) would have been strangled.



Urbanization has turned long tailed macaques into city-monkeys in a matter of just a few years. Even though the species has diminished by nearly 40% since the 1980s under the double threat of animal testing and bush meat, the animal is considered to be invasive, annoying, and clownish. A release far away from the megapole is hoped for within the next few months. That will be a big change from the pole where it was chained in a gas station parking lot.<sup>32</sup>

**August 5, 2017  
Thailand**

Rescue of a southern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Annexe II) aged about three years . The species' habitat is the forest, and deforestation is their main enemy. The southern pig-tailed macaques are often shot on sight. This is, in a way, better for them than to be captured and used in animal testing. This one in particular had been put to use as a domestic animal.<sup>33</sup>



**September 23, 2017  
Bangkok, Thailand**  
Rescue of a northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) and a rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) about 10 years old. They are in the good hands of the WFFT.<sup>34</sup>

**VIET NAM**

**July 13, 2017  
Ba Ria Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

The bird shop was gradually diversifying into a macaque shop. After the visit of the forest officers, the owner agreed to part with the two northern pigtail macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) which were promptly released in a forest considered protected.<sup>35</sup>

**July 18, 2017  
Ninh Thuan Province, Viet Nam**

1800-1522 : Wildlife alert number! The decision to release him in nature or give him to a shelter will be made in the coming days. The slow loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) had been purchased by a passer-by in a compassionate gesture and then handed over to the province's forest services with ENV (Education for Nature – Vietnam) mediation.<sup>36</sup>

**July 21, 2017  
Son La Province, Viet Nam**

The slow loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) sold on Facebook was released and the seller was arrested.<sup>37</sup>



**August 1st, 2017  
Phu Yen Province, Viet Nam**

Purchase and release of a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II). Still this tendency to buy wild animals to traffickers to save them and then hand them over to ENV. It is better to call ENV and / or the police directly to have the animal seized and the trafficker sued.<sup>38</sup>

**August 1st, 2017  
Dac Huyt Border Post, Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam**

Tai went to Cambodia for a hunting party on July 23rd. On his return, he was cornered by customs with five black-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nigripes*, Appendix I) in the game bag. Tai will not be able to sell the meat and certain organs to impostor doctors.<sup>39</sup>

**August 2, 2017  
Chu Yang Sin National Park, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam**

A stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) released in Chu Yang Sin National Park.<sup>40</sup>

**August 3, 2017  
Tan Thanh District, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

She was selling the macaque (*Macaca* spp.) on Facebook after keeping the animal for about two years in appalling conditions. Undercover buyers trapped her. The Forestry Department is gonna fine her.<sup>41</sup>



**August 3, 2017**

**Chi Linh, Hai Duong Province, Viet Nam**

The monks of the pagoda claimed they had to catch the stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II), the long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and the northern pigtail macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) because when wild, they constantly came to steal food from them. In first instance, the trio is housed in the wildlife shelter of Hanoi.<sup>42</sup>

**August 15 2017**

**Hoai Hao, Hoài Nhon District, Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam**

Rescue of two lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) and a python used as bait in a restaurant on the side of National 1.<sup>43</sup>

**August 24, 2017**

**Hô-Chi-Minh-Ville, Viet Nam**

Better for both! The long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) was exhibited in a bar of the district 11. The slump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) was offered by a family to the Pho Giac Pagoda in Hoc Mon District. The first was returned to the forest in the province of Soc Trang. The second was taken to the Cu Chi refuge.<sup>44</sup>



**September 3, 2017**

**Thang Binh District, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam**

"Everyone has done the job". The northern pigtail macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) that was chained to a tree particularly appreciates to see the end of the tunnel. Now with his 4kg of strength, it's up to him to take care of himself in the protected forest of Thang Binh.<sup>45</sup>



**September 6, 2017**

**Kon Tum, Kon Tum Province, Viet Nam**

The northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) wrapped up in iron wire was finally released into the forest. There is no guarantee that it will be able to survive in the wild.<sup>46</sup>

**Septembre 12, 2017**

**Bien Hoa, Dong Nai Province and Tan Thanh District, Ba Riau Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam**

Voluntary handing over of three long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and two lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) detained in two churches. The macaques were let go into the wild. The lorises were transferred to Cat Tien National Park. ENV reiterates that wildlife should not be locked up, in neither churches nor pagodas.<sup>47</sup>

**September 20, 2017**

**Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam**

Freeing of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) that was chained to a tree in the courtyard of a coffee shop.<sup>48</sup>

**Septembre 26, 2017**

**Long Bien District, Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Freeing of a baby langur and transfer to Cuc Phuong National Park.<sup>49</sup>



EUROPE

ITALY

**End of September 2017**

**Turin international Airport, Piemont Region, Italy**

Seizure of a baboon skull (*Papio* spp., Appendix II) that was hidden in the luggage of an Italian traveler coming from South Africa. He considers that it was a "souvenir from the savanna". This souvenir could cost him a several thousands euros fine.<sup>50</sup>

UNITED KINGDOM

**London, England, United Kingdom**

**Septembre 29, 2017**

The Inner London Crown Court sentenced Peter Bailey (65 years old) to 26 months in prison, suspended for 18 months, 120 hours of community service, and to pay the court costs of £ 4000 (\$ 6,200 US). He pleaded not guilty. The man is a trafficker specialist in the internet: Online, he was selling the skulls of leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), bears, African dwarf crocodiles (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*, Appendix I), chimpanzees (*Pan* spp., Appendix I), drills (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*, Appendix I), guenons (*Cercopithecus* spp., Appendix I or II), mangabeys (family Cercopithecidae), macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), and colobuses (*Colobus* spp., Appendix II), as well as parts of crocodiles, elephants, Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), and whales ... On an online platform, he had sold to an English buyer two baboon skulls for £ 140 and £ 170 (\$ 180 US and \$ 220 US), described as "taxidermy monkey skull, baboon, curio, collectable skull, rare". The expert who was consulted during the investigation was able to establish that most of the skulls were from central and western Africa, and had been poached recently.<sup>51</sup>



# 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.**



AMERICA

## ARGENTINA

**September 2, 4 and 19, 2017**

**Biedma Department, Chubut Province, Argentina**

Guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) are being ruthlessly tracked down. Since the beginning of the month, poachers have been arrested one after the other. Provincial Route 4 seems to be a favorite of traffickers. On Saturday September 2, the mounted police conducted two seizures on the Route 4. The first seizure was around 5 PM, and concerned a man in a Ford Ranger who was transporting the remains of a cut up guanaco. He was sentenced to pay a fine, and the meat parts were given to an animal refuge. Around 8:30 PM, it was a Toyota Rural that attracted the attention of the police. On board, the driver was in possession of around 100 kg of spoiled guanaco meat.

On September 4, an overloaded Golf Trend was spotted around 1 PM near Gaiman. The police found that the three passengers were transporting 14 pieces and 6 quarters of guanacos. They were coming in from Trelew.

During the evening on Sunday September 19, near the intersection of Provincial Routes 4 and 8, the mounted police of Trelew stopped a vehicle that had 250 kg of so-called "foal" meat and 100 kg of guanaco meat on board. Two caliber 22 rifles "of suspicious origin" were also seized.<sup>1</sup>

It's always the fatal merry-go-round of dead guanacos in the province and elsewhere. Cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p.53.

**September 14, 2017**

**Uspallata, Province of Mendoza, Argentina**

Seizure of a dead guanaco, a cut up guanaco, several jars of marinated guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), a rhea (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II), a *Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I), and a golden-billed saltator (*Saltator aurantirostris*). The five men are not amateur poachers. Their weapons are sophisticated. They had kilos of munitions and also use metal traps. They were arrested on the high plateaus of Mendoza.<sup>2</sup>



## BOLIVIA

**July 7, 2017**

**Eduardo Abaroa Natural Reserve, Potosi Department, Bolivia**

Three poachers were found with a vicuña skin and meat (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II), with two fire arms and ammunition. They were inside a reserve where hunting is forbidden. One claims he shot accidentally while trying to find his herd. "The shoot just went off" he says.<sup>3</sup>

## Deer

AMERICA

## ARGENTINA

**July 12, 2017**

**San Luis, Province of San Luis, Argentina**

Seizure of a pampas deer (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*, Appendix I), six red-winged tinamou (*Rhynchotus rufescens*), two European hares (*Lepus europaeus*), and many weapons and hunting tools. The pampas deer is the emblem of the province. Surprised by a police roadblock at the intersection of routes 11 and 27, the occupants of the car had thrown numerous bags onto the roadside. Four men were stopped. The driver and the hunter were fined 200,000 pesos, or \$12,250 US.<sup>1</sup>



## BRAZIL

**September 26, 2017**

### **Regente Feijó, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

A pampas deer (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*, Appendix I) was found cut up and wrapped up in the hunter's freezer. He was sentenced to pay a fine of 5,000 real (\$ 1,580 US). He will lodge an appeal.<sup>2</sup>

## GUATEMALA

**September 19, 2017**

### **San José El Rodeo, San Marcos Department, Guatemala. Border with Mexico.**

In the home of a 26-year-old woman: 11 white-tailed deer trophies (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III).<sup>3</sup>

## MEXICO

**July 13, 2017**

### **Lampazos de Naranjo, State of Nuevo León, Mexico**

Twelve white tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III in Guatemala) had been put under sequestration since March. They have vanished. The PROFEPA has filed a report for theft.<sup>4</sup>



## ASIA

## INDIA

The swamp deer (*Rucervus duvaucelii*) also called the barasingha is listed in Appendix I of CITES. They live in India, Bhutan and Nepal. They are extinct in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

**July 9, 2017**

### **State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Seizure by the SSB 49<sup>th</sup> battalion of 12 deer antlers for a total weight of 10.25 kg.<sup>5</sup>

**July 12, 2017**

### **State of Bihar, India**

Seizure by the 21st battalion of a pair of deer antlers.<sup>6</sup>

**July 12, 2017**

### **Pilibhit, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Seizure by the 49<sup>th</sup> battalion of three adult deer antlers, five sub-adult deer antlers and 12 antler sections.<sup>7</sup>

**August 8, 2017**

### **State of Bihar, India**

Seizure by the 25th battalion of a live male deer. The traffickers were attempting to smuggle him from Nepal.<sup>8</sup>



*Rucervus duvaucelii*

**July 13, 2017**

### **Ananthapura, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Arrest of Sujir. He had at his home a spotted deer skin (*Axis axis*). The species is in the top ten of the most poached in India.<sup>9</sup>

**July 19, 2017**

### **Dengaon, State of Assam, India**

Dismantling of a secret barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) rearing. The deer are temporarily in the custody of the Center for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation.<sup>10</sup>



# Felines

## Lions: green light for poachers

The decline of tigers in Asia has a domino effect on lions in Africa. The recent South African decision to authorize the annual exportation of 800 farmed lion skeletons has unleashed poachers. Poisoning and mutilation of wild and farmed lions are increasing in southern Africa. A lion skeleton sells for \$3,000 US in the regional market, ten times higher in China where lion bones substitute for tiger bones in various recipes that are reputed to cure rheumatism and sexual insufficiencies.

The strain on lions is also fueled by a local rumor that eating lion heart “scares away enemies and protects against attacks.”



© Charles (Chuck) Peterson

### On the Trail “ n°18

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

	Animal/parts	US\$	Ref.
<b>Africa</b>			
Southern Africa	Lion skull	3,000	48
<b>America</b>			
Mexico	Living young tiger	300	22
<b>Asia</b>			
India (Telengana)	Leopard skin	31,000/ 39,000	5
India (Uttarakhand)		15,500	6
India (Uttarakhand)		11,700	13
India (Maharashtra)		774	8
Thailand	Living young tiger	15,000	39

## LEOPARDS

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

AFRICA

### GABON

#### Beginning of September 2017

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

Seizure of two skins and arrest of two traffickers in the outskirts of Libreville.<sup>2</sup>

### REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

#### September 22, 2017

##### Dolisie, Niari Department, Republic of the Congo

Cédric Nzahou and Jeanne Moussonda tried to sell two panther skins. Gotran Luther Likibi had slaughtered them; Prince Kombo Bakala had participated in the cover up. They acknowledged the facts. The small gang was locked up by the Departmental Directorate of Water and Forests of Niari and the gendarmerie, with the support of the PALF Project (Projet d'Appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune Sauvage - Project to Support the Implementation of Law on Wild Fauna).<sup>1</sup>

### ZAMBIA

#### End of July 2017

##### Kapiri Mposhi, Central Province, Zambia

Two Zambian soldiers, Joseph Tapwila and Charles Mukanda, were sentenced to six years in prison each with hard labor for possession of two leopard skins. They were sent to Mukobeko Prison.<sup>3</sup>



ASIA

INDIA

GANG

July 6, 2017

**Sahaspur, District of Bijnor, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Informed by a tip-off on animal skins trafficking, the police intensified surveillance at checkpoints. Farmood and Saif Ali, residents of the city, and Noor Mohammad, from the Saharanpur district, fell into the net. The three of them were riding a motorcycle and carrying a leopard skin. Noor Mohammad and Saif Ali confessed to killing the animal six days earlier in the Mohand Forest in the neighboring Uttarakhand State. Police suspect them of belonging to Ali Jan, Yushuf and Dawood's famous wildlife gang trafficking.<sup>4</sup>

July 8-9, 2017

**Islampur, District de Nirmal, Etat of Telengana, India**

No less than 17 of them meddled in the poaching and attempted sale of a leopard skin. The electrical trap was put together with metal wire and a battery near a water spot in the Birsapeit forest during the month of March 2016. Six of them were stopped in a car. They were heading for Hyderabad. They wanted to sell the skin for the outlandish price of 20 to 25 Lakh (\$ 31.000 to 39.000 US). The skin, the car and 6 cell phones were seized. The passengers were taken into custody and the 11 accomplices arrested right after. They are all from Islampur village.<sup>5</sup>

July 9, 2017

**Khatima, Udham Singh Nagar District, Uttarakhand State, India**

Two men on a motorcycle carried three leopard skins when they were controlled by a special task force from the State Forestry Department. Someone had denounced them. They tried to escape, but were overtaken after a chase on 1 km. The seized hides are over 2 m long and are estimated at 3 million rupee (\$ 46,500 US). Daljeet Singh Grewal (32) and Shekhar Verma (34) were on their way to deliver the skins to a client in Haldwani, the third city of Uttarakhand. Since the beginning of the year, 17 leopard skins have been seized in the State and 9 traffickers arrested.<sup>6</sup>

July 13, 2017

**Ananthapura, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Sasikumar had received from his parent Krishnan a leopard skin. Krishnan had "inadvertently" found a dead leopard in a trap in Karnataka's forest. He had "picked it up" and scorched the dead body, then "given" the skin to Sasikumar who was trying to make some money out of it. Unfortunately for him, the potential buyers were sworn forest agents who had received a tip-off. Sasikumar is in pre-trial detention in a sub jail in Gobichettipalayam.<sup>7</sup>

July 20, 2017

**Thane, District of Thane, State of Maharashtra, India**

Stopped near the station, Ramchandra Bhusare (49) kept the skin of a one-year-old leopard in a bag. The police was acting on information. Bhusare was going to meet in the city a buyer willing to pay 50,000 rupee (\$ 774 US) for the skin. The police did not wait for him. Bhusare was put in detention for violating the Wildlife Protection Act.<sup>8</sup>

August 4, 2017

**Bangalore, State of Karnataka, India**

Five men, aged 26 to 30 years, tried to sell leopard and deer skins in the city. They were arrested.<sup>9</sup>

August 16, 2017

**Vettilappara, Thrissur district, State of Kerala, India**

Rescue of a male leopard approximately 11 years old, trapped in the middle of a rubber plantation. Tranquilizers had to be administered twice before getting him under control. His wounds should still allow for a quick release. The area is also inhabited by wild boars, deer, and elephants.<sup>10</sup>



September 20, 2017

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

Two smugglers on a motorcycle, a leopard skin in a bag, a police roadblock in Manda Naka. Rajinder Puri and Rajinder Verma were arrested, and a legal procedure has been launched against them.<sup>11</sup>

September 24, 2017

**Thirunelli, State of Kerala, India**

A male of about 6 years of age was found dead on a coffee plantation in Begur Wildlife Sanctuary by members of a tribal group who were mushroom picking early in the morning. Nord Wayanad forest department officers observed that the dead body did not have any visible wounds. It was handed over to a veterinary surgeon from Mananthavadi, for post-mortem examination. It appears that the leopard died the day before he was found. He may have been poisoned, perhaps by a pesticide used on the plantation.<sup>12</sup>



## LEOPARDS - FOLLOWED



**September 28, 2017**  
**Wadda, State of Uttarakhand, India. Border with Nepal.**

The police were well informed and set a trap on the route between Jhulaghat and Pithoragarh. They were waiting for a man with leopard skins. He was coming from Nepal, which is just next door. Trilok Singh Bisht fell into the trap. He was transporting two skins - 2.40 m long and 2.10 m long. Their estimated value on the international market is 1,500,000 rupee (\$ 23,400 US). A Dhani Chand from Nepal's Baitadi district appears to be the orderer. He asked Trilok Singh Bisht to transport the skins to a contact in Pithoragarh. This is the fourth time that leopard skins have been seized in the sector since the beginning of the year.<sup>13</sup>

**The "State of India's Environment 2017 in Figures"** is an exceptional document, and a statistical feat in a federal country that has nearly 1.3 billion residents and 29 States with their own governments and administrations. The United States of America and the European Union should draw inspiration from it.

For example, this survey teaches us that:

- 10,000 ha of forest were cleared between January and September 2016, for mining and irrigation projects, power lines, roads, and solar power plants.

- 35 million hectares of forests burn each year, and 95% of these fires are of human origin, mainly due to agriculture. Fire has broken out 10,634 times between April 1 and May 2, 2016 - five times more than the same period in 2015. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands were affected as well. 13 States have reduced their budgets for fighting forest fires from 72% to 14%.

- The number of protected areas is on the rise (733 in 2017 and 689 in 2013), but their overall area has declined (160,902 km<sup>2</sup> in 2017 and 166,000 km<sup>2</sup> in 2013). As such, wild animals are forced to leave their natural habitat.

- 106 internet sites are used to sell animals or parts of protected animals.

"State of India's Environment 2017 in Figures" is published by Down to Earth / Centre for Science and Environment.

## IRAN

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

**August 8, 2017**

**Fars Province, Iran**

The killers were caught through photos on social networks and a partial view of the vehicle's license plate. Arrest of two brothers.<sup>14</sup>



**Mid-August 2017**

**Behshahr County, Mazandaran Province, Iran**

A female leopard and her cub were shot, skinned and burned by the spring known as "the Shahid Abad Forest Fountain". The investigation is stalled.<sup>15</sup>

**September 2, 2017**

**Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Iran**

The Court of Appeal upheld the sentencing of the leopard poacher to two years in prison. The other poacher, whom the court of first instance had sentenced too to two years in prison, was acquitted due to insufficient evidence (cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.51).<sup>16</sup>



## NEPAL

**July 27, 2017**

**Bhaktapur, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Arrest of three men and seizure of one leopard skin.<sup>17</sup>



**August 1, 2017**

**Gongabu, Katmandu district, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Bhakta Bahadur Rokaya, 24 years old, from Kalikot, was surprised by the police in room 205 on the second floor of a hotel-restaurant in possession of an adult leopard skin - including the head, tail, and paws - and two bones.<sup>18</sup>

## TIGERS

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

### AMERICA

#### MEXICO

**July 6, 2017**

##### **State of Chihuahua, Mexico**

Mexico is losing its megafauna but accommodates exotic felines. A tiger who was being walked on a leash escaped by the edge of the Rio Sacramento. This caused public disrupt. He finally was got back. The PROFEPA is waiting for the owner to produce non-falsified certificates of origin. If they are too long to come in, the tiger will be seized.<sup>19</sup>



**July 29, 2017**

##### **Monterrey, State of Nuevo León, Mexico**

Seizure from a house of a baby female Bengal tiger aged 5 months. Her only brother in misery was a dog. She was transferred to the Pastora zoological park.<sup>20</sup>



**August 10, 2017**

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

Seizure of a Bengal tiger in a private house. His conditions of life did not guarantee him a "dignified and respectful treatment". Moreover, he was a danger to the neighborhood.<sup>21</sup>

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**August 23, 2017**

##### **Otay Mesa Border Cherkpoint, San Diego, State of California, United States of America. Border with Mexico.**

Luis Eudoro Valencia (18 years of age) thought that he could smuggle a baby Bengal tiger on the floor of his vehicle. The animal was spotted in a secondary inspection area of the customs post. Luis said that he obtained the feline for \$ 300 US in Tijuana (in Mexico) from an individual walking an adult tiger on a leash in the street ... He left as a free man, in exchange for a \$ 10,000 US personal surety bond prior to his preliminary hearing.<sup>22</sup>

**September 6, 2017**

##### **Atlanta, State of Georgia, United States of America**

The escape of a Bengal tiger ended up under police bullets in the yard of a house in an Atlanta suburb. It had first been spotted around 6 AM on a highway. As the police tailed the tiger, it jumped over the fence of Brittney Speck's house, and jumped on her dog. The police fired shots. The dog named Journey came out of it unharmed, but the tiger was killed. To justify the blunder, the Henry County police announced in a press release that "with the tiger in close proximity to a school bus route in a densely populated area, officers made the decision to put the animal down with gunfire ..." But where did this tiger come from? Zoo Atlanta and Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary were quick to say that they had not lost any boarders. Gerri Yoder, the director of Henry County Animal Care and Control, asserts that there aren't any licensed tiger breeders in the area. It may have been a feline that an individual was detaining in secret.<sup>23</sup>

### ASIA

#### INDIA

**July 14, 2017**

##### **Near Manas National Park, Barpeta District, State of Assam, India**

Officers of the Forestry Department arrested five men in possession of a tiger skin, 157 pieces of tiger bones and a homemade rifle. Sanjiv Basumatary (30), Ranjan Doimary (26), Sunil Bodo (30), Badu Bodo (45) and Bonaru Bodo (24) reportedly killed the tiger on April 25 inside the National Park.<sup>27</sup>

**July 22, 2017**

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

On denunciation, four men were arrested while trying to sell the skin of a young tiger. The suspects, identified as Sandeep alias Monu (22), Rajesh (33), Ramkumar (33), and Abhijit alias Matru (30), obtained the skin from a certain Avinash, which would be the leader of trafficking. Photos of the skin's stripes were taken to try to locate the origin of the victim. But some experts who have seen the skin doubt its authenticity. One of them even said: "It could be a dog skin with stripes painted on it" ... The picture appears to prove him right.<sup>30</sup>



## Tiger Fishing

## REPEATED OFFENSE

July, August and September 2017

**Pench Tiger Reserve and Kolutmara, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, Tirodi, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India**

- The case started end of June ("On the Trail" n° 17 p. 61). Four canines 11 and 12 cm long were found in a hut in Kolutmara. "Earlier, it was thought of that these fishermen are only involved in illegal fishing and were doing it to earn livelihood. But apart from illegal fishing, they were also involved in poaching tigers and trading body parts. They also killed herbivores like chital and sambars for meat." The reserve managers are astounded.

To this day, nine people are indicted for poaching and trade in tiger parts. They are being kept in custody. They were refused bail. The first instance judge prefers to keep them in reach. "Besides, if released, there is every possibility that evidence will be tampered. The arrested men are habitual offenders and a couple of them had also damaged forest department's camera traps fearing they might have been caught on camera". Other organs or parts such as tiger skins could have been exported to Tirodi in the adjacent Madhya Pradesh.<sup>24</sup>



- Wildlife racket in the Pench reserve vouch for one more trophy. 12 whiskers kept in a jar were found in Tirodi at a certain Kudsam's home, whose parents live in Kolutmara, the fishermen village who fishing at night in the Totladof dam reservoir inside the Pench reserve and set traps for both carnivores and herbivores. At home or in hiding places, 12 kg of bones, 14 claws and four canines all from tigers were found. Kudsam says the whiskers come from a tiger poisoned by insecticide poured into a water spot. It is true that a barrel of Monocrotophos, an insecticide deadly at high doses, had been found empty in the area. The Kolutmara fishermen also fish tigers. Investigations continue. To this day, 10 people have been indicted, they are accountable for the death of at least four tigers.<sup>25</sup>



- Mukesh Uike admitted to have discharged Monocrotophos into a watering hole in April, where a tiger would regularly visit to quench its thirst. The tiger died from poisoning. The case of the fishermen located in the Pench Tiger Reserve becomes more and more seedy. 77 tiger whiskers, ranging from 3.5 to 14 centimeters long, have just been recovered in the courtyard of a former Balaghat district representative. They were buried in a plastic bag.



The tiger whiskers are one of the instruments used by black magic sorcerers, who claim to have the power to make the rain fall and to ward away evil curses. Following the country's demonetization and banknote withdrawal, a crazy rumor said that the tiger whiskers, when accompanied with occult chants, could make new money rain. Other sources say that the whiskers are used by dentists to heal toothaches (cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p. 55). A specialist with the Wildlife Protection Society reports that a powder made from the whiskers can be sprinkled on food to incite internal hemorrhages and used as a mortal poison. An adult tiger has from 50 to 78 whiskers.

- Mid August, the confessions from the "tiger fishers" and police searches have led to the seizure of 12 kg of bones, 14 claws, four canine teeth, 89 whiskers, a 12 cm<sup>2</sup> square of hide, and various poaching and butchering tools. 17 people are in Forest Custody remand. The confessions of RV Kodwate, former local elected official, sound like a grim comic strip. He recounts that the corpse of the tiger, deemed to be killed in a territorial fight, was transported overnight on a fishing smack in a remote spot of the reserve, and that the bones were extracted with a kind of crowbar. The four paws were cut off with a machete, and the body was buried in a ravine. At least five tigers were butchered by the gang.

- Uike or Uikay, one of the main suspects, the man responsible for the insecticide incident, fled in the early hours Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August morning. He was in Forest Custody remand. He was, or was believed to be, guarded by three Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) agents in a tourist lodge that was closed due to monsoons within the Pench reserve. The three guards were sleeping soundly when their prisoner escaped. They were immediately suspended from their duties. A dog team was called to the rescue to find the fugitive's trail in the jungle, but it was not a great help. The dogs were led astray in the driving rain. Uike is a big shot. He is the one who had ties to the black magic groups and who supplied on call for tiger organs  
...../.....

## Tiger Fishing - Followed

- On August 26<sup>th</sup>, nine days after his escape, Uike was found dead on the side of the road that leads from Dhawlapur, his village, to Wanera. His body did not have any injuries but 1,500 villagers gathered immediately and called for revenge. His two sons demand the truth. Fresh supply of Police are called in. The district's roads are covered with insulting tags for the investigators, one of which is "Death to Gawande". He is the one who directs the inquiry.

- On September 4<sup>th</sup>, the judge requested released on bail for the other 16 suspects. The forest service announces that they will appeal the decision at the beginning of the week. "The suspects are accused of illegal fishing but also of tiger poaching and trading," they insist. A local elected official speaks out to denounce the harassment of the natives: "They use the tiger organs to cure cancer and other illnesses. They are not organized poachers and should not be tortured," she says.<sup>26</sup>

- Uike's autopsy proves that he was intoxicated by a drink containing alcohol and pesticides. It is not known if it was a suicide or poisoning. The police suppose that during his escape, Uike was sheltered and fed by villagers. The comprehensive investigation on the "tiger fishers" in the Pench Tiger Reserve is no longer moving forward. The three inspectors who had gathered the incriminating evidence, the corroborating testimonies, and uncovered kilograms of tiger bones and quantity of whiskers were left out of the procedure. A new investigation team was just named by the Chief Forest Conservator of Maharashtra. The team is directed by the field director of the Pench Reserve, three senior forest service managers, the president of the Satpuda Foundation for the protection of wildlife and forests, and the famous legal advisor Kartik Shukul, who is an expert in animal trafficking. To be continued...

## July 2017

### **Melghat Tiger Reserve, State of Maharashtra, Jim Corbett National Park, State of Uttarakhand, Amangarhn Tiger Reserve, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Population decline in the Melghat tiger reserve. 41 tigers officially counted in 2017 including 10 sub adults versus 43 tigers and 13 sub adults in 2016.

- Melghat and its 2000 km<sup>2</sup> can harbor about a hundred tigers. The Tadoba reserve, 1700 km<sup>2</sup>, and Pench reserve, 660 km<sup>2</sup>, boast for respectively 80 and 44 tigers. The president and wildlife expert from the NGO Satpuda believes that the presence of only 41 tigers is depressing, especially since while costing tens of millions of rupee, 15 villages were transferred outside the reserve and that tigers were transferred into Melghat from other State reserves. "Administrator's must question this failure." They answer that themselves and the watching teams have much to do to deal with the human encroachments, domestic herd intrusions, fires and poaching.<sup>28</sup>

- The Jim Corbett National Park and the Amangarhn tiger reserve are contiguous. The Park is attached to Uttarakhand administration; the reserve is in Uttar Pradesh. The forest services of both States make uncoordinated counts, even though tigers can travel 20 km in a day and poachers ignore administrative borders. The last counts dating back to 2015 came to 215 tigers in the Jim Corbett National Park, 512 km<sup>2</sup>, and 13 in the Amangarhn reserve are unreliable. Poachers take advantage of this lack of cooperation between forest services of the two neighbor States. In March 2016, Ramchandrar and his gang from the Bawaria tribe entered the Jim Corbett park and poached around ten tigers then retreated into Uttar Pradesh where they buried in several ditches skins and bones.<sup>29</sup>

### **End of July and August, 2017 India**

The committee of 11 experts must turn in a report within the next three months addressing the feasibility of partial transfer of thirty or so tigers, some of which come into regular conflict with nearby human activity, from the reserve in Bramhapuri. The opinions are mostly circumspect.

"Even if you take away 10 adult tigers, there are 10 sub-adult cubs waiting to occupy their territories," says the group of experts. Indeed, the sub-adults occupy the terrain immediately, very happy to leave the fringes and the exterior of the reserve where they are pushed into and where they are victims of collisions with cars and trains, electric fences surrounding aggressive households, gunshots, and fights with their nery congeners.

"We will discuss areas where once there were tigers, but now there are none. For example, Gadchiroli." The Ministry of Forests says that a decision will be made based on the committee's report.<sup>31</sup>

### **August 10, 2017**

#### **Tumsar, Bhandara District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Another conviction to 3 years prison for Kuttu (See "On the Trail" n°17 p. 60). This time he admitted having killed by using a metallic trap an adult tiger in Gaimukh in 2013. Three of his helpers were also sentenced to 3 years time. The four of them in addition received a fine worth 25 000 rupee. Kuttu immediately after hearing the conviction was taken under high surveillance to Lakhimpur Khiri in Uttar Pradesh where he must face trial for a case of smuggling sandal wood. "It is good to see that all the accused were found guilty" say the forest services.<sup>32</sup>



## TIGERS - FOLLOWED

### FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 14, 2017

**Nagpur district, State of Maharashtra, India**

New release on bail refused for three men of the Baheliya community who were suspected of tiger poaching in the Masondi region, based on converging evidence and testimonies (cf. "On the Trail" n°17 pages 60/61). Kartik Shukul, anti-poaching expert, offered further confirmation. Two of the accused say they do not know each other, but Shukul said that based on the genetic analysis, they are brothers.<sup>33</sup>

**Ramanagar Forest, near the Corbett Tiger Reserve, State of Uttarakhand, India**

A first for the State. The forest service used metal detectors to find traps set by poachers of the Bawaria tribe. This is just the beginning. Only two detectors are available to cover an area of 487 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>34</sup>



August 2017

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

The buffer zone of the reserve considered as an Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ) will be reduced by 75% (from 1,200 km<sup>2</sup> to 312 km<sup>2</sup>). Under local political pressure, the government of the State of Karnataka decided to remove the community of Joida and its 96 villages from the ESZ. The ESZ is an extension of the reserve where five tigers live, according to the 2014 inventory. To widen National Highway 4A, 38,000 trees will be cut down. 1,700 of them are within the reserve. The Kali reserve, which is surrounded or criss-crossed by cars and by agriculture, is a small scale example of what is happening in the whole world.

Local wildlife protectors say that the government should remove its label from the Kali tiger reserve, as nothing is done to protect it. They are deeply concerned by the fact that the large trekking trail, with the option of the "canopy trail", goes through the reserve without requesting the opinion of the NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority).

Ecologists consider that this new tourist activity is a major disturbance to wildlife. They fear the accumulation of waste, noise pollution, accidental fires, and the frightening away of the birds. According to the latest information, the trekking trail could be rerouted from the initial plan.<sup>35</sup>

## MYANMAR

Sunday July 9, 2017

**Tachileik, Shan State, Myanmar. Border to Thailand.**

There was a dead tiger at the back of their car. The two men told Customs that they bought him in Thailand. They wanted to sell it in Mong La, the famous international wildlife market place near the border between Myanmar and China.<sup>36</sup>

## NEPAL

September 13, 2017

**Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal**

It is the fourth skin seized since the start of the year. 2.7 m long, 60 cm wide. Just the right doormat to ward off robbers. The Bawarias are back.<sup>38</sup>



## THAILAND

August 24, 2017

**Wang Phai, Chumphon Province, Thailand**

24 humans and two tigresses in a bus—humans in the seats, tigers in plastic boxes in the baggage compartment. Coming from Koh Samui, they had already been on the road for five hours, and they had at least six more to go. The driver had agreed to deliver the "kittens" to Bangkok for \$30 US. The fate of tigresses, aged two and four months, was not disclosed by the authorities, which estimated their value at \$15,000 US each.<sup>39</sup>



## TIGERS - FOLLOWED

### VIET NAM

#### Beginning of July 2017

##### **Tho Xuan District, Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam**

The wife of Nguyen Mau Chien, the traffic baron who was arrested last April (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 87) exploited a tiger farm in deplorable conditions. A teenager had recently been bitten there by one of the felines. Following the detention of the trafficker, the Thanh Hoa People's Committee ordered an inspection of the breeding farm, which demonstrated that it was not compatible with the status of a "wildlife conservation facility". As the initial license had expired, the People's Committee recommended that the government refuse a new license. Mau Chien remains behind bars pending trial.<sup>37</sup>

#### September 5, 2017

##### **Phu Hoi, Duc Truong District, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam**

Vo Anh Huy (32 years), owner of the Huy Hoang joinery in Phu Hoi, had been producing a homemade liqueur for his clients and guests: a young tiger of 10 kg drowned in the alcohol. The police found a second tiger cub in a refrigerator. Both corpses were seized.<sup>40</sup>

## LIONS

**African lions (*Panthera leo*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, Indian lions (*Panthera leo persica*) under Appendix I.**

### AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### July 3, 2017

##### **Near Modimolle, District of Waterberg, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

The Limpopo police opened an investigation to find those responsible for the death by poisoning of 3 lions in the "Kareefontein farm". During a patrol near the lion pen, guards discovered the beheaded carcasses. Legs had been severed too. Only a knife was found on the scene.<sup>41</sup>



#### Beginning of July 2017

##### **Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

There will be no lawsuit against the farmer who killed a lion and wounded another one on his farm when they attacked his cattle. The felines were part of a group of three companions who had fled from Kruger Park. The National Parks Administration dispatched a helicopter and a team to find them

in the early morning. They were spotted near the farm. The runaway stopped there: the two lions last were shot dead. SANParks spokesperson William Mabasa said: "The terrain was difficult and we could not drug them".<sup>42</sup>

#### July 18, 2017

##### **Elandsfontein, Waterberg District, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

The guards of the private park in Makanyane, assisted by members of the NGO Heritage Protection Group, had set out on the trail of suspicious tracks. Finally a man was arrested. He's suspected of trying to poison lions in the area.<sup>43</sup>



#### August 8, 2017

##### **Kroonstad, Orange Free State Province, South Africa**

Three lions poisoned in their pen at Lusthof Farm, a hunting reserve. The guards found their carcasses; legs were severed and jaws cut out. The police are investigating, the killers are still running.<sup>44</sup>



#### August 11, 2017

##### **Vaalwater, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Two lions poisoned to death and dismembered in the night in a pen. The muzzles and paws were stolen. One of the feline's stomachs had been opened but none of the organs had been removed. Previously in June, in Limpopo, two captive lions that had been rescued from Colombian and Peruvian circuses had been killed and mutilated (cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p. 62).<sup>45</sup>



#### August 12, 2017

##### **Marble Hall, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Now over to the lions at the Bushfellows Game Lodge, who were kept in small cages for the guests' entertainment. Here again, the heads and the paws were cut off. The thieves had enough time to remove the hearts and the adrenal glands, which are used to "scare the enemies and to be protected from attacks," according to a traditional healer interviewed by the newspaper *The Citizen*. The police worry about the rising incidents of poaching of captive lions in Limpopo. No arrests were made.<sup>46</sup>

## LIONS - FOLLOWED

**August 18, 2017**

### **Gauteng Province, South Africa**

A five year-old lion poisoned with arsenic. His owner swears to force the criminals out of hiding. The motives of the crime are unknown. Without a doubt, it was a failed attempt to strip the lion of organs that are used in black magic or charlatan medicine.<sup>47</sup>



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## BOTSWANA

**August 5-6, 2017**

### **Middlepits, Kgalagadi District, Botswana**

Four native Botswana, 30 year-old men, were stopped in their tracks Sunday around midnight on the road between Middlepits and Bogogobo when their car was blocked by a police patrol. What came out of the search - to the surprise of the police - was two lion skins and bones, which, according to their size and quantity, could also come from two lions. A lion skeleton sells for nearly \$3,000 US in Southern Africa, and for much more when it is sold in retail in Asia to cure rheumatisms or to make out relentlessly.<sup>48</sup>

## MOZAMBIQUE

**July 3, 2017**

### **Limpopo National Park, Gaza Province, Mozambique**

Wildlife traffickers' networks are diversifying in Mozambique: lions' bones are being added to their catalogue. National Park agents followed the footsteps of three poachers in the Intensive Protection Zone. They end at their encampment and nearby a snare trap with a poisoned bait, as well as the bodies of three lions and a hyena. The previous week, snares and a bag of poison had already been found in the vicinity. The product used would be Temic, an insecticide and nematicide based on aldicarb, the use of which is restricted in the USA and banned



in the European Union since 2007. Very soluble in water, it migrates easily to soils and is bioaccumulative. The remains of the poisoned animals were burned to prevent further contamination. This is the third time in two years that lions have been killed for their bones in the park. A nyala (*Tragelaphus angasii*) trapped in one of the snares was freed.<sup>49</sup>



*Tragelaphus angasii*

## NAMIBIA

**Mid July 2017**

### **Namibia**

Namibia shares 800 km of border with South Africa. In response to export permits for 800 farm lion skeletons from South Africa to Asia (see "On the Trail" n°17 p.62), sanctions for anyone caught in possession of bones will be notably harshened. The fine will be one million Namibian dollars (\$ 77,000 US) and prison sentence up to 10 years. The Minister of the environment and tourism Pohamba Shifeta fears that liberalization of lion bone trafficking in South Africa will encourage trans-border trafficking. In Namibia, the population of wild lions barely reaches a few hundred individuals. In South Africa, 6 to 8000 lions are held in captivity in breeding farms. Traditionally the asiatic clientele prefers wild animal bones to those from breeding farms.<sup>50</sup>

**September 2017**

### **Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia**

AfriCat reports that the two young lions were killed by bullets. AfriCat's mission is to protect farmers, domestic livestock, and lions. The lions are accused of attacking the livestock.<sup>51</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

**July 7, 2017**

### **Ngamo Forest, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

Xanda, a 6 year old male lion was killed by a hunter from the United States or Europe. For the moment his identity is being kept secret. Xanda is a descendant of Cecil, the lion killed by Walter Palmer, a dentist from Minnesota, two years ago. 13-year-old Cecil's death had cause a wave of upset around the world. Andrew Lovebridge, from the Oxford University, expert on mega fauna who studies and follows the consecutive generations of lions in Hwange park is appalled. Luke Hunter, President of the NGO Panthera is worried. .../...

## LIONS - FOLLOWED

.../... Xanda was the dominant male of a group of three females and 7 lion cubs. His passing will enable another male to take the lead of the group and his priority will be to kill all the cubs. Genetically he will not put up with being one adoptive father. Xanda's death is not just his death, it is a full blow to the whole staggering lion population of Hwange park. The hunt was organized by Richard Cook Safaris.<sup>52</sup>

### August 2, 2017 Mashonaland West and Matabeleland North Provinces, Zimbabwe

This is a zone where the wildlife can be seized and strangled by metal traps at any given time. The lone adult lion was a victim of one. He was burned to prevent poachers from pillaging its carcass. Bones, heads, paws, genital organs and heart - all lion parts are up for sale.<sup>53</sup>



### September 28, 2017 Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Anesthesia and veterinary care during the night for a lion whose back and abdomen had been trapped in a metal trap. None of its vital organs was affected. The prognosis is optimistic.<sup>54</sup>



## AMERICA

### MEXICO

#### June 10, 2017 Mexico, Mexico

Seizure of an African lion. He was living on a building roof top.<sup>55</sup>

**August 4, 2017**  
**Puebla de Zaragoza, State of Puebla, Mexico**  
Seizure of a lioness. Her cage did not guarantee her the "dignified and respectful" treatment prescribed by section 119 of the Wildlife Act. She was transferred to the zoo.<sup>56</sup>



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## ASIA

### TURKEY

#### August 23, 2017 District of Cizre, Province of Sirnak, Turkey

Find of a male lion cub in a discarded car near the border with Syria. It was handed over to the zoo of Gaziantep. He is about a month old and bottle-fed 8 times a day, with milk and quail eggs.<sup>57</sup>



### PUMAS

Pumas (*Puma concolor*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, except the subspecies *Puma concolor costaricensis* listed under Appendix I.

## AMERICA

### ARGENTINA

#### July 15, 2017 Candelaria, Province of Misiones, Argentina

20 days after parading all over Facebook waving a puma corpse, Martin Andrada received a visited from the « Division de Delitos Rurales ». The feline's stuffed head, his meat in the freezer, an armadillo shell, 11 knives, 5 traps, 2 fire arms and 91 rounds of ammunition were seized. He has been indicted for possession of prohibited weapons and cruelty to animals.<sup>58</sup>

**July 31, 2017**  
**Chumbicha, Province of Catamarca, Argentina**  
Seizure of 2 puma skins, 3 paws, puma meat and offal.<sup>59</sup>

#### September 22, 2017 Province of Santa Fe, Argentina

After Winkler killed pumas, triumphantly wore their skins, and broadcasted his feats on social media, he was arrested in his home. The troops found two firearms there, material for nighttime hunting, a puma skin, and two non-human skulls of unidentified species. Winkler was released after the report.<sup>60</sup>



facebook

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## JAGUARS

Jaguars (*Panthera onca*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

### AMERICA

#### MEXICO

July 12, 2017

**San Luis Potosí, State of San Luis Potosí, Mexico**  
Seizure from an individual's home of Kain, one young male jaguar of about a year.<sup>61</sup>



August 3, 2017

**Culiacan, State of Sinaloa, Mexico**

Seizure of a female jaguar about eight months old. Her master lodged her in "unworthy and disrespectful" conditions.<sup>62</sup>

September 3, 2017

**Tonalá, State of Chiapas, Mexico**

The police raided a ranch. Seizure of 20 weapons of various categories, from a pistol to an AK 47, of 4,500 cartridges, a jaguar skin, a stuffed jaguar and a stuffed white-tailed deer. Five arrests.<sup>63</sup>

## LEOPARD CATS

Wild leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, except in Bangladesh, India and Thailand where they are listed in Appendix I.

### ASIA

#### VIET NAM

July 2017  
Viet Nam

Sàng, a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) will not see freedom again. He was saved from a snare trap in July by Save Vietnam's Wildlife but the injury on his right front paw will prevent him from climbing or jumping. Snare traps are easy to place, cheap and efficient. The more the animal struggles, the more the metal enters deep into the flesh.<sup>64</sup>



August 7, 2017

**Thoai Son District, An Giang Province, Viet Nam**

The man had bought it two days before. After 48 hours, he realized that he had made a mistake. He called ENV. The Forest protection department took action. The release of the leopard-cat into the wild is being considered.<sup>65</sup>



In a cage, leopard-cats never leave their tail out of the bars.

August 28, 2017

**Province of Kien Giang, Viet Nam**

For sale on Facebook a leopard-cat. Seized by the police, he will be released in the forest.<sup>66</sup>

facebook



## ONCILLAS AND OCELOTS

Oncillas (*Leopardus tigrinus*) and ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

### AMERICA

#### BRAZIL

July 28, 2017

**Sete Quedas, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil**

Seizure of an oncilla on the brinks of being sold in the town center.<sup>67</sup>



ONCILLAS ET OCELOTS - FOLLOWED

AMERICA

ECUADOR

August 3, 2017

El Carmen Canton, Province of Manabí, Ecuador

Seizure of a female ocelot about six months old recently captured in the wild. Her claws and canines were not filed. After the quarantine, she could, if all goes well, be released in the forest of La Perla near Concordia. The man who tried to sell it on the social networks is subject to the prosecution under article 247 of the Criminal Code.<sup>68</sup>



LYNX

Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) are listed under CITES Appendix II except the Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*) listed under Appendix I.

EUROPE

SUISSE

July 13-14, 2017

Vallée des Ormonts, Canton of Vaud, Switzerland

Two young Eurasian lynx females returned to wildlife after being released into the Ormont Valley. They had been discovered in distress near the dead body of their mother killed by a poacher in the spring near the Chamossaire, a mountain in the Vaud Pre-Alps. The forest wardens had been able to catch them and entrusted them to the Juraparc animal park in Vallorbe. For Najla Naceur, assistant nature conservator, "they were given a helping hand because an orphan lynx has almost no chance of survival. Fed with roe-deer meat, we hope that they will now regain their hunting instinct". They're equipped with radio collars to track them. One seems to be doing well: remains of her preys were found. But the other one is worrying because no carcass has been seen on her territory. Pressure on the lynx population in Switzerland is increasing. The year 2016 was the deadliest since the reintroduction of lynx between 1971 and 1975. Of an estimated population of 172 individuals, 29 were lost. The main causes of adult deaths are road and railway collisions and poaching. Eight orphans were found dead.<sup>69</sup>

VARIOUS SPECIES FELINES

AFRICA

KENYA

End of July 2017

Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

Arrest of a "businessman". He detained lion, cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatu*, Appendix I), leopard, buffalo, hyena and other wild animals skins.<sup>70</sup>

UGANDA

August 24, 2017

Uganda

Seizure of a leopard skin, a cheetah skin (*Acinonyx jubatu*, Appendix I), and 6 python skins.<sup>71</sup>

AMERICA

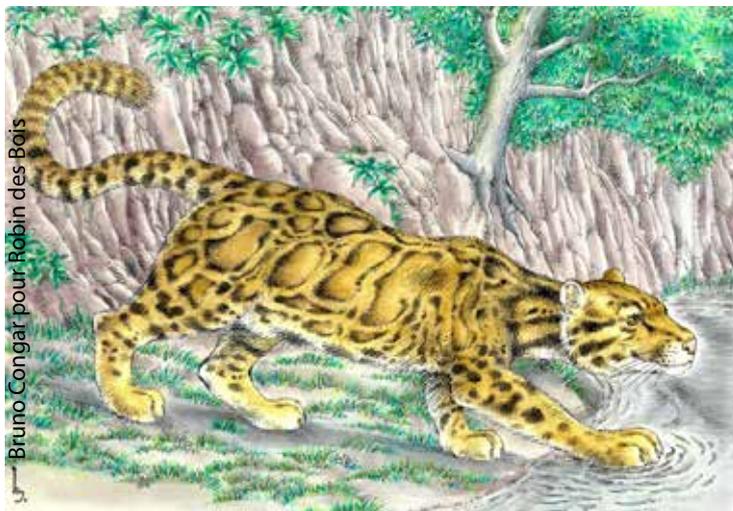
MEXICO

August 25, 2017

Ciudad Juarez, State of Chihuahua, Mexico

Seizure of three Bengal tigers, a lion and a Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletti*, Appendix II) in a private home.<sup>72</sup>

ASIA



Bruno Congat pour Robin des Bois

INDIA

August 9, 2017

Gorchuk, State of Assam, India

Seizure of a leopard skin, a clouded leopard skin (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I) and 3.67 kg of bone. Ranjan Rabha and Subal Rabha, both in their 30s, acted as foot carriers between the border States of Meghalaya and Assam. The value of the seizure is estimated at 550,000 rupee or \$ 8570 US.<sup>73</sup>

# Wolves



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**Wolves (*Canis lupus*) are listed under CITES Appendix II except the populations of Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan listed under Appendix I.**

## EUROPE

### GERMANY

**July 8, 2017**

#### **State of Baden Württemberg, Germany**

It wasn't a dead dog that the police pulled out of the lake. It was a wolf—and what a wolf! It came from the North, near Bremen. After 600 km of running, walking, and hunting—even though no loss of sheep or goats had been recorded on its route - it seemed the wolf had been in the south of Germany, very close to Switzerland, for two weeks. He was killed by a bullet. This is the 24th wolf killed in Germany in the past 17 years. In Baden Württemberg, wolves had been exterminated from 1866 year.<sup>1</sup>

### SPAIN

**September 15, 2017**

#### **Principality of Asturias, Spain**

The local government wants to clear one third of the territory in order to make it a No Wolf Zone. No quotas, no control, no mercy for wolf cubs or pregnant females.<sup>2</sup>

### FRANCE

**July 12, 2017**

#### **Grenoble, Department of Isère, France**

The Administrative Court of Grenoble declared illegal an order issued by the Prefect of the Drôme on September 1st 2015 permitting a "reinforced hunting" on a wolf located in the territory of three communes, Lus-la-Croix-Haute, Treschenu-Creyers and Glandage. The animal -in fact a she-wolf- was killed during a beat organized a few days after the authorization. The judge, who had been seized as a matter of urgency, had at the time refused to suspend the order. This time the Administrative

Court held that not everything had been done to protect the herds, and that permission to shoot to kill should only be granted if dissuasion shots had first been attempted. Wildlife protection associations, together with peasants, note that the number of wolves' attacks on herds has increased since 2015.<sup>3</sup>

**July 20, 2017**

#### **France**

Permit to slaughter 40 wolves between July 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 and June 30, 2018 has been renewed. After the 32<sup>nd</sup> victim, only defensive shots to repel or kill wolves while they are attacking herds will be allowed. This decision that might be amended or adapted to specific circumstances has been met with discontent from all sides.<sup>4</sup>

**July 24 – August 10, 2017**

#### **Cervières, Beaufort, Le Monétier-les-Bains, Cipières, Department of Hautes-Alpes, Savoie Department and Alpes-Maritimes, France**

Shooting to kill authorized by the Minister of ecology of an adult male, one male, an other adult male and three wolves cubs.<sup>5</sup>

**September 20 and 22, 2017**

#### **Orcières, department of Hautes-Alpes, Les Allues, department of Savoie, Belvédère, Alpes Maritimes, France**

Minus two female wolves and one male wolf. 19 wolves were "removed" in the context of a legal slaughter of 40 wolves between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.<sup>6</sup>

### ROMANIA

**August 2017**

#### **Romania**

The break for the wolves is over. The environment minister Grațiela Gavrilescu announced that by the end of the year, 97 wolves will be killed if they directly threaten domestic herds, or if they go too close to human communities.

This so-called "precautionary" predation is rousing wolf protectors, who consider that this is really about making hunting legal again. A license to kill a wolf brings in \$ 3,000 US for the government, in addition to the profit that the local guides, taxidermists, and the hotel industry makes. The break did not last long. A year ago, the government had banned the hunting of wolves, brown bears, lynxes, and wildcats.

As in Sweden, France, and the United States, the experts in Romania consider that shooting to kill reduces the effectiveness of pack hunting, and encourages survivors to fall back on livestock. Non-lethal methods to deter wolves from attacking herds such as in-person surveillance, electric fences, and various methods to scare them off are underused. One method that Humane Society International (HSI) mentions is the horse patrols organized by livestock breeders in the United States.<sup>7</sup>

# Bears and Red Pandas

## AMERICA

### CANADA

**August 2017**

#### **Province of British Columbia, Canada**

The provincial government announced that in line with its pre-election promises, it is prohibited to trophy hunt grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) starting from November 30 of this year.

For the past two or three decades, there has been mounting discontent about hunting grizzly bears in British Columbia. The climax of the campaign was reached in September 2015, when the photo of the famous Anaheim Ducks ice hockey player Clayton Stoner was published in a Vancouver newspaper, smiling with the head of a bear in his hands.

Since 2001 and the start of the hunting season again, it is said that 4,000 bears have been shot by amateurs of trophies who wanted to take home the head, hide or paws of their targets.

The Great Bear Rainforest covers 60,000 km<sup>2</sup> by the Pacific Ocean, from the middle of the province of British Columbia through Alaska, and also includes the islands of Haida Gwaii (formerly Queen Charlotte).

Thanks to the surprising exchanges between the trees, animals, salt and fresh water, the Great Bear Rainforest is the natural empire of killer whales, salmon, marbled murrelets, northern goshawks, tailed frogs, and mountain goats.

The bears play a key role. Although they capture and eat salmon, they ensure the survival of this amphidromous species. The leftover salmon that they leave at the bottom of giant trees release nutrients and help the plant cover to grow and regenerate. In return, the trees regulate the flow of water and their shadow protects the gravel pits where female salmon go to lay their eggs.

The Association for hunting guides of the province criticizes the ban on bear trophy hunting. According to its spokesperson, 5,000 hunters from outside the province contribute about 350 million dollars to the rural economy.

A major detail still needs to be settled. The government intends to ban trophy hunting, and to continue to authorize hunting for food. "There's clearly no way to enforce this," said Ian MacAllister, the Pacific Wild spokesman. "The only way they'd be able to do that is to video-monitor a hunter as they ate their grizzly bear dinner, to see if they did in fact consume the meat." The Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations says that in the coming months, all stakeholders will be able to exchange in order to settle how political decisions are made in practical terms.<sup>1</sup>



## ASIA

### CAMBODIA

**August 29, 2017**

#### **Kompong Chhnang, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia**

An Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) locked in a cage at Phkay Proeunk Guest House was discovered during a search conducted by the military police and the forest administration, supported by members of the NGO Wildlife Alliance. When the plantigrade was just a two-year-old cub, villagers who had killed its mother sold it to the guest house owner. As the authorities considered that it had been treated properly, they decided not to press charges against the woman. In 21 years, this is the 201<sup>st</sup> bear to be handed over to Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Center in Takeo Province.<sup>2</sup>

### CHINA

**July 2017**

#### **Changsha Airport, Hunan Region, China**

Seizure of 22.5 kg of Himalayan black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I).<sup>3</sup>

**August 29, 2017**

#### **Dandong, Province of Liaoning, China. Border with North Korea.**

In a suitcase declared as containing health food, customs officers discovered 110 bags and two boxes of products derived from bear bile (*Ursus* spp., Appendix I or II). The city of Dandong is on the border with North Korea. It is next to the Korean city of Sinuiju on the Yalou River.<sup>4</sup>



## **GANG**

**September 26, 2017**

### **Yanbian, Province of Jilin, China**

The police published the conclusions on the murder of a black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) in June in the forest of Xinkai. His remains were found on July 23, with a bullet in its head and its paws cut off. The investigations lasted two months. But in the end, seven suspects were arrested. About ten bear paws and three gall bladders were seized during the searches. At the beginning of September, an eighth accomplice finally turned himself in. The gang is said to have used homemade bombs and guns to kill at least three bears since June.<sup>5</sup>

## **INDIA**

**September 10, 2017**

### **Haldwani, State of Uttarakhand, India**

Arrest of Deepak Singh Rawat (32 years old) and Ganesh Singh (34) in possession of two bear gall bladders (*Ursus* spp., Appendix I or II). One of them weighed 210 g, the other one weighed 122 g. Poachers usually poison the females when they are with their cubs, to extract their gall bladder. The proximity with the Nepalese and Chinese borders facilitates trafficking.<sup>6</sup>

## **IRAN**

**July 6, 2017**

### **Tiran, Amol County, Mazandéran Province, Iran**

The corpse of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was discovered high on Mount Amol, near the village of Tiran, by a unit of the Iranian Wildlife and Heritage Watch. The rangers had heard several shots a few hours before. The shooter (s) have not been identified. They could be local arborists, who would try to prevent the bears from feeding on their fruits.<sup>7</sup>

**August 15, 2017 and September 19, 2017**

### **Gilan-e Gharb County, Kermanshah Province, Iran. Border with Iraq.**

Yet another brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) aged 2 to 3, shot down near cultivated land - this time near the gardens of Sarab Ghanbar.



The environmental protection ministry made the autopsy public. The animal was riddled with bullets shot by a group of individuals equipped with several rifles and shotguns loaded with lead shots and frangible bullets. Its dead body was then moved and left in a canal. The police launched an investigation on the locals and are trying to use the images from CCTV cameras.<sup>8</sup>

**September 2, 2017**

### **Terjenli, Golestan Province, Iran**

A big slip up by the rangers. They are accused by witnesses and videos to have poorly organized the administration of anaesthetics to a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) said to be "problematic," according to some villagers and a local elected official. The bear, which had been administered under-dosed hypodermic syringes, caused a skirmish. "Spectators" brutally intervened to "calm the bear down." It died from blows and live ammunition fire. The Ministry of the Environment opened an investigation.<sup>9</sup>

## **NEPAL**

**July 2017**

### **Nepal**

Kath is a place of transit and exhibition of animal remains, a kind of relay to China.

Between July 2016 and July 2017, 107 suspects were arrested there. Between July 2013 and July 2014, 64 suspects were arrested.

In three years, 53 red pandas (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I) were seized, while the overall population in Nepal, Bhutan, China and Myanmar did not exceed 300 individuals. The red panda is much more threatened than the giant panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*, Appendix I). His skin sells between 200,000 and 600,000 rupee (\$ 2000 - \$ 6000 US), depending on the quality, the size and the customer. Skins are sold off in Burma, then in China.<sup>10</sup>

## **VIET NAM**

**Early July 2017**

### **Province of Son La, Viet Nam**

A young Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) weighing 6 kg was seized by the police while being transported in a cage. One man was arrested. He intended to sell it.<sup>11</sup>



**July 19, 2017**

### **Viet Nam**

The Forest Administration (VNFOREST) and Animals Asia signed an agreement today that is expected to free approximately 1,200 captive bears held in more than 400 "bile farms" in the country. The bear bile trade is expected to stop within the next five years. Individuals are all captured in the wild. Bile extraction is a torture that can lead to death in a few weeks: drugged and fitted with a metal corsets equipped with a catheter than plunges directly into the gall bladder, the bears are locked in cages preventing them from moving. They are barely fed, so as to maximize bile production. The rescue program - estimated at 20 million US dollars - includes the construction of shelters for the released animals. But even saved from the clutches of their executioners, the bears do not have a rosy future. In China, the Chengdu Bear Rescue Centre notes that 60% of its 92 residents suffer from severe eye problems related to ill treatment and conditions during detention. Ten are totally blind.<sup>12</sup>

## **EUROPE**

### **ITALY**

**August 12, 2017**

#### **Autonomous Province of Trento, region of Trentino-Alto-Adige, Italy**

KJ2 was unlucky. She was walking home with her offspring in the forests near Lake Terlagio when she stumbled across a 69 year-old guy and his dog. KJ2 was scared for her two cubs and wounded the intruder's leg. The dog ran away. KJ2's maternal instinct was deemed a "problem" and a provincial government decree instructed immediate execution. This was carried out with the help of 30 forest rangers. The two bear cubs managed to get by all alone. Their presence is documented by camera traps. The Province of Trento received European funding to carry out the *Ursus* protection project.<sup>13</sup>

### **ROMANIA**

**August 2017**

#### **Romania**

The break for the bears is over. The environment minister is going back on her October 2016 decision to ban bear hunting (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II). She has announced that 140 bears could be killed starting from the end of the year. A video showing bears rummaging through trashcans and the village garbage dumps, supposedly spreading panic amongst the residents was very conveniently broadcasted just before the minister's speech. Instead of shooting, it would be more effective to manage household waste better and to use tightly closed trash cans that resist the curiosity and opportunism of bears. WWF Romania is blaming the massive deforestation and the fragmentation of the bear's habitats in the Carpathian Mountains. For the moment, there is still a ban on shooting lynxes and wildcats on sight.<sup>14</sup>

### **RUSSIA**

**July 2017**

#### **Vilkitski Island, Iamalo-Nenetsia Autonomous District, Russia**

A slaughter. Members of the Russian Geographic Society who were involved in a Soviet-era waste disposal operation found the corpses of six polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) shot by poachers. A first expedition on the island last April had already discovered the skin of a freshly killed bear. The culprits had been arrested. These new bodies appeared after the melting of the snow cover. The age, sex of the animals and the date of the killing are difficult to estimate. The heads have been severed in the manner of the manufacturers of bedrods. The price of such a "trophy" is about \$ 17,000 US.

Vilkitski Island, in the Kara Sea, was known to harbor a large population of polar bears. Poachers rushed on the site. Feeling safe, some even wrote messages on the walls of the lighthouse. One Stepan wrote, for example: "I was here, killed 5 bears, good luck to you". There would be no polar bears left on Vilkitski Island.<sup>15</sup>



### **UKRAINE**

**Beginning of August 2017**

#### **Lviv, Lviv Oblast, Ukraine**

Liberation by the NGO Four Paws of the last dancing brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) exhibited in front of the cafés of the historic city of western Ukraine. Four Paws plans to host five retired plantigrades in a Grisons house in Switzerland.<sup>16</sup>



# Hippopotamuses

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

AFRICA

## SOUTH AFRICA

July 2017

**Brits, North-West Province, South Africa**

The Hawks, a special unit of the South African Police, arrested three men with four hippopotamus teeth which they were trying to sell to an undercover police officer. The transaction took place in a garage of the chemical company Sasol. The traffickers, aged between 26 and 39, had been denounced by local residents while offering teeth for 1500 rand per kilo (\$ 115 US). Four mobile phones and a vehicle worth 100,000 rand (\$ 7700 US) were also seized.<sup>1</sup>

## MALAWI

August 17, 2017

**Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi**

Sentencing of an American (USA) preacher to a fine worth 200,000 kwacha (\$ 275 US) or in case of non-payment four months prison for unlawful possession of 1 kg of hippo teeth. For having attempted to export the ivory without a permit, the American citizen was also sentenced to 12 months prison, six of which are suspended sentence. Malawi is worried for its 2 to 3000 hippos. They are not "covered" by Appendix I granted to elephants and poachers fall back on them. Tourists also have started buying hippo ivory in the form of necklaces and other jewelry. In 2014, Uganda banned trade in hippo teeth and Malawi is thinking of taking equal measures. On the banks of Lake Malawi, several herds have already been decimated.<sup>2</sup>



## NIGER

July 10, 2017

**Ayérou, Region of Tillabéri, Niger**

Niger and hippos no longer go well together. Ayorou 200 km upstream from Niamey for a long time was a tourist attraction and naturalistic area thanks to its hippos. After some time of deterioration in cohabitation, the situation suddenly got worst. 27 hippos have been slaughtered since the month of March. No information has been communicated about what done with the teeth that can be sold on the black market for \$ 20 US/kg. Population and fishermen say they are very angry after 11 people were taken into custody for yet another poaching of a hippo. The local fishermen chief intends to practice regulation of hippos with his own team if the government does nothing to "park them in a reserve".<sup>3</sup>

## UGANDA

Beginning of July, 2017

**West Uganda**

Seizure of 140 hippo teeth and tusks.<sup>4</sup>



July 2017

**Kampala, Central Region, Uganda**

A suspect was arrested in the capital city with 38 hippopotamus teeth, no more information. 16 incisors and 22 canines, equivalent to at least 3 individuals.<sup>5</sup>



August 20, 2017

**Western Uganda**

215 teeth removed from hippopotamuses and trafficked across the border to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to EAGLE Uganda, the trafficker is in cahoots with "an army major already arrested a while back".<sup>6</sup>

August 21, 2017

**Kasese, West Region, Uganda**

One arrest and seizure of 73.7 kg.<sup>7</sup>



September 6, 2017

**Western Region, Uganda**

Seizure of teeth from about 15 hippopotamuses - 127 teeth, 56 kg.<sup>8</sup>



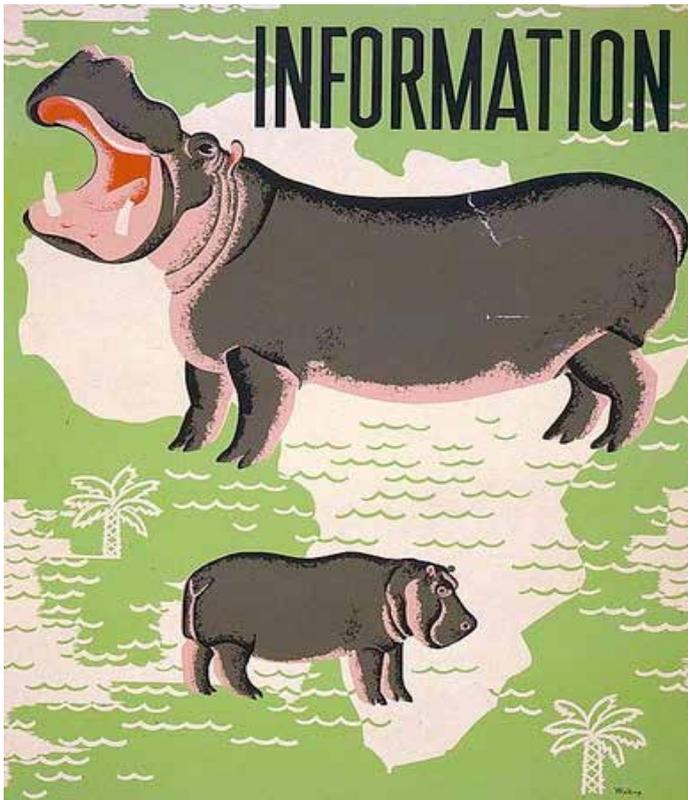
End of September,  
2017  
Northern Region,  
Uganda  
Seizure of 102 teeth.<sup>9</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

September 2017  
Sibilobilo, Kariba District, Mashonaland West  
Province, Zimbabwe

A patrol on the Upper Zambezi discovered four carcasses that were dismembered to the bone. Cartridges of various calibers were found on the scene. The meat seems to be the reason for this carnage. The poachers are butchers. The same patrol caught an illegal encampment of Zambian fisherfolk by surprise. 1,000 m of net, a wooden boat, and quite a lot of dried fish were seized.<sup>10</sup>



A new article published in the *African Journal of Ecology* promises to be explosive and shows once again that the CITES offices in exporting and importing countries do not speak the same mathematical language. The article recognizes Uganda's major role, along with Tanzania, in the profusion of small ivory items from hippopotamus found in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the ivory brand includes elephant, mammoth, and hippopotamus. In 2008, Uganda declared 400 kg of hippopotamus teeth for exportation to Hong Kong, and Hong Kong declared the importation of 3,879 kg—a notable difference involving at least 750 hippopotamuses. Between 1980 and 2016, Hong Kong reported to have received 3 t more than Tanzania said to have exported. These discrepancies in reporting discredit the CITES system; at least we can give it credit for the transparency of the contradictions. Another surprise revealed in the article "Missing Teeth," is that of the 707 t of legal hippopotamus ivory imported to Hong Kong since 1975, 55% were re-exported to the United States after having been worked in workshops - and only 8% toward mainland China.



# Rhinoceroses

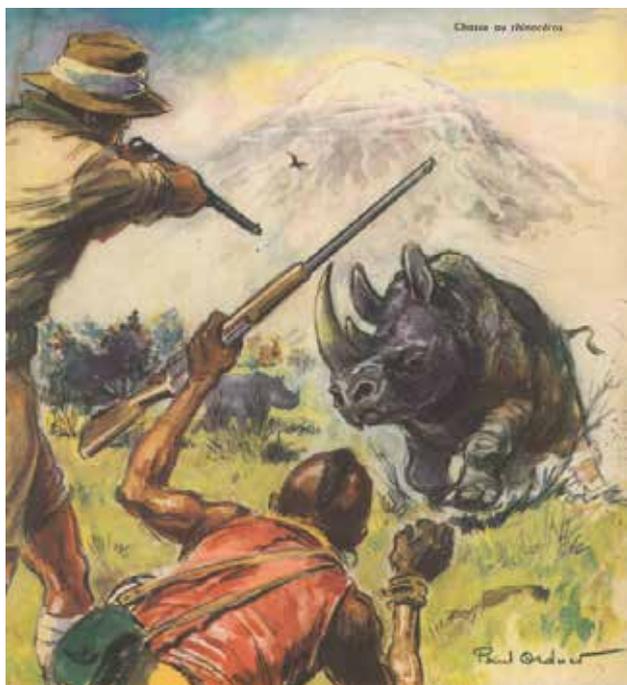
The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Swaziland and South Africa which are listed in Appendix II for trade of live animals and hunting trophies.

The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

## “On the Trail” n°18

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	China	25,610	67
		25,580	68
	Thailand	61,000	78



« Le Chasseur Français » n°738 - Août 1958.

## EASTERN AFRICA

### MALAWI

**Beginning of August 2017**  
**Liwonde National Park, Southern Region, Malawi**

There are only two rhinoceroses left in Malawi. Jabesi honorably known by rangers and tourists was poached and stripped of his anterior horn.<sup>1</sup>

## It's True, Yet Without a Doubt, False

Testimonies from vendors and antique dealers interviewed by Elephant Action League show that rhino horns on the Chinese market are fake - at least 80%, that the rhino items for sale on WeChat are phoney, and that it is easy to find an expert complicit in the scheme to tell you it is a genuine horn even though he knows at first glance that it is fake. Counterfeit jewelry, antiques or horns are actually made with crushed resin, hooves and horsehair. Clandestine workshops have even managed to lure famous auction houses. Some prices on the fool's market:

1 bowl	42,000 US\$
1 bracelet	1,500 US\$
4 bracelets (950 g)	140 US\$/g
Powder tablets	260 to 440 US\$/g
Pearls	117 US\$/g
Small sculpture	103 US\$/g

For the record, O'Brien, senior of the Irish gang Rathkeale Rovers, has a good knowledge of fake horns (cf. "On the Trail" n°16 p. 70).

### UGANDA

**August 18, 2017**  
**Entebbe International Airport, Kampala District, Uganda**

The Vietnamese national was coming to Kenya by road. His flight plan was to return to Hanoi via Doha on Qatar Airways.

The sniffer dogs immediately disapproved of the suitcase. There were 23.38 kg of horns inside, each weighing 1 to 3 kg. The police canine unit has been working for seven months. President Yoweri Museveni would like the unit to be working 24 hours day, including in the VIP section. The management in Entebbe received the order to dismiss anyone who may prevent the canine unit from accessing special zones.<sup>2</sup>



## TANZANIA

**August 12, 2017**

**Mamba, Mlele District, Katavi Region, Tanzania**

Octavian Mekriori and Jinasa Jinasa are accused of economic sabotage. At dawn, the two small farmers were found in possession of several pieces of horn.<sup>3</sup>

## ZAMBIA

**July 30, 2017**

**Chanida, Eastern Province, Zambia. Border with Mozambique.**

32.2 kg. 25 horns. Five arrests. Two Zambians and three Chinese.

There were more than 10,000 rhinos in Zambia in 1990. There are just a few dozens left today.<sup>4</sup>

## ZIMBABWE

**Early August 2017**

**Kwekwe, Province of Midlands and Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

Appearance of Dumisani Moyo wanted for multiple rhinoceros poaching in four Southern African countries. Cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.73.

Before being arrested in Kwekwe, Zimbabwe, he had fled from Botswana where he had been released on bail of 10,000 pula (\$ 1,000 US) after surrendering his passport to the police.

The Harare court prosecutor points out that Moyo can not be released on bail again. "The risk of escape is too great". Before being possibly extradited to Botswana, Moyo has to respond in Zimbabwe for the charges of poaching four rhinoceroses in the province of Masvingo. The horns would have been sold in Zambia.<sup>5</sup>

**Beginning of September 2017**

**Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

Edson Chidziya, the director-general of Zimparks, is in custody. He is accused of hiding an audit report that discloses the theft of 56 rhinoceros horns in the State stock, two years ago. The estimated loss is \$ 3 million US. It appears that Chidziya and three of his subordinates weakened the security protocols by copying the keys to the safe and sharing them with each other, and perhaps with other people. Chidziya's silence regarding this audit has diminished the chances of the following inquiry to succeed.<sup>6</sup>

**September 22, 2017**

**South of Zimbabwe**

Poachers savagely attacked a rhino "mum" on World Rhino Day. She may come out of it alright, after taking a long time to recover. Her little one was not hurt.<sup>7</sup>

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**July 1-10, 2017**

Thanks to its network, Save the Rhino counted 40 poaching in 10 days "and again, we are not aware of everything".

The NGO is exasperated by the lack of communication from the Minister of the Environment and his refusal to regularly release the reports of poached rhinos.

For the past two years, the department was satisfied with four reports per year. In 2017, silence on this subject. Not even one press account on how many rhinoceros killed. No response either to questions about the ongoing audit of private horn stocks or the new formalities required to legitimize possession of one or more horns. Nothing new under the sun, except the rhinos declining more and more.

Save the Rhino attributes the poachers' resurgence of activity to the reopening of the domestic horn market and the knock-on effect caused by the announcement of auctions by Horn Tycoon John Hume (cf. "On the Trail" n°17, pp.73-74).

At some point, as the national press says, "inaction becomes an act".<sup>8</sup>

**Sunday, July 2, 2017**

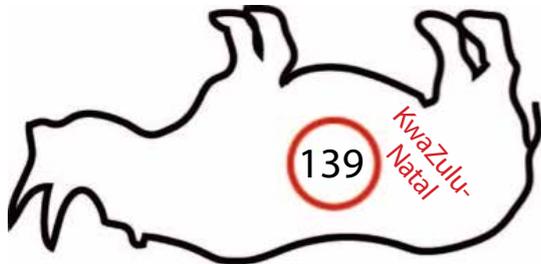
**Ntambana, Uthungulu District, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Alerted on the presence of a suspicious Mercedes-Benz, the anti-poaching rhino task force was able to intercept the vehicle this Sunday around noon, following research that started the day before. At the search, officers seized a horn, shotgun parts and ammunition. The 44-year-old female driver and her 33-year-old passenger, living in Hazyview, Mpumalanga Province, were scheduled to appear before the Ngweleza court on Monday.<sup>9</sup>



**Sunday July 2, 2017  
Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Six rhinos were slaughtered at night. Eleven shots were heard, alerting the rangers who discovered the corpses without their horns - sawn off. The gang of poachers had disappeared. This massacre brings to 139 the number of rhinos killed in KwaZulu-Natal since the beginning of the year.<sup>10</sup>



**July 2, 2017  
Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Poaching of two black rhinoceroses, a mother and her 4 months old young.<sup>11</sup>

**July 4, 2017  
Rietvlei Nature Reserve, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

- Poaching of a 40 years old female.
- Failed poaching of the male who managed to escape, limping, wounded but surviving.

The two had been preventively dehorned a year ago. Surveillance is reinforced day and night. The reserve covers 3800 hectares.<sup>12</sup>

**GANG  
July 5, 2017  
Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Accompanied by their lawyers, the Ndlovu trio, Jabulani, Forget and Sikhumbuzo, were charged with poaching 22 rhinoceros in three years:

- One white rhino on Bucklands Reserve near Grahamstown;
- Six white rhinos in two raids on the Pumba Game Reserves, near Grahamstown;
- Two white rhinos on Koffylaagte near Jansenville;
- Four white rhinos in three separate raids from Mount Camdeboo farm near Graaff-Reinet;
- Two white rhinos in two separate raids from Kleindoornberg farm near Cradock;
- Three in two separate raids on Spekboomberg, also near Cradock;
- Three from Sibuya Game Reserve near Kenton-on-Sea;
- One black rhino from the Great Fish River Reserve near Grahamstown.

They are reported to be of Zimbabwean nationality. Forget presents himself as a gamekeeper. According to the instruction file, the geolocation of their rental vehicle and their mobile phones matches to the poachings of which they are suspected.

The hypodermic gun that was seized at the time of the Ndlovu arrest would have been used in the poaching of the 22 rhinoceroses. The procedures and syringes are similar. M99 also known as Etorfine or Thiafentanil is used to anesthetize pachyderms when needed. At high doses, it is used to kill them and its use by the Ndlovu implies links with the vet community.

The trial is scheduled for November 30. In the meantime, the three Ndlovu, who would not be related, were released on bail. The risk of run away is high.<sup>13</sup>

**July 2017, night from 7 to 8  
Near Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa**

Poaching of a mum. Her baby was hosted at the orphanage for rhinos. He was in panic, covered with blood; rangers, police and volunteers watched him for hours until a truck chartered by OSCAP (Outraged SA Citizens Against Rhino Poaching) came to pick him up to drive him to the orphanage.<sup>14</sup>



**Weekend of July 7-9, 2017  
Bulgerivier, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

One female was found dead and dehorned at the Zinkshoek farm in Bulgerivier. The murder happened during the weekend but it was not reported until the beginning of the week to the police, who was reduced to calling for witnesses.<sup>15</sup>



**July 8, 2017  
Kroonstad, Free State Province, South Africa**

Five suspects were arrested at a farm in Kroonstad following a nighttime shooting near the Rhino Camp. The guards of the site had seen men climbing over the fence and came near. The reaction was immediate: shots were fired at the guards who fired back. Arriving on the scene, the police were able to apprehend two suspects on foot, and a third on standby in a vehicle. Two other men who were in the Odendaalsrur hospital with bullet wounds were subsequently arrested. Andries Baloyi, 36, Moketele Mthombeni, 28, Moses Mthombeni, 46, Isak Nteo, 36, and Dan Vilankulu, 34, appeared in Kroonstad Magistrate's Court on Monday on charges of rhino poaching.<sup>16</sup>



**July 9, 2017  
Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Reserve,  
KwaZulu-Natal Province, South  
Africa**

Two men suspected of poaching were killed at 3:30 am by the KZN Wildlife field rangers. After hearing voices and observing five suspicious silhouettes, the gamekeepers pointed their flashlights at the group and ordered them to lay down their arms. One of the men reportedly pointed his rifle at the officers, who immediately opened fire. Three suspects fled and were not found, despite the use of sniffer dogs. A rifle was seized. Police is investigating whether this gang is responsible for the Sunday July 2 killing (see above).<sup>17</sup>



**July 10, 2017  
Between Barberton and  
Nelspruit, Mpumalanga  
Province, South Africa**

A shooting broke out when officers from the White River K9 unit wanted to control a car from KwaZulu-Natal near the Tshwane University of Technology. They had received information involving his three occupants in rhino poaching. Two were able to escape, but the driver was stopped and a large horn was found hidden in the back bumper. One of the two fugitives was then arrested on the street.<sup>18</sup>



**REPEATED OFFENSE  
July 10 and 11, 2017  
Provinces of Mpumalanga and  
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

After a high-speed pursuit, the Nelspruit police K9 unit arrested a car first spotted at Hluhluwe. On board, the investigators arrested two men and seized a horn. The following investigation led the police to a private home in Ntambanana. Upon searching the premises, two high calibre rifles with serial numbers filed off were recovered as well as a dagger and ammunition. Two other suspects were arrested. One of them is a recidivist.<sup>19</sup>



**July 2017  
Near Manyeleti Game Reserve, Mpumalanga  
Province, South Africa**

Did Prince Mashele lead a double life? A prominent member of KNP (Kruger National Park) Protection Services, he organized the security of two gates to the park, security of access, security of transport of funds, control of road traffic. At the age of 50, Prince Mashele was a great chief supervisor.

At his home, the SAPS found rangers uniforms, ammunition, flashlights, a blue light, a quad motorbike, a bicycle, in short full equipment stolen from the KNP and likely to be lent or rented to poachers.

The new Skukuza Regional Court dedicated to rhinoceros cases charged Mashele with illegal possession of ammunition and theft. In a rush and without explanation, his file was transmitted to the court of Bushbuckridge which immediately released him on bail of 2000 rand (\$ 154 US).<sup>20</sup>



**July 15, 2017  
Botsalano Game Reserve, North West Province,  
South Africa. Border with Botswana**

Two rhinoceros less, poached and dehorned, a male and a female.<sup>21</sup>

**July 22, 2017  
Hluhluwe, KwaZulu-Natal  
Province, South Africa**

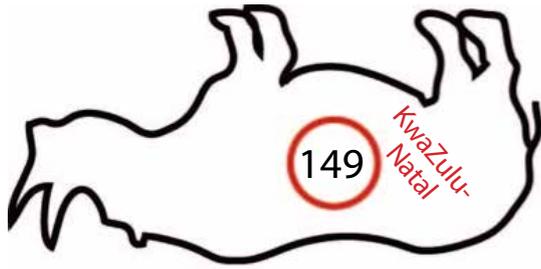
Saturday night. The car came from Melmoth 190 km away. It was chased by the anti-poaching police in the suburbs of Hluhluwe.

Because of the refusal to comply, it was decided to shoot to immobilize it. The fugitives shot back. The car went off the road. Three of the injured occupants were taken to the hospital. The fourth is dead. He's a policeman from Melmoth. He was 30 years old. A 303 rifle with an erased number, ammunition, a silencer, a 9 mm pistol and its ammunition, axes and minor equipment were seized. The car was followed from the start. The police were in possession of precise information. The four men were going to poach in the Hluhluwe reserve. The three survivors are charged with attempted murder, illegal possession of weapons and ammunition and offenses to the National Road Traffic Act.<sup>22</sup>



## KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

In July 2017, the death count is 149 rhinos poached since the beginning of 2017 against 162 for the whole year 2016 and 115 for 2015.<sup>23</sup>



**July 25, 2017**

### **Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Arrest of a 24-year-old Chinese girl from Lusaka to Hong Kong. She carried 11 rhino horns weighing 23 kg.<sup>24</sup>

**July 26, 2017**

### **South Africa**

### **Rhinoceros. Official record and unofficial record January to June 2016**

The Minister of the Environment announces that :

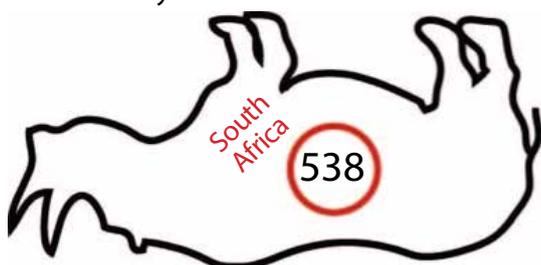
- 359 poachers and alleged traffickers were arrested in the first half of the year, including 90 in the Kruger Park and 112 in the adjacent province of Mpumalanga.

- 529 rhinos killed with high power hunting rifles handled mostly by Mozambicans against 542 in 2016 for the same period.

The DPCI (Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations), better known as Hawks, apprehended 13 suspects in nine trafficking cases involving 140 kg of horns. Madame Molewa is concerned about civil peace between all services and awards good points to all: DPCI, South African Revenue Service (SARS), Environmental Management Inspectors (SMIs) and South African Police Service (SAPS).

In summary, according to Molewa, things are not so bad, the rhinoceros massacre is attributed to Mozambique, compared to 2016 there were 13 less poached rhinoceros in the first half of 2017 and the specialized court in Skukuza will speed up the procedures and improve the quality of the judicial inquiries (except for the Prince Mashele file, see above!).

- OSCAP (Outraged SA Citizens Against Rhino Rhino Poaching) from the compilation of all reliable sources including those of SAPS comes to the record of 538 rhinoceros poached in the first six months of the year.<sup>25</sup>



**Friday July 28, 2017**

### **Hekpoort, Gauteng Province, South Africa Poaching and robbery**

The bandits of the weekend began by neutralizing the guards by tying them and grabbing their weapons and they continued shooting at the crash of rhinos as at the fair. One of them was killed and dehorned. The bandits left with the horn after robbing the lodge, stealing the guards cellars phones, radios and ammunition.<sup>26</sup>

**End of July, 2017**

### **Near Lephalale, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Arrest of seven men aged 24 to 52 suspected of poaching. Seizure of two cars, a fire arm and a silencer, ammunition and an axe.<sup>27</sup>



**August 3, 2017**

### **Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Appearance before Skukuza Special Rhinoceros Court. Msibi, a guide in Kruger Park, accompanied on 2 September 2014 a group of visitors to the Shisangeni section. They discovered a seriously wounded rhinoceros as a result of a conflict with another rhino. The next day Msibi was on leave. He took advantage of it to finish the rhinoceros and take possession of both horns with a knife and an axe. He pleads guilty.<sup>28</sup>

**August 3, 2017**

### **Uitenhage, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa**

Break in and robbery in a hunting reserve. Four armed men broke into the vault and stole two horns. They fled without leaving a trace.<sup>29</sup>

**August 4, 2017**

### **Ngwelezane, Empangeni, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

This is the 15<sup>th</sup> postponement of the trial of Dumisani Gwala and his two accomplices in two years. The three men charged with 10 charges for trafficking in rhinoceros horns are provisionally released on bail. Their usual trick is to dismiss their lawyers just before appearances or to not pay them, which leads them to withdraw. In court, Gwala and his two co-defendants invariably call for additional and sufficient time to hire new defenders and allow them time to review the case.

This is one of the knacks going on in South African courts when it comes to judging rhinoceros horn traffickers.<sup>31</sup>

Cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p.71, n°14 pp.63 and 66.

**4 août 2017**  
**Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**  
**The mysteries of the prestigious King Edward hotel**



The historic monument is in the hands of Sheik Khalaf Al Otaiba who's been making headlines for some years because of extravagant moves and unpaid bills and damages. At the top of the list of what is held against him, the hotel is in ruins and no renovation work has been taken on. A new event tarnishes even more the member of the royal family of the United Arab Emirate's reputation.

Starting with an anonymous tip-off, the Hawks began a search of the shabby palace and the sniffer dogs as well as their trainers noted a strong smell coming from a bolted in room.

The employees were unable to comply the elite corps' order to open it, under the pretext that only the Sheikh had the key and he was far off on a long voyage abroad. They broke through the door and four rhino horns, at least one of which was fresh, were immediately found by the police. Khalaf Al Otaiba's South African lawyer confirmed in a communiqué that his client was the only person to have a key to the room and that "the four horns were from dead rhinos that belonged to his Excellency". "We have scheduled this week a meeting with economic services of the province to proceed to register the horns and their return to the legitimate owner." Let us note in passing that if all goes as wanted by his lawyer, the Sheik who owns property assets in South Africa could in the end under the category of personal use export the horns to his home country.<sup>30</sup>

**August 9, 2017**  
**Kruger National Park, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Inside the park, crossfire between police, rangers and a trio of armed men. One of the suspects is mortally wounded. The two others are on the run.<sup>32</sup>



**9 August 2017**  
**Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa**  
 A female and a male shot at 1 km distance.<sup>33</sup>



**August 9, 2017**  
**Jeffreys Bay, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa**  
 Poaching and dehorning of two rhinos. A third is wounded.<sup>34</sup>



**August 9, 2017**  
**Hoedspruit, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**  
 Seizure of an unauthorized weapon, ammunition and an axe. Two arrests near the Madrid farm.



The Hoedspruit region, in Afrikaans « The Hat River », named that way after the farmer boer Dawid Johannes Joubert lost his hat there after a flash flood in 1844, was divided into parcels. The names were chosen because familiar to the settlers: Essex, Berlin, Moscow, Dublin, Madrid ...<sup>35</sup>

**August 10, 2017**  
**Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Seizure of horns hidden in a small electronic equipment in the suitcase of a Zimbabwean passenger. The destination of the contraband was not disclosed. The women aged 30 old risks up to 10 years in prison.<sup>36</sup>

**August 14, 2017**  
**Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Saving the Survivors vets were at Vrystaat's bedside. She was limping, but the bullets and shrapnel did not hit any of her vital organs. The prognosis was not bad. The two poachers were arrested.<sup>37</sup>

**August 16, 2017**  
**Near Tarkastad, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Large caliber rifle with ammunition and a blood stained axe but no horn in the Isuzu bakkie intercepted on Highway 61. Four suspects are in preventive detention. All the private reserves and ranches in the area are on the qui-vive and count and recount rhinos. The blood is analyzed in a scientific laboratory and the bakkie has been thoroughly searched, including the chassis and engine.

For the moment, only the carrying of prohibited weapons can be used against the suspects aged between 23 and 30 years. Ballistic research is underway to see if the weapon seized is linked to the poaching and dehorning of two rhinoceros a week ago in the Lombardini Game Farm between Jeffreys Bay and Humansdorp, 350 km from Tarkastad.<sup>38</sup>

**August 18, 2017  
Kruger National Park, South Africa**

Escape and end for two poachers. Following a contact with the rangers near Mkhuhlu and Cork south of the park, one poacher fled in the bush and the other was fatally wounded.<sup>39</sup>



**August 21-25, 2017  
Gauteng, South Africa**

Mixed results from an online auction of horns from John Hume's crash.

At the end of an eight-year legal battle, the Constitutional Court of South Africa ordered the lifting of the ban on rhinoceros horn trade within the country (cf. "On the Trail" n° 17 p. 73-74).

One week before the sale, the official homepage of the South African government and the site of John Hume were "seized" and erased for several hours by cyber pirates claiming to be Anonymous. "It's only the beginning," they warn.

At the eleventh hour, the Minister of the Environment, Edna Molewa, contested the legality of the auction of 264 horns with a total weight of about 500 kg. The day before the auction, the Supreme Court of Pretoria rejected the Minister's legal argument that the granting of the sales permit should have been signed by herself and not by the senior director, Olga Kumalo.

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, the lawyers and legal counsellors of the Private Rhino Owners Association, of which Mr. John Hume is a member, published a press release. They deplore the insufficient number of bidders and blame it on judicial harassment from the Minister of the Environment, which allegedly had prevented several interested parties from registering in a quiet and timely manner. However, they commend that the domestic market is being restored and that the road has been paved for new auctions.

As a reminder, the sale was legally accessible to foreign buyers under the condition that the horns remain in safekeeping in South Africa pending possible regulatory evolution of the regulations validated by Parliament. In particular, the capability for South African nationals and expats to export two horns as personal property.<sup>40</sup>

**August 20, 2017 – mid-September 2017  
Immerpan District, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Piet Van Zyl and his wife Tilla were murdered at home on Saturday night. There was blood everywhere, according to an officer who wanted to remain anonymous. The safe was forced. The inventory of funds or stolen goods is not known. The theft of horns is not ruled out. A year ago, Piet Van Zyl, 68, had been involved with two accomplices in the questionable detention of 113 rhinoceros horns (see "On the Trail" n°14 p.64). He was on bail. Perhaps he would have been better protected in prison.

Three weeks after the double murder, seven suspects were arrested. One of them Bhokodisa Vision Mbongwe, had been working for the Van Zyl for 24 years. He was dismissed after being involved in a poaching incident near Kalkpoort in 2016. All the suspects are believed to be from the circle of Big Joe Nyalungu (or Nyalunga) the Hazyview big shot whose trial has been consistently postponed for six years (see "On the Trail" n°6 p.62, n°7 p.62, n°9 p.66 and n°12 p. 69).<sup>41</sup>

**August 28, 2017  
Springs, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

The Mercedes managed to escape. The Ford ranger was caught in the net. In the back, the local police found two horns and a rifle. Four men are under arrest.<sup>42</sup>



**August 28, 2017  
KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

At the current rate, one rhinoceros is poached to death every 32 hours. In 2015, one rhinoceros was killed every 75 hours, and in 2008, one rhinoceros every 486 hours.

162 rhinoceroses were poached in 2016, 116 in 2015, and 18 in 2008.

Since the beginning of 2017, 166 rhinoceroses have been poached in KwaZulu-Natal.

Most of the predation is concentrated in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park.

The national statistics—529 rhinoceroses killed in the first quarter—show that for the fifth year in a row, the symbolic threshold of 1,000 deaths will be exceeded.<sup>43</sup>



**End of August 2017  
Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa**

Another blow to Pilanesberg. An adult female, about to give birth, is poached to death and dehorned.<sup>44</sup>

**August 30, 2017  
Botsalano Game Reserve, North West Province, South Africa**

Mother poached. Survivor cub. Already in care and bottle fed in the enclosure of a confidential shelter.<sup>45</sup>



**September 6, 2017**  
**Near Ulundi airport, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Death of a man suspected of indulging in rhinoceros poaching. He was killed in a clash with the Rhino 08 Task Team. His fellows fled. A large caliber rifle typically used on rhinos was found in the chased down car. Ulundi is located near Matshitsholo Nature Reserve, the Ophathe Game Reserve Park, and Hluhluwe–iMfolozi Park.<sup>46</sup>



**September 7, 2017**  
**Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Mapoyisa Mahlauli was sentenced to 20 years in prison for rhinoceros poaching and possession and use of a firearm without a license. After an exchange of gunfire, the poacher was arrested at the scene of the crime. The incriminating evidence included an axe, a pair of horns, and a large caliber hunting rifle. His accomplice had fled the scene.<sup>47</sup>



**September 8, 2017**  
**O.R.Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Seizure of five horns wrapped in aluminium foil in the luggage of a Chinese passenger flying to Hong Kong.<sup>48</sup>



**September 11, 2017**  
**Hluhluwe Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Two poachers killed, a third on the run.<sup>49</sup>



**September 13, 2017**  
**Between Messina and Louis Trichardt, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

The car had been stolen. Inside, there was a .375 special rhino rifle, nine bullets, a silencer, and a knife. Arrest of the two alleged poachers.<sup>50</sup>

**September 15, 2017**  
**Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Ras and his bunch (cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p. 78). The 1,800 initial charges with poaching, smuggling, money laundering between 2008 and 2012 were brought down to 284. The suspects were arrested in 2014. Most if not all of them were released on bail. Postponed again and again, the trial is supposed to take place in March 2018.<sup>51</sup>

**Mid-September 2017**  
**Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

The court specializing in crimes against rhinoceroses sentences three men of foreign nationality to four years in prison for attempted poaching in conspiracy and trespassing into the Kruger National Park. A fourth man has been sentenced to six years jail for illegal possession of two horns.<sup>52</sup>



**September 18, 2017**  
**Tonga, Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

The home of Sibongile Brenda Khoza was searched. Three pistols and a .375 special rhino rifle, two bick bush knives, two axes, two bulletproof waistcoat, two KNP field rangers uniforms. One arrest and a lot of questions without answers.<sup>53</sup>



**September 15 and 19, 2017**  
**South Africa**

Hope and despair for this young three-year-old male, whom poachers shot straight in his face and mutilated. Cared for and then finished off a few hours afterwards. He was disfigured and permanently blind. One congener had more luck. He was shot in the collarbone, but not in his vital organs. The prognosis is positive. Saving the Survivors does indeed have victories sometimes.<sup>54</sup>

**September 20, 2017**

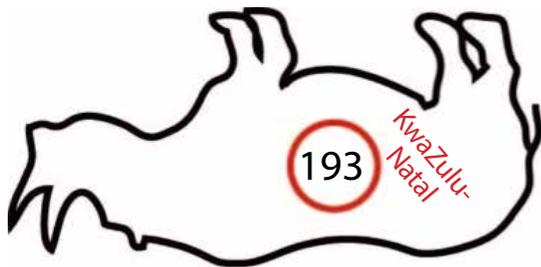
**Crocodile Bridge Gate, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

They were determined to poach. The five men who were interrogated near a Kruger Park access gate had the firearm, munitions, the silencer, axes, knives, and dagga to roll joints. It was an international team, with representatives from South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.<sup>55</sup>

**September 20, 2017**

**Dundee, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

In a candy shop, arrest of a Malawian involved in the murder of two rhinoceroses in July on a Colesberg ranch in Northern Cape Province. Eburra James was working on the spot and vanished after the poaching.<sup>56</sup>



**BOTSWANA**

**July 2017**

**Botswana**

In 2013, the government of Botswana announced that it would authorize shooting to kill armed poachers. This measure—for which there is no descriptive document as of yet—has created tension with rural communities in the northern part of the country. They complain about the frequent incursions of the army.



“Live by the gun, die by the gun”. This provocative title of the analysis of the “shoot to kill” doctrine - written by Goemeone EJ Mogomotsi and Patricia Kefilwe Madigele, academics from Botswana - appeared in the South African quarterly “SA Crime”. The title is very clear. The two authors consider that combating poaching, particularly rhinoceros and elephant poaching, is like the war on terror. As such, international conventions and national law authorize the use of weapons with the intention to kill, if the poachers-terrorists do not respond to the summons, or if they use their weapons with the intention to kill the wildlife guards or other government representatives. The authors reiterated when one or more poachers have been shot dead, the Constitution of Botswana requires the law to conduct an investigation to verify that the shooting on sight was justified, and that the presumed or actual poachers were not targeted as they were surrendering, and as they were responding to the

warnings. In some cases, the death of a poacher considered as a terrorist may be requalified as a murder.

Section three of the Inquests Act does not make a distinction between nationals and foreigners. The investigation, like the autopsy, must be conducted before the body is repatriated to its country of origin. An analogy can be made between the definition and enforcement of ‘shoot to kill’ in Botswana and the Indian State of Assam.

“We believe parks are war zones and that rules and principles of war ought to be implemented”. “One justification for Botswana’s ‘shoot-to-kill’ policy, is to send a clear message to say, if you want to come and poach in Botswana, one of the possibilities is that you may not go back to your country alive.”

They consider that the ‘shoot to kill’ option is part of the overall success of megafauna protection in Botswana, as acknowledged by international experts. The authors would like other southern African countries—and above all South Africa—to adopt the measure as part of a unified anti-poaching strategy. ‘Shoot to kill’ seems to be the nuclear deterrence of the poaching universe.

Confronted with this green militarization, there is rising reluctance and resistance. Can we put a rhinoceros poacher and a poacher looking for bushmeat in the same basket? According to some experts, a consensus can perhaps be achieved on the enforcement of ‘shoot to kill’ in counter-poaching operations, prioritizing endangered species whose international trafficking generates illegal profits.

In the same issue, the journal SA Crime opened up to dissenting opinions that are also worth looking at. It is said that introducing ‘shoot to kill’ to South Africa would be returning to colonialism, to a time past, when law enforcement and the impartiality of trials was only for the elite. South Africa and most of the neighboring democracies have abolished the death penalty. Major General Johan Jooste, responsible for rhino programs at South African National Parks, reiterates that his administration does not support shooting on sight, and this practice does not resolve problems. “It will only demean and degrade who and what we are. . . . Legal officials met rangers on a regular basis to train them on the legal rules of engagement with armed poachers.”

However, in their article, academics from Botswana remind that the Constitution of South Africa authorizes the police and other law enforcement authorities to use “lethal force”. They also remind that in its 2016-2021 anti-poaching strategy, the Southern African Development Community recommends using weapons and munitions that can compete with the poacher’s weapons. They consider that targeting the poachers is a veiled and politically correct application of the shoot-to-kill doctrine.<sup>57</sup>

## NAMIBIA

**July 8, 2017**

### **Kunene Region, Namibia**

HoRN.NAM (Help Our Rhino Now Namibia) is committed to providing a \$ 770 US reward to provide police or the Ministry of the Environment with information on poaching activities.

The NGO, founded in 2014, has already, according to its director, "rewarded" several members of the public.<sup>58</sup>

**July 26, 2017**

### **Windhoek, Namibia**

\$ 1,800,000 US. This exceptional donation from the United States should enable to enhance communication and the flow of useful information on poaching and trafficking in endangered species between State administrations, court officials, reserves and protected areas managers. Priority is to counter the rhino horn ring. "This project, while large and varied, is just part of a larger effort underway in Namibia to address wildlife trafficking. One very important step taken recently was the National Assembly's decision to increase penalties for wildlife trafficking" declares the American ambassador Thomas Daughton. The Chinese ambassador recently encouraged on his compatriots settled in Namibia to contribute to a special anti-poaching and trafficking fund. So far the fund equals to a few thousand US\$. ("On the Trail" n° 17 page 97).<sup>59</sup>

**August 19, 2017**

### **Helao Nafdi, Ohangwena Region, Namibia**

Near the border with Angola, a taxi driver unknowingly transported two traffickers. Upon the approach of a traffic controller, the two passengers fled the scene on foot, leaving their baggage. Inside, the police found two horns. The two men were arrested a little bit later. They were hitchhiking on the road leading to Ondangwa.<sup>60</sup>

**End of August 2017**

### **Kunene and Erongo Regions, Namibia**

A fresh rhino carcass in Klip River. Seven people arrested, including a teacher. In Namibia, teachers often have a double life.<sup>61</sup>



**September 5, 2017**

### **Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia**

Arrest of Champion Kapans Haraseb. The lieutenant colonel Petrus Mutako Damaseb and the serviceman Steven Omeb were arrested first (cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p. 80) in possession of fresh and blood-soaked horns worth 600,000 Namibian dollars (\$ 44,400 US). According to the statements his brother made, the police violently beat Omeb the soldier during his hearing, and he is unable to walk now. Haraseb managed to escape from the gas station where the poachers had been intercepted. It appears that the rhinoceros was killed in a farm in the region.<sup>62</sup>

**September 11, 2017**

### **Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia**

Zhi is an abalone and rhinoceros horn trafficker. He made off thanks to his release on bail in February 2016 subject to him handing over his Namibian passport, going to the closest police station from his home or his activities twice a day within Windhoek District. His portrait should also be displayed at all of the country's border posts.

In October 2016, the requirements were significantly lightened. Zhi had to clock in at the police station once a week, on Fridays. To understand the extent of his fishy business, refer to "On the Trail" n°12 p.4 and p.72.<sup>63</sup>

## AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**September 14, 2017**

### **Las Vegas, State of Nevada, United States of America**

Development in the CRASH operation. Edward N. Levine is charged with trafficking in black rhinoceros horns. His trial is set for the end of the year. Levine is free after committing to respond to the court summons. In December 2015, Lumsden W. Quan, his rhinoceros business partner, was sentenced to one year and two days in prison without remission. Levine could face a stiffer sentence. In his instruction on the rhinoceros case, the public prosecutor reiterated that he has been involved in cocaine trafficking with the Medellin cartel. Cf. "On the Trail" n°5 p.76 and n°11 p.61.<sup>64</sup>

### OPERATION CRASH

**September 18, 2017**

### **Long Island, New York State, United States of America**

Fengyi Zhou, an antique dealer specializing in Asian art (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 84) is sentenced to two years in prison for trafficking five black rhinoceros horns.<sup>65</sup>



**September 29, 2017**

**Miami, State of Florida, United States of America**

Michael Hegarty, a member of the Rathkeale Rovers gang, pleaded guilty to purchasing an auctioned libation cup made of rhinoceros horn, from a man used as a cover.

With the help of an accomplice, Michael Hegarty then organized the illegal dispatch of the cup. The police of Greater London arrested his accomplice while he was attempting to sell the cup that came from an Asian rhino to a Hong Kong native. Hegarty was arrested in Belgium. Like Great Britain, Belgium accepted to extradite him to the United States. France is the only country that has refused to extradite a member of the Rathkeale Rovers wanted by the U.S. law. Hegarty's trial will be in mid-November in the court of Miami.<sup>66</sup> Cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 76

**ASIA**

**CHINA**

**July 11, 2017**

**Hong Kong International Airport, China**

A passenger from Cape Town who traveled through Johannesburg, South Africa, was checked upon arrival in Hong Kong with 8.16 kg of horns and pieces of horns. He also held a 60 g dyed black ivory bracelet. The whole is estimated by the official website of the government at 1,630,000 HK \$ (about \$ 209,000 or 25,610 US / kg). According to the South African press, it seems that since the announcement of the reopening of the domestic horn market in South Africa, an increase in smuggling is observed on passengers from Johannesburg at Hong Kong airports and Hanoi.<sup>67</sup>

**August 12, 2017**

**Hong Kong International Airport, China**

Seizure of 2.6 kg of rhinoceros horns wrapped with tin foil and plastic tape and placed inside two reused cardboard boxes, in the baggage of a 37 year-old man arriving from Johannesburg, South Africa and making for ... a Hong Kong Court record office. Estimated value by customs: \$66,500 US, or \$25.58 US/kg.<sup>68</sup>



**INDIA**

**GANG**

**July 3, 2017**

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

A set of five men on motorcycles was spotted by the 46th SSB battalion and forest rangers on National Highway 31. Four of them managed to escape, but the fifth, Gaur Mallik (29), was arrested in possession of a 1.5 kg horn seemingly tarnished and of foreign currency.<sup>71</sup>



**Mid-July 2017**

**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

Recruitment of a hundred men for a new special anti-poaching force exclusively assigned to the Kaziranga park. Candidates must live in the districts of Nagaon, Golaghat, Sonitpur, Biswanath or Karbi Anglong East. After the basic training, the selected ones will undergo training in "war in the jungle", according to a spokesman for the forest department.<sup>72</sup>

**September 14, 2017**

**Mangaldai, State of Assam, India**

The 22nd SSB battalion arrested three armed rogues on suspicion. They were approaching Orang National Park.<sup>73</sup>

**September 16, 2017**

**State of Assam, India**

A new sequel to the car accident on March 14, 2017 (cf. "On the Trail" n°16 p.71 and n°17 p.82). Arrest of Muyang, known as Ling Ding Muyang. He is accused of involvement in poaching the two rhinoceroses that were found buried and dehorned in Gorumara National Park.<sup>74</sup>

## July 2017

### **Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

The rhinoceros fled the flood when they could, and most of the time they took refuge in areas that were inaccessible to rangers patrols due to the limited nautical facilities available. Poachers are often better equipped and have the advantage of knowing precisely their target in this park of 430 km<sup>2</sup>. However, the guards are not completely destitute and focus in particular on controlling the speed and the trunks of the cars and other vehicles which run along the park by road 37. This road where the speed is deliberately limited to 30 km/h under a penalty of 5000 rupee (about \$ 80 US) is crossed by the rhinoceros that go to dry in the hills of Karbi Anglong. Rangers protect the exodus of rhinoceros and additional reinforcements are deployed in the villages around to avoid as much as possible conflicts between inhabitants and animals of all species. Rangers also monitor 111 mounds of land that were raised in the 1990s to serve as a promontory for flooded and isolated wildlife. Unfortunately, these islets are for some in the process of collapse and need to be consolidated. 33 new one must be constructed with a minimum height of 4.9 m while the old ones are 3.65 m. A bad timing of these constructions with beginnings of works in May resulted in a collapse of the works in the flood of Brahmaputra in early July. They will have to start all over again. These works costs 7.4 million rupee per hectare (\$ 114,000 US).

As of July 20<sup>th</sup>, there were four drowned rhinoceroses - but the number could increase as the water level will decrease and dead bodies will be discovered - and of 14 other mammals killed in collision with overspeed cars on road 37. The CWRC (Center for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation), located in the heart of the park, reports that 74 animals stuck or surprised by the floods have been rescued by veterinary mobile units and rangers.<sup>69</sup>

## August and September 2017

### **Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

Monsoon rain. Death report.

On 22 August, the official human death toll on the Indian subcontinent was:

Nepal: 143 dead.

Bihar (India): 253 dead.

Assam and Western Bengal (India): 122 dead.

Bangladesh: 115 dead.

Uttar Pradesh (India): 69 dead.

Himalayan region (India): a landslide and mud avalanche swept off two buses and left 54 humans dead.

On August 22, the official animal death toll in Kaziranga National Park and around was established: 377 animals dead, including 28 rhinoceroses, 217 deer, 4 elephant calves and one porcupine.

A Bengal tiger died after fighting with an elephant herd. It is likely that this battle for territory took place for the control of a high point during the flood.

The park is going to reopen on October 2, except for the Agoratoli sector, known for its migratory birds. It is devastated from floods.<sup>70</sup>

Floods in Kaziranga Park cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p.19, n°2 p.50, n°6 p.69 and n°14 p. 69 and 70.

## NEPAL

## August 23, 2017

### **Chitwan National Park, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Monsoon rains caused flooding of the Narayani and Rapti rivers. The Chitwan National Park was partially flooded. Eight rhinoceroses were swept away by the streams. On the border with India near Champaran, a squad of 40 soldiers and wildlife wardens succeeded in saving four of them, two adult males and two youth. A fifth was found drowned in the Nawalparasi. Twenty spotted deer (or chitals) and Indian muntjacs were drowned. The tigers were spared.

A two year-old rhinoceros carried away by the flood beyond the border between Nepal and India became a matter of bilateral cooperation. His repatriation to Nepal was hindered by the cut of the expressway on Nepal's side. Again in Nepal, 600 tourists stuck in Sauhara were given provisions or evacuated by rescuers who came riding on elephant's backs.<sup>75</sup>

## SINGAPORE

### August 31, 2017 Changi Airport, Singapore

The Vietnamese man was coming from Africa via Dubai and was heading to Laos. He had eight sections of horn in his luggage. He was 29 years old. He faces two years in prison and/or \$ 500,000 US (\$ 350,000 US) in fines. In 2014, for a similar case, a man had been sentenced to 15 months in prison.<sup>76</sup>

## THAILAND

### August 8, 2017 Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Foong Ngab Ha hadn't put all of his eggs in the same basket, but he still got himself nabbed. He had cut a horn in five pieces and put them in two suitcases. The X-rays and the machine operators saw everything. The Vietnamese citizen came from Angola and was heading via Dubai and Bangkok for Luang Prabang in Laos.<sup>77</sup>



### September 22, 2017 Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Arrest of three Vietnamese nationals - two women and one man - aged 27 to 56. They were coming from Angola and were heading for Hanoi, via Ethiopia and Thailand. They said they were expatriate workers in Angola, and they had accepted to be horns carrier for slightly less than \$ 1,000 US. The 15 pieces weigh 7.4 kg in all. The Bangkok Post estimates that they are worth 15 million baht, or \$ 451,000 US (\$ 61,000 US/kilo).<sup>78</sup>

## VIET NAM

### July 23, 2017 Moc Bai, Tây Ninh Province, Viet Nam. Border with Cambodia.

The three men had bought 5 kg of horn in Cambodia intending to sell them in Ho Chi Minh City. They were arrested and searched during a roadside check.<sup>79</sup>

## EUROPE

## CZECH REPUBLIC

### September 19, 2017 Dvur Králové nad Labem, Region of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic



Burning under close guard of 33 kg of horns preventively cut off from the foreheads of rhinos in the zoo after the poaching in the Thoiry zoo near Paris in March 2017 (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.72). The incineration was approved by the Ministry of the Environment and the CITES focus point for the Czech Republic. De-horning of the 21 rhinos had been carried out since March and the horns were stocked in a vault. Even though de-horning is a source of stress for rhinos and a mutilation, it was maybe in this particular case the best option given the presence in Prague of an intensive and aggressive Vietnamese channel.<sup>80</sup>

## Rhinos and Elephants

## AFRICA

## SOUTH AFRICA

### August 15, 2017 Sandringham Reserve, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

The ground spoke. SAPS diggings revealed 11 rifles, 1300 rounds of ammunition, and cartridges. At first, 10 rhino horns and two big elephant tusks were uncovered. The Sandringham hunting reserve intendent was arrested. Samuel Liversage, 68 years old is a member of the association for South African professional hunters. The reserve belongs to a multi-millionaire Italian investor. The weapons will be subjected to a ballistic analysis. Many of the serial numbers were erased. The fenced in Sandringham reserve is South of Timbavati. It isn't part of the Timbavati group of reserves. Cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p. 23, 2 p.44, 8 p. 60, 10 p.48 et 17 p.95.<sup>1</sup>

## KENYA

**July 2017**

### **Laikipia County, Kenya**

After an eight-year long procedure, the sale of 6880 ha by the former president Daniel Arap Moi to the KWS is confirmed by justice. Local elected officials and one human rights organization in the US opposed the sale because villagers would be evicted to ease creation of a new national park. The KWS declares to be ready to take control of the territory and transform it into the "Laikipia National Park". In the tense atmosphere presently dominating the county, this new national park risks becoming a renewed subject of conflict if the KWS, elected officials and community leaders do not set up together a management plan. Daniel Arap Moi had sold the domain for 400 million Kenyan shillings in 2011 (\$ 4,396,000 US).

It is thanks to Arap Moi that Kenya was in 1989 the first country to burn ivory as testimony of their determination and a warning to poachers, smugglers and consumers. He had personally set fire to 12 tons of tusks.<sup>2</sup>

## MOZAMBIQUE

### **Pemba, the strainer port**

Pemba is haunted by a Chinese clan, heir to a line of smugglers from Shuidong, Guangdong Province, given to totoaba fish bladder, lobster, octopus, and sea cucumber with branch points in Tanzania, Kenya, and Nigeria. EIA explores this Chinese colony set up in Pemba and ready to move if the widespread level of corruption were to decrease or drain. The Shuidong connection, as it has been explored in East Africa and in China by EIA, is opportunistic. It is not attached to one species or matter, without a doubt it is interested today in donkeys skin (cf. page 121). It can switch from pangolin scales to elephant tusks, it keeps as far away as possible from on the ground poaching, it distributes the global financial burden from an international expedition between several investors and on several ships or planes in order to not sustain alone heavy losses from a seizure in Africa and above all in Asia. It frequently uses recycled plastic pellets and likely other waste as filler material in its smuggling containers.

Pemba cf. "On the Trail" n°2 pg.64, n°6 pg.84-85, n°7 pg.83, n°8 pg.63, n°9 pg.70-71 and 77, n°10 pg.51, n°11 pg.70 and n°15 pg.98.<sup>3</sup>

## NAMIBIA

**July 22, 2017**

### **Namibia**

#### **Official Numbers**

Since 2014, Namibia has lost 241 rhinos to poaching incidents since 2012, 17 since the beginning of the year as well as 245 elephants, 17 of which have occurred since the beginning of the year.

According to the latest reports released in the newspaper *Namibian Sun*, after verification by Minister of the Environment, the numbers of individuals arrested for poaching and trafficking are as follows: 49 for the first 6 months of 2017, 78 in 2016, 96 in 2015 and 29 in 2014.

A previous report published at the beginning of the year noted 222 arrests in 2016. The Minister explains that his teams sometimes confused the poaching proceedings and the arrests, and specifies that a coordinator has since been devoted to ensuring consistency of information that comes from numerous agencies.<sup>3bis</sup>

### AMERICA

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **OPERATION CRASH**

**July 27, 2017**

#### **Boston, State of Massachusetts, United States of America**

Appearance of Guan Zong Chen alias Graham Chen, a Chinese trafficker operating between the United States, China and Australia. He is accused of having

attempted to export from the United States towards Hong Kong \$ 700,000 US worth of objects made of rhino horn, elephant ivory and coral. He had bought them from auction houses located in California, Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Texas. Then he arrived in the United States with an accomplice to collect his purchases and illegally export them. In April 2014, assisted by the owner of a shipping business in Concord, Massachusetts Chen had exported an ivory carving to Hong Kong and declared it to be made of wood and worth \$ 50 US. Subject to an international arrest warrant emitted by the United States, he was arrested in 2016 in Australia, and extradited within the framework of Operation Crash.<sup>4</sup> Cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p.71

### ASIA

## VIET NAM

**Mid-August 2017**

#### **Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Announcement of the arrest of Pham Minh Hoang Hoang, a customs agent, 35 years of age, known under the name Hoang. He was manager and keeper of the ivory stockpiles seized by his colleagues. With two helpers, themselves arrested, he had replaced 150 kg of real ivory by fake ivory made of plastic, cement and wood. The switch was found out in April. It amounts to 239.5 kg ivory and 6 kg rhino horn. To protect investigations, the circumstance is only now revealed. Hoang's two accomplices are not part of the Custom's services.<sup>5</sup>

# Elephants

- Seizures increase: 15 tonnes for July, August, and September 2017.

- The price per kg of ivory seized falls, according to the taxation authorities in the affected States.

It is too early to draw lessons from these official quotes, which concern exclusively African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*). In Kampala (Uganda), a kg of raw ivory was valued at \$112 US/kg in August while in July it was \$1,470 US/kg. -Poaching is on the rise in Southern Africa. In Central Africa, in the Nile basin and in Sahelian Africa, the shadow borne by civil wars prevents an accurate death toll for elephants, as well as for other profitable wildlife species. It is imprudent to claim that poaching is in decline on the African continent.

-Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) are no better off. They are harassed between and around the national parks, by the expansion of agriculture and illegal campsites. The black market extends to other by-products beyond male elephant tusks. Confetti made from elephant skin sells for \$3.65 US, or \$5,660 US per m<sup>2</sup> in Myanmar.

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°18  
Black market raw ivory quotation  
from media or official sources**

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	820	3
		400	11
	Malawi	2,257	15
	Uganda	1,470	22
		1,957	25
	Nigeria	112	27 / 33
Asia	China (Hong Kong)	711	83
		1,350	105
		2,560	108 / 110
	2,550	111	
	India (Uttar Pradesh)	4,875	117
	Indonesia	130	132
	Malaysia	1,944	137
Thailand	2,915	151	



Paris, 10<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, Summer 2017

C/N/Robin des Bois

## EASTERN AFRICA

### KENYA

#### July 2017

#### Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Ndawe, a tusk-er with 45 kg on both sides, had been living proof that elephants walk between Tsavo and Amboseli. He had been treated in April after being hit by a spear perhaps after an insolent approach of cultures lining his migration corridor. He never entirely recovered this first attack. Lack of rain and food was no help.

Somewhat sickly, a little less bold at an estimated age of 55 to 60, in July he suffered a more severe attack. Three spears killed him. Between April and July, an electric fence was spread to protect the intrusive cultivation in the Kimana corridor. See ("On the Trail" n°13 p.83). The clash with farmers is excluded. His tusks were found. <sup>1</sup>



© Big Life

**Beginning of July, 2017  
North Eastern Province, Kenya**

The Olarro Conservancy ranger units spotted a female elephant with an arrow wound sticking out of her back left foot. The Mara Mobile Vet Unit was able to remove the metal piece and heal her.<sup>2</sup>



**July 29, 2017  
Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Kenya**

Arrest of a woman of Chinese nationality, Cao Juhua, 38 years old, transiting through Kenya, coming from Zimbabwe and going to Hanoi. Seizure of 120 kg of ivory worth about 10 million shillings i.e. \$ 98.500 US (\$ 820 US/kg).<sup>3</sup>

**End of July, 2017  
Kenya**

Tracked by the Big Life Foundation and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), two traffickers were caught red handed in the middle of the night while transporting ivory, seven entire tusks, 58 kg, i.e. four elephants killed.<sup>4</sup>

**August 10 and 23, 2017  
Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Tsavo East National Park, Taita Taveta County, and Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya**

The first patient was a female by Voi River. Doctor Poghon very professionally managed to remove the poisoned arrow. Her prognosis is very good. The second patient was a young male who had been speared. His prognosis is not as good. He went back into the savanna, but to the extent possible, he will be monitored for a few weeks. It may be necessary to give a dose of antibiotics to him a second time, to prevent a systemic infection.



The third patient was a four-year-old female who was lying down on her side with an arrow driven into her front left shoulder. After 45 minutes of anesthesia and care, she bravely joined her elephant calf, which was not far. Aircraft, an outstanding veterinary team, 24 hour availability, and a partnership with KWS: David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust does excellent work.<sup>5</sup>

**End of August 2017  
Ole Naishu Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya**

Rain is back in the county. The shepherds and herds from the north are still there. A pregnant female was attacked on the edge of the Dam Repeater reservoir at night. The two tusks were recovered and handed over to KWS.<sup>6</sup>

**Laikipia, Kenya**

Months of occupation by nomadic ranchers and their herds coming from the north have transformed a region renowned for the quality and diversity of its megafauna into a lost battlefield.

The packs of lycaons are all dead from Canine distemper transmitted by sheep dogs. Only a few individuals remain.

84 elephants were poached in the first half of the year as opposed to 75 during the entire year of 2016.

Antelopes and buffaloes were literally decimated by other diseases transmitted by domestic herds such as anaplasmosis and tick-borne diseases.

Lions, unlike giraffes and zebras, were relatively spared from poaching but the decline of antelopes has thrown off the balance of the food chain in the savannah. Consequently, the lions fall back on the livestock of sedentary farmers and provoke a new source of conflict with humans. Already, some lions have been shot on sight by farmers.<sup>7</sup>

**August 30, 2017  
Nanyuki, Laikipia County, Kenya**

"On the Trail" had reported his arrest in issue 6 p. 87. The case dates back to 23 September 2014. Three years later, as investigations and judicial proceedings reach their end, the judge decided there is no possible doubt that David Gitonga Mwariama is guilty. He was convicted and sentenced to five years prison time and a fine of 1 million shillings, that is \$ 9800 US, plus one extra year of prison if he fails to pay. The eight tusks he illegally possessed was at the time worth 4.3 million shillings, that is \$ 42.060 US.<sup>8</sup>



**September 9, 2017**

**Naigara, Narok County, Kenya**

A young male speared. The examination showed that the victim had his trunk severed in another ambush, probably by a trap.<sup>9</sup>

**September 10, 2017**

**Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya**

Nearly each day, an elephant is killed or wounded. This female was hit with a poisoned arrow. It was necessary to protect the victim from a herd of three calves trying to approach the scene of the crime. A dangerous general anesthesia with M 99 was administered by the veterinarian, Limo. The prognosis is reserved. Just after the first victim woke up, the rescue team was called to the side of another elephant hit by a projectile weapon in the Mara Triangle.<sup>10</sup>



**Mid September 2017**

**Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Arrest of a police officer and of two civilians trying to sell 25 kg of ivory estimated to be worth \$ 9,800 US, or slightly less than \$ 400 US/kilo.<sup>11</sup>

**MALAWI**

**July 8, 2017**

**Rumphi, Northern Region, Malawi**

Dokotala Chavula (35 years old) and Elias Nkhonjera (26 years old) were tipped-off as they were attempting to sell the raw ivory in the shopping mall in Lusani. Value of the seizure is estimated at 5.8 million Malawi kwacha (\$ 8150 US).<sup>12</sup>

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

**Malawi**

End of transport after sedation for 520 elephants. After driving in a truck for 350 km, they are now in the Nkhotakota reserve. They are protected by electric fencing. Africa Parks is satisfied with the success of this great translocation that lasted two years and costed the life of two elephants.<sup>13</sup> Cf. « On the Trail » n°14, p. 75-76, n° 17 p.106.

**August 29, 2017**

**Chitipa District, Malawi**

A few days earlier, Reverend Kanyimbo had been caught with raw ivory in the shopping center in Nthalire. He was waiting for a client. This mortal sin cost him four years in prison and hard labor. Based on unofficial information, an elephant was recently poached a few kilometers from Nthalire, in Nyika National Park, and villagers organized a big banquet around its flesh. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, Nyika received by truck a reinforcement of 34 elephants from the south.<sup>14</sup>



**September 18, 2017**

**Kanengo Industrial Site, Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi**

Arrest of three men. The oldest man, Wisdom Milosi, is 49 years old. They were selling 1.4 kg of raw ivory. The estimated value of the seizure is 2,310,000 kwacha, or \$ 3,160 US (\$ 2,257 US/kg).<sup>15</sup>

**MOZAMBIQUE**

**August 2017**

**Maputo, Mozambique**

Five policemen and two customs officers are dismissed from service at the capital's international airport. They are believed to have made easier the smuggling of undefined amounts of rhinoceros horns and elephant tusks.<sup>16</sup>

**September 8, 2017**

**Murupula District, Nampula Province, Mozambique**

Thanks to a road inspection, a bag bulged with 45.5 kg of raw ivory and 3.7 kg of semi-precious stones in a bus on the Beira-Nampula route. The driver and a Tanzanian passenger were under arrest. They denied any responsibility in the matter. They said that at 4:30 in the morning, a guy went onto the bus with a bag of seeds. When the police boarded the bus for an inspection later, he fled, leaving the bag behind.<sup>17</sup>

**July 11 and Mid-September 2017**

**Montepuez, Province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique**

He was chased by Tanzania and Mozambique. He would have been the "master mind" of seven poacher gangs in south Tanzania in 2013.

Mateso Albana Kasian, a Tanzanian national also known as Matso



Chupi, is now in the hands of the SERNIC (National Criminal Investigation Service) in Mozambique. Confessions made by poachers arrested in 2014 in the Niassa National Reserve in Mozambique put investigators on the Kasian's trail. For the year 2014 only, he would be responsible for the trafficking of 3 t of ivory. For reminder, the Niassa reserve was home to 10 to 12,000 elephants in 2011 and three to four times less in 2016.

Kasian would be the main supplier of the Chinese community originated from Shuidong that exports towards Asia through Pemba port containers full of smuggled wood, ivory or pangolin scales (cf. page 81).

Mid september, Kasian is extradited from Tanzania. About ten of his fellow Tanzanians have already meet the same fate for illegally prospecting for gold and rubies in Niassa and in other protected areas. The extradition case of 20 other Tanzanian nationals accused of poaching is currently being examined.<sup>18</sup>

**End of September 2017  
Gorongosa National Park, Sofala Province,  
Mozambique**

The teaching profession has gotten mixed up in the business again. But they aren't the only ones. Three of the band are teachers. The three others are rangers. During the vehicle inspection, gems and tusks were seized. This bad news goes against the optimistic vision of Rui Branco, the director of the park. He says that poaching in the park has dropped by 72% since the start of the year.<sup>19</sup>

**September 2017  
Limpopo National Park, Gaza  
Province, Mozambique**

Pesticide attack. 45 vultures and a jackal found dead near a carcass of a poisoned nyala (*Tragelaphus angasii*). The beaks and the claws that are used in black magic were not removed. Experts wonder about the poisoner's motives. Perhaps a way to prepare for future elephant poaching. Circling above the carcasses, vultures signal to the rangers that an operation in progress. Vultures are the scourge of pirates of the savannah.<sup>20</sup>



**UGANDA**

**July 2017  
Western Region, Uganda**

A trafficker was arrested with 54 kg of ivory. No more information. On the photo, at least 3 killed elephants.<sup>21</sup>



**July 4, 2017  
Makindye, District of Kampala, Central Region,  
Uganda**

Seizure of four tusks weighing a total of 7 kg and estimated value of 36,750 Ugandan shillings i.e. \$ 10,300 US and \$ 1470 US/kg. Arrest of Paska Osike, 58 years old. He also was in possession of an okapi skin (*Okapia johnstoni*).<sup>22</sup>



**REPEATED OFFENSE  
July 18, 2017  
Western Region, Uganda**



58 kg, four arrests, including a pastor already arrested for the same offense and set free after paying a fine.

Trafficking pastors in Uganda, cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p.59 and n°14 p.78.

The usual judicial inertia usually benefiting poachers and traffickers might just be about to wake up owing to the installation of a special court over wildlife crimes in October 2016 and the threatening letter sent by President Yoweri Museveni to the anti-poaching services (see "On the Trail" n°17 p.43).<sup>23</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENSE  
July 26, 2017  
Mbarara, Western Region, Uganda**



Jackson Baluku was arrested again. This time with 33.8 kg of ivory (6 tusks). He was in the process of selling them in Mbarara, but the buyer or buyers do not seem to have been bothered by police. He had been noticed by the Natural Resource Conservation Network (NRCN). Already arrested in 2015 with four people in possession of ivory, Jackson Baluku fell between police hands again a few months later for having provided a hyena liver destined to poison an official figure... He is one more time in pre-trial detention.<sup>24</sup>

## REPEATED OFFENSE/GANG

July 2017

### Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

The Kourouma Bangaly judicial story continues. The Guinean citizen was arrested with two tusks, total weight being 6 kg, in Kampala on January 5, 2016 (cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p. 79). At the time he was let out on bail, but had chosen to not show up later when required to report to the police station. He had crossed the border on foot on 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2016 in Katuna, on the road to Rwanda. Beginning February 2017, Kourouma Bangaly was spotted again in Kampala. He was still meddling in ivory and rhino horn trafficking.

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> of July, investigators from the Uganda Wildlife Agency (UWA) assisted by the NGO Natural Resources Conservation Network cornered him at the Garden City shopping mall. He was forced to reveal where his stock was kept. The loot is finally found in a store 4 km away from the capital. 437 pieces of ivory weighing in full 1303,16 kg, and cutting equipment ! The ivory of which value is estimated at 9 billion Ugandan shilling (\$ 2.55 millions US i.e. \$ 1957 US/kg) would have transited through Burundi. Two accomplices were arrested on site, Mohammed Kourouma another Guinean citizen and Kromah Moazu a Liberian citizen. Investigations revealed that Kromah Moazu had made cash transaction reaching \$190,000 US from 2014 and 2017 between a certain Vannaseng Trading Company in Laos, and an Eco Bank branch in Kampala. The trio is sent before the local tribunal. The judge followed the attorney general and the accused will be presented to the High Court.<sup>25</sup>

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017

### Bushenyi, Bushenyi District, Western Region, Uganda

She was caught red handed. In her shop in the Kazinda shopping mall, Youthfull Gloria Nagaba was about to sell 18 kg of tusks. But the buyers were cops accompanied by members of the Natural Resource Conservation Network (NRCN). She claims her husband gave her the bag and asked her to wait for the client. It should be noted that on July in the same region ivory was valued at \$ 1470 US/kg.<sup>26</sup>

August 11, 2017

### Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

A joint team composed of police inspectors and the NRCN managed to get their hands on 18.5 kg of ivory and two men working in the hotel trade. Local value is estimated at \$ 112 US/kg. To be noted: in the same region in July, ivory was rated at \$ 1470 US/kg.<sup>27</sup>

August 13, 2017

### Northern Region, Uganda

A school was serving as a hideout for ivory and trafficking. Two tusks. Two arrests.<sup>28</sup>

August 19, 2017

### Western Region, Uganda

Separate arrests of five traffickers and seizure of 10 tusks.<sup>29</sup>

## GANG

August 21, 2017

### Rukungiri, West Region and Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Six arrests and two seizures of tusks with a total weight of 33.3 kg.<sup>30</sup>

August 31, 2017

### Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Seizure of four tusks cut into eight pieces.<sup>31</sup>

Beginning of September 2017

### Northern Region, Uganda

Seizure of 40 kg.

Arrest of three people, including an imam from South Sudan. He was taking advantage of his prestige to indulge in trafficking between the two countries. Religious servants of all worships do the same thing.<sup>32</sup>



## GANG

Mid September 2017

### Fort-Portal, Kabarole District, Western Region, Uganda

The police dismantled a gang of eight people involved in poaching and trafficking. Seven of them were arrested in possession of ivory poached in Kibale National Park, with 20.5 kg in all, estimated to be worth 8.2 million Ugandan shillings (\$ 2,300 US, or \$ 112 US/kg). The eighth member is a soldier from the Uganda People's Defence Force. He is accused of killing an elephant for one million shillings (\$ 280 US). He claims that he was never paid. Namara and Twinomujuni, two members of the gang, supposedly contacted him for a rifle. They would have acquired a submachine gun from another soldier, Harry Masiko, who has died since then.<sup>33</sup>

End of September 2017

### Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

We can't say that they look grieved.<sup>34</sup>



## TANZANIA

**July 5, 2017**

PAMS (Protected Area Management Solutions) commends the conviction to a prison sentence of an holder and trafficker of several trophies belonging to the State of Tanzania. "PAMS congratulates the National Anti-Poaching Task Force."<sup>35</sup>



### In Vitam Wayne Lotter 1965-2017



Mr. Wayne Lotter was murdered in Dar es Salaam on the night of August 16, 2017, at the airport exit. He was 51 years old. His taxi was blocked at a crossroads. The assailants opened the back door and killed him at point-blank range, snatching three computers and two carry-on bags.



Wayne Lotter had been the cofounder and director of PAMS since 1989, very active in Tanzania and Mozambique. The influence of PAMS extends beyond East Africa and southern Africa.

There is no doubt that his death pleased the jailed traffickers from Kenya to South Africa but also the large and small poker players for ivory, horns, and scales in Viet Nam, Laos, Malaysia, and China.

The elephants are well known for the quality, diversity, and adaptability of their social networks. Wayne Lotter and his partners at PAMS have set up a network in the great savannah to detect elephant movements as well as movements of poachers.



In September, just one month after the assassination of their husband and father, Mrs. Inge Lotter and her daughters Tasmin and Cara-Jane participated in the rescue of three elephants in South Africa.

As long as there are families and goodwils like the Lotters and PAMS, there is light in the dark future of elephants.

At the beginning of September, three people were accused of the murder. Wayne's personal belongings were found at their house.<sup>36</sup>

**August 31, 2017**

### Manyoni District, Singida Region, Tanzania

PAMS commends the sentence of 20 years in prison for a man who illegally held elephant tusks and the rigor of the magistrates in charge of the investigation.<sup>37</sup>



**July 26, 2017**

### Dodoma, Dodoma Region, Tanzania

Partial acquittal of Boniface Methew Malyango, nicknamed "The Devil Has No Mercy." The Dodoma Court believes that there is not sufficient proof on the charge of having illegally detained tusks. Boniface serves a sentence of 12 years in prison for organized gang poaching, delivered in March 2017. Cf. "On the Trail" n°11 p. 71 and n°17 p. 77.<sup>38</sup>

**End of July 2017**

### Manyoni District, Region of Singida, Tanzania

Sanctions are harsh in Tanzania. Accused by five witnesses, George Mhando and Magwa Chikole came out with twenty years prison time for being in possession of "government trophies", more precisely in this case ivory.<sup>39</sup>



**August 15, 2017**  
**Mbezi Beach, Dar es Salaam, Region of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**

Seizure of 28 tusks, weighing a total of 377 kg, from a warehouse. Arrest of four suspects, one of whom is a member of the local government, and moreover, the imam of the mosque of Uдах. "The tusks are not fresh," meaning that the elephants were killed between 2013 and 2014, explains the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism.<sup>40</sup>

**Beginning of September 2017**  
**Tanzania**

Penal sequel of the illegal transport of 305 kg of ivory in July 2013 (cf. "On the Trail" n° 2 p. 58).

– Six 20 month prison sentences.  
– Two 35 year prison sentences for the two Oysterbay police officers involved in the transport and the attempt to export. The eight people who were sentenced were accused of breaching the Wildlife Conservation Act and of economic sabotage. The vehicles used for the transport were seized.

However, there is no criminal news about the three wardens from Kiteto Prison in the region of Manyara who were caught in the act of transporting giraffe, gazelle, and ostrich meat in the Toyota Land Cruiser that belonged to Tanzanian Prisons.<sup>41</sup>



**September 10, 2017**  
**Tarime District, Mara Region, Tanzania**

News item.

- Seizure of seven tusk sections with an estimated value of \$ 46,500 US, and arrest of four suspects. The day before, the police had seized over 150 kg of bhang.<sup>42</sup>

**September 15 2017**  
**Manyoni District, Singida Region, Tanzania**

Saganda Kasanzu was sentenced to 25 years in prison and an astronomical fine of \$ 440,000 US for illegal possession of ivory trophies.<sup>43</sup>



**September 27, 2017**  
**Rungwa Game Reserve, Manyoni District, Singida Region, Tanzania**

Cheers for the Chinese workers! The Chinese news agency Xinhua reports that the company Sinohydro which is building a dam dispatched engineers and bulldozers to Rungwa Game Reserve 40 km from the construction site to pull out five elephants who were stuck in a pit.



"Elephants are loved by the local people. Chinese companies working in Africa also pay great attention to wildlife protection."<sup>45</sup>

**ZAMBIA**

**August 11, 2017**  
**Lilayi Elephant Nursery, Lusaka District, Zambia**

Injured, thirsty, afraid, a female elephant calf of about 1 year and 10 months of age was nursed and warmed by a blanket, hot water bottles, and a heat lamp. She was found in the Kavalamanja District, where there are rumors of poaching.<sup>46</sup>

**August 13, 2017**  
**Mufulira, Copperbelt Province, Zambia**

Wildlife news briefs in the *Lusaka Times*.

- Two primary school teachers caught red-handed for possession of six pieces of ivory (10 kg). Along with two accomplices, they are remanded in custody in Kalulushi.

- Advice to the community. "Three lions that had been seen marauding around the village of Namomba and eating a goat crossed the Zambezi River and are now in Zimbabwe."<sup>47</sup>

**September 24, 2017**  
**Arusha and Manyara Regions, Tanzania**

Clearing of a vital corridor for mammals between Tarangire National Park and the Manyara Lake reserve, a bipolar and indivisible ecosystem. Various squatters, small nomadic and sedentary farmers, and illegal fisherfolk have settled right in the middle of this. At this stage, the prefect of Babati district has simply expressed his intention. Dar-es-Salam still needs to be convinced of this.<sup>44</sup>



## September 2017

### Zambia

An “iconic tusker” bearing two 44 kg tusks was killed. It was the largest elephant killed in Zambia in decades. The world of Big Five hunters is pleased about this. The meat was distributed in the schools and villages. A foreign client, whose identify and nationality were not revealed, paid a “lot of money”—without going into the details. This money will be used to protect the “next elephant generation” [and next hunter generations, editor’s note].

The client went back home with the skin and the tusks. Remember that a kilo of ivory on the Asian black market sells for up to \$ 2,500 US/kg. “Stone Hunting Safaris” organized the tracking. Two South African brothers, Jason and Clinton Stone, own this business. They “work” in South Africa, Namibia, Ethiopia, Zambia and Tanzania.<sup>48</sup>

Tusker, cf. “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, n°17 p.95.

## ZIMBABWE

### July 4 and 7, 2017

#### Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Sentencing to nine years in prison for David Ndlovu and Nkathazo Penga for having poisoned five elephants and attempting to sell three tusks for a total weight of 3.605 kg and 2 kg of cyanide. Immediately after their arrest, both individuals claimed they only “picked up” the ivory and cyanide crystals in the park while gathering fire wood. In front of the judge, they were somewhat more explicit and admitted to being responsible for the death of five elephants by injecting cyanide into oranges.<sup>49</sup>



### July 12 and 17, 2017

#### Bulawayo, Province of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Detectives from Minerals and Border Control Unit had a tip-off: two poachers, Webster Nyaruviro (49 years old) and Max Bloomton (46 years old), were transporting tusks in their car. They were arrested on the Bradfield parking lot. There was an electronic scale and two tusks for a total weight of 3 kg hidden in the spare wheel compartment. The two stood at a court hearing on July 17. They accused the police of denying them the right to seek legal representation or contact family members. They were remanded in custody.<sup>50</sup>

### July 17, 2017

#### Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Deployment of 150 guards, police officers and decontamination agents after the latest wave of cyanide poisoning.

Two more carcasses were found deep inside the park. One had the tusks ripped off, the other’s tusks were still intact. It is urgent to decontaminate the salt marshes and ponds, remove all the poisoned bait, eliminate the toxic carcasses to limit death among jackals, vultures, felines and other animal wildlife.<sup>51</sup>



### July 19 and 27, 2017

#### Hwange National Park/ Hwange Tribunal, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Tony Maphosa. This traditional healer was wanted since 2013 and the first series of elephant poisoning by cyanide in the Hwange park. Maphosa was carrying with him two elephant calf tusks, both their weights adding up to 765 g. Before court, he claimed he only “picked up” the ivory in the bush to use it for therapeutic and ritual purposes. He asked the judge, Rose Dube, to choose a fine as punishment, insisting on the fact he had the needed means. The 34-year-old man was sentenced to nine years prison.<sup>52</sup>



### July 20, 2017

#### Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Four elephant poisoners and ivory traffickers stood before the tribunal today. Dyker Dube (66 years old), Hloniphani Sibanda (33 years old), Charleson Sibanda (27 years old) and Heritage Ncube (21 years old) denied the charges. Ncube had denounced his associates after having been arrested in possession of a tusk and 456 kg of cyanide. They could be liable for the death of 17 elephants. They were remanded in custody awaiting trial.<sup>53</sup>

### July 28, 2017

#### Tsholotsho District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Acquittal of Makela, 43 years, and Ndlovu, 22 years, charged with illegal detention of tusks in complicity with Dyke Ncube who had fled at the time of the incident. The two suspects, through their lawyer, declare to have been used as bait in a set-up by two rangers and a policeman in attempts to “corner” Ncube, an ivory trafficker. As the latter did not fall into the trap, the three officials made do with the extras. The judge found that their testimonies were invented. The prosecution had demanded a conviction assuring that Makela and Ndlovu were identified as sellers of



tusks and that they had fallen in the trap laid by the mixed team of rangers and police who pretended to be buyers. The tusks at the heart of this case have the taste of cyanide. Cf. "On the Trail" n° 17 p. 95.<sup>54</sup>

### **August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

#### **Machipisa, Province of Harare, Zimbabwe**

Court hearing for Joseph Mupamhanga, 32. The National army officer wanted to sell four tusks weighing 16.8 kg stolen in local national parks. He apparently fell into a trap on a parking lot of the St Peter's Vocational Training Centre. Mupamhanga was approached by two fake buyers. The investigation should tell us more.<sup>55</sup>

### **Beginning of August, 2017**

#### **Dete, bordering the Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

Discovery of seven carcasses, all with tusks removed. Cyanide poisoning is suspected. The packings of lethal poison were found scattered around the disaster area.<sup>56</sup>



### **Week of August 7, 2017**

#### **Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

Mafana Shoko, unemployed, 34 years old, was looking to sell, or even bargain off, two tusks in the middle of the town. He offered one for \$60 US to undercover agents. The value of the tusk is declared at \$410 US. The lawyer from Shoko pleads innocence. "My client didn't know that selling ivory was illegal."<sup>57</sup>

### **Mid-August 2017**

#### **Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe**

According to the English journal The Guardian that received a video showing their turbulent and traumatic capture, 14 baby elephants were ripped from their family in the Hwange Park to be sent to China. A flood of negative comments poured over this unfortunately habitual operation between Zimbabwe and China. "The scientific literature states that captive facilities continue to fall far short of meeting elephants' natural needs for movement, space and extended social networks, with negative effects on health, behavior and reproduction," said Anna Mulà - Fondation Franz Weber. For Iris Ho of the International Humane Society "It's a win-win, for those who are financially profiting from the legal trade in the calves. But it's a lose-lose for the animals, both imported and left behind."<sup>58</sup>

## **REPEATED OFFENSE**

### **GANG**

**August 19, 2017**

#### **Near Chinotimba, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

Namatani Ndlovu, an unrepentant poacher, was seen transporting two tusks from his car, one at a time. He buried them in the bush near Victoria Falls - Bulawayo highway. Trailing behind his every step, the police arrested him while he was digging holes. He was not able to show valid ivory ownership certificates, or to provide plausible explanations for why he tried to hide the tusks.<sup>59</sup>

### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**End of August 2017**

#### **Dinde, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

After he was arrested in possession of tusks on August 23, and admitting to poisoning elephants with cyanide in Hwange National Park—Nkomo, a forest department officer, was already released, according to the Chronicle. This was despite the proceedings that Josphat Nkomo and his brother Elmon, who himself is a former forest department officer, and two fellows from Zambia poisoned elephants around Dete and in Hwange National Park, as an organized gang.<sup>60</sup>



**September 1, 2017**

#### **Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

In the area of Liasha, find of two dead elephants - one of whom was detusked - and of 260 kg of cyanide in the thickets. According to the Zimbabwean daily newspaper The Herald, 400 elephants have been poisoned throughout the country over the past year and a half.<sup>61</sup>



**Beginning of September 2017**

#### **Mana Pools National Park, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe**

A Zimparks official was shot down. He is being cared for and in custody at a hospital in Harare. This wildlife warden was poaching elephants in the park.<sup>62</sup>

**September 16, 2017**

#### **Matusadona National Park, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe**

Death of two poachers in crossfire with guards. Two companions are on the run. Two tusks were found there where the fight broke out.<sup>63</sup>



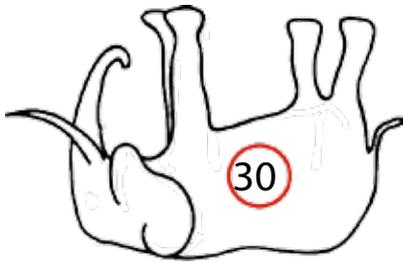
## SOUTH AFRICA

July 18, 2017

South Africa

January to June 2017

According to the OSCAP toll, 30 elephants were poached across the country since the beginning of the year.<sup>64</sup>



August 2, 2017

Bloemhof, North West Province, South Africa

Ivory in black plastic. It was hidden inside a car. Two arrests in the early morning. 38 and 33 years old.<sup>65</sup>

August 21, 2017

Vlakteplaas Section of the Kruger National Park, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

First a foul smell, a trunk peeking out from behind the bushes then a mass wave of flies swarms off in a loud noise, that is how Colonel Leonard Malatji and his team came upon the site where an elephant was poached some days or weeks earlier. In the gigantic bag of grey skin and bones covered in vulture droppings, the tusks were missing. They must have been heavy. The elephant was 30 or 40 years old. After a few hours of autopsy with an axe, cutting with a knife and with use of a trawl harnessed to the front of a 4-wheeler, the colonel wearing gloves, but no mask came out victorious of the carcass with at hands a broken rib that had been crossed by a high caliber bullet. The poaching is proved. The piece of evidence will be submitted to ballistic analysis.

"Sometimes when a poacher shoots an elephant, they can run far away from the original scene. This one was shot in the lungs. He would have died a slow death" he says before getting back methodically to his searches assisted by his team of four crime scene experts.<sup>66</sup>



© Neil McCartney

August 21, 2017

Kruger National Park, South Africa

Already 30 poaching events in the park since the beginning of the year. The elephant laid on his side, the spinal cord cut so as to be sure to rip the tusks off without the victim convulsing. It is not imperative that the victim be dead, paralyzed is enough.<sup>67</sup>

August 24, 2017

Dinokeng Game Reserve, Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa – Zinave National Park, Inhambane Province, Mozambique

It's with a heavy heart that the fellows from the Dinokeng Reserve (185km<sup>2</sup>) are going to organize a transfer to Mozambique and its Zinave National Park (4000 km<sup>2</sup>) of four "boys" that they have looked after for years. But this action brings a certain sense of relief. The defectors, notably one named "Hot Stuff", were the ringleaders and troublemakers. They were quick learners to dodge the fence and on the night of April 17<sup>th</sup> of this year they were seven elephants who escaped and went rambling about, approaching dangerously close, for them as well as human populations, to the towns of Cullinan et Refilwe as well as the road networks. It took two days for the wardens and volunteers from the 911 Battalion to get them back to the reserve. Trucking would take 24 hours, at an average speed of 40km/hr, with two elephants per truck. The whole operation totaled \$50,000 US, including the coordination, the provisions, and the tranquilizers.<sup>68</sup>



September 2017

Near Kruger Park, South Africa

Elephants Alive saved the three elephants from 'shoot to kill'. They had been taken out of private reserves near Kruger Park. They were venturing into fields where mango is industrially farmed and are labeled as "Damage Causing Animals". Anesthesia, storage, truck, translocation.

The expert Michelle Henley runs Elephants Alive. She considers that the problems start when human activity blocks elephant migration pathways.

For 10 straight days, the mango crops were surrounded by a smoke screen. Elephants are intolerant to burning chili peppers.

The widow of Wayne Lotter and his two twin daughters participated in this intervention, which shows how deeply rooted the affection of the family for elephants is (cf. page 87).

The rescue was co-funded by Humane Society International, Young Presidents Organization, Transfrontier Africa's sponsors, Pennies for Eles, and Rettet Das Nashorn.<sup>69</sup>

## The Best Savanna's Landscape Gardener



© The KOTA Foundation

Katherine Bunney, William Bone, and Michelle Henley published a study in 2017 on the dispersal of fruit and tree seeds by elephants of the African savannah, the largest terrestrial mega herbivores of the Anthropocene. The study was conducted in the APNR (Associated Private Nature Reserve), on the western edge of Kruger National Park, using telemetric monitoring of 38 elephants for 8 years and intentional distribution of mangoes and melons to four elephants in the same perimeter.

The following lessons can be drawn from the study and its associated bibliography:

- In the Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe, an elephant disperses more than 2000 seeds per km<sup>2</sup> per day, with an average of 3200 seeds dispersed per day.

- The mangoes, containing five seeds each, and the melons, containing a very large quantity of seeds, were considered in size and in fecundity to be representative of the mega-fruits consumed by the mega herbivores of the savannah. The study shows that after an average intestinal transit time of 34 hours, 50% of the seeds are deposited at a distance of more than 2.5 km and than 1% of the seeds are deposited more than 20 km away from the tree from which they had been collected. Large seeds are deposited at a maximum distance of 59 km and small seeds up to 75 km away after an intestinal transit of 4.5 to 8 days.

The distribution of large-seeded palm trees, like the *Hyphaene coriacea* or the *Borassus aethiopum*, is dependent on the number and range of the elephants. The seeds passed through the intestinal pathway of elephants germinate in 30 days, the raw seeds in 90 days or more.

The ability to disseminate fruit seeds in the African savannah bestows upon the elephant a determining and positive role. This opposes their caricatured portrayal as tree pillagers, which the countries and NGOs in favor of ivory trade endeavor to spread.

## BOTSWANA

**July 2017**

**Nokaneng and Ditshiping, North-West District, Botswana**

**A torrid winter for the elephants.**

At least 17 dead elephants were discovered. Most of them ridden of their tusks. Only a few were located:  
-Two in Sedie at a 51-year-old man's home who was released on bail. They were sent to Gaborone for in depth analysis.

-Another pair in Komana at a 30-year-old man's home.

-Near Maun, a 25-year-old woman found a tusk in the bush while gathering fire wood. She tips-off the police. Authorities call on all members of the public to report any suspicion of poaching and trafficking to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, police or community leaders.

Poachers target in priority elephants, giraffes and buffalos. There is a lack of resource to tackle this plague. Yet, the army might be called upon and soon drones will be mobilized for surveillance of all movements of pillaging gangs.<sup>70</sup>

**August 1-17, 2017**

**Francistown, North-East District and Maun, North-West District, Botswana**

Three police operations led to the arrest of five men in illegal possession of ivory. One of the arrests was made, thanks to a tip-off, in the Galo mall of Francistown, 10 km from Zimbabwe. It led to the seizure of 23 tusks. The traffickers were also executioners.<sup>71</sup>

**August 2, 2017**

**Maun, North-West District, Botswana**

After six tusks (32.2 kg) were found in a hidden compartment of a Toyota (cf. "On the Trail" n° 14 p. 82), the driver Muti Ashilly said



that he was not aware of them at all. This version of the story is contradicted by detective constable Ramosamo. Amongst the several clues that he noted, at the time of the road inspection, Ashilly tried to flee, but was blocked by a traffic jam. The passenger Bisapa pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 5 years in prison.<sup>72</sup>

## NAMIBIA

**July 2017**

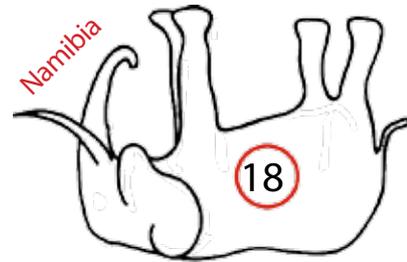
**Bwabwata National Park, Caprivi and Kavango Regions, Namibia**

Arrest of Kebby Livuo. He was holder of two elephant tusks. His request for bail has been denied.<sup>73</sup>

**July 21 and 24, 2017**

**Windhoek, Region of Khomas, Namibia**

Tjaonga Undjee (43) and Simson Tjatindi (49), two residents of the Katutura township, stood before court for possession of two tusks. They had been arrested in Windhoek on July 21. In waiting their trial, they had been released granting payment of 5000 Namibian \$ (\$ 385 US) bail each.<sup>74</sup>



**September 27, 2017**

**Windhoek, Region of Khomas, Namibia**

Two Chinese citizens were convicted by the Windhoek tribunal to a fine worth 50,000 Namibian \$ (\$ 3900 US) or to 12 months prison each for having wanted to export 14 pieces of elephant meat. They risked up to 20 years prison and 200,000 Namibian \$ in fine (\$ 15,400 US). Li Qiang (47 years) and Zhang Weiyu (55 years) were back from a hunting expedition where they killed an elephant having paid \$ 75,000 US for the permit, they said. The general attorney railed against this type of offense that would be committed "on a daily basis". He asked for "a deterrent sentence". The two men's lawyer reminded of the legality of the hunting safari and the benefit it brings to Namibian economy. The judge Vanessa Stanley notes in her decision that the accused had expressed remorse, and that elephant meat in the local economy was unimportant. She concluded with a relatively lenient sentence. What happened to the elephant's tusks?<sup>75</sup>



**August 1st-4, 2017**

**Windhoek, Region of Khomas, Namibia**

They made amends and were sentenced to a worthless fine. On 7 December 2016, police had found in their luggage as they were approaching the airport 12 tusks slices for a total weight of 1.1 kg carefully hidden in instant coffee boxes. Xinxi Xue and Ruhe Zhang were each sentenced to 20,000 Namibian \$ in fine, that is \$ 1540 US.<sup>76</sup>



**September 2017  
Namibia**

The controversy on the desert elephants persists (cf. "On the Trail" n° 6 p.74-75). Desert Elephants and Friends and others are speaking out to say that elephants in the northern part of the country, in Kunene, are a special species that requires more attention and precautions.

The spokesperson of the environmental ministry continues to say that elephants in the north are like any other elephants - well, with a slight difference. The ministry acknowledges that these elephants have exceptional knowledge of the terrain, with extraordinary mobility and stamina. The verbal joust isn't empty. If few hundreds of desert elephants would be considered as a subspecies, they would not be included in the some 20,000 elephants which Namibia claims to and they would be spared by the hunting permits due to their risk of extinction.<sup>77</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**September 14, 2017**

**Kongola, Zambezi Region, Namibia**



No release on bail for these four men. Most of them are repeat offenders. One of their four victims was killed in Bwabwata National Park. The three others were killed in neighboring Botswana.<sup>78</sup>

**End of September 2017**

**Otjikakaneneo, Erongo Region, Namibia**

The two elephants were accused of damaging the underground water pipes. They were shot to death with the blessing of the environment ministry.<sup>79</sup>

## WESTERN AFRICA

### BENIN

**July 4, 2017**

**Gogounou, Alibori Department, Benin**

A team from the Kandi gendarmerie, in coordination with the W National park management arrested three traffickers in possession of four ivory tusks, total weight 20.9 kg. The W National Park in Benin is part of the W Trans-Border Biosphere Reserve that spreads over more than a million hectares across Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger.<sup>80</sup>

#### RECIDIVE

**August 11- 24, 2017**

**Natitingou, Atakora Department, Benin**

- "Boarding" of 14 elephant calf tusks for a mean weight less than 2kg and 2 arrests.

-Conviction of Kora Basile, repeated offender, and Doko David to 48 and 40 months of prison and a joint fine and damages worth 3,4 million francs CFA (about \$ 6100 US). "The souls of the wild animals want justice" writes Emmanuel Gbetu, a journalist for L'Évènement Précis.<sup>81</sup>

From July to September 2017, seizure amount to 18 tusks or tips weighting 44.09 kg.



### NIGERIA

**Mid-September, 2017**

**Ganye, State of Adamawa, Nigeria.**

Seizure by the National park guards of two tusks. They come from North Cameroon. One arrest.<sup>82</sup>

**September 27, 2017**

**Lolo, Kebbi State, Nigeria. Border with Benin.**

At the border post, customs officers seized two tusks weighing 65 kg in all, on board a vehicle. The Sokoto customs command considers the seizure to be worth over 14 million naira (\$ 46,250 US, or \$ 711 US/kg). Indeed, the border city of Lolo is a mecca for trafficking. The customs controller took advantage of this opportunity to order his troops to step up their operations, and to be particularly on alert for trafficking in light weapons.<sup>83</sup>

## CENTRAL AFRICA

### CAMEROON

**July 5, 2017**

**Yoko, Mbam-et-Kim Department, Centre Region, Cameroon**

A team that came specially from Yaoundé 300 km away from Yoko managed with some difficulty to stop an armed trafficker whose motorcycle packs held two tusks weighing 18 kg and cut into four sections. To avoid any ambush, the State agents immediately retreated to Yaoundé with the ivory and the suspect. Yoko, population 13,000, would be subverted with complicities between wildlife traffickers and local civil servants. Several attempted arrests have failed there.<sup>84</sup>

### GABON

**July 2017**

**La Lopé Department, Province of Ogooué-Ivindo, Gabon**

Seizure of four tusks and two arrests.

To tackle poaching and financing of Boko Haram's activities by the ivory trade, 16 English militaries from the "Rifles" battalion are hosting a training camp for National park rangers.<sup>85</sup>

**July 14, 2017**

**Near Makokou, Province of Ogooué Ivindo, Gabon**

Interception of a car heading towards Libreville and seizure of 50 tusks. The driver and the passenger or passengers managed to escape and disappear.<sup>86</sup>

### GANG

**July 19, 2017**

**Mitzic, Province of Woleu-Ntem, Gabon**

Seizure of 17 tusks and a panther skin. Maïga Hamidou was caught red handed by the gendarmerie and Forest and Water Department assisted by the NGO Conservation Justice. He was waiting for an accomplice who was expected to convoy the trophies by truck on the Route national 2 linking northern Gabon to Cameroon. As a middleman, Maïga Hamidou was to be paid 3,200,000 Francs CFA (\$ 5600 US) for the whole load. He is believed to be part of a network: Burkinabe citizen, he named some of his trafficking and poaching partners who reside in the Plus Tard village not far from Ndjolé, still on Route national 2 (Moyen-Ogooué Province). He is in detention under remand and faces up to 6 months prison.<sup>87</sup>

**July 31, 2017**

**Ndjolé, Province of Moyen-Ogooué, Gabon**

It is the General Directory for counter-Interference and Military Security (DGCISM) that interfered in the affairs of François Bé Nah, Gabonese citizen, and of Emile Zumo, from Cameroon. Both men had been denounced. Late in the night they were to bring with their pick-up truck around thirty tusks (40 kg) to a middleman. They were stopped before arriving.<sup>88</sup>



**August 1st, 2017**

**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

Michel and Rick Mbembo, two Gabonese citizens, were under surveillance. They were to meet a buyer on Tuesday in the Louis neighborhood. They were caught red handed, in possession of ivory and trading in ivory. There was 20 kg, in 4 sections. The two traffickers were placed in pre-trial detention. The buyer does not seem to have been troubled or identified.<sup>89</sup>

**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**August 29, 2017**

**Franceville, Province of Haut-Ogooué, Gabon**

Arrest of Kevin Bondouaboka while in action. Thanks to the weakness of the penalties set by article 275 of the Forest Code dating back to a past time when forests and elephants were plenty, Bondouaboka faces maximum one year prison. He already has recently been sentenced to 6 months prison for the same offense.<sup>90</sup>

**September 18, 2017**

**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

The four ivory tips (27 kg) that Samba Camara, of Senegalese nationality, proposed to sell in a hotel of the Montagne Sainte neighborhood came from around Mayumba and possibly the national park. The investigation that led to his arrest rounded up elements of the judicial police, the Water and Forest service, and the help of the NGO Conservation Justice.<sup>91</sup>

**REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

**GANG**

**REPEATED OFFENSE**

**Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo**

Sentencing of Florent Mekozi, Thomas Simbo, Cyrille Mebith and Jean Baba to thirty-six months in prison suspended sentence and for the last three to pay jointly a fine worth 200,000 FCFA (\$ 350 US) and 1,000,000 FCFA in damages (\$ 1750 US). NGO's in Congo are outraged by the weakness of these sentencings. The public attorney has lodged an appeal.

Florent Mekozi is a repeated offender. He has already been sentenced to four years in prison for having provided a kalachnikov and ammunition to a team of poachers. He is 49 years old and father of 13 children. To the Tribunal he declared: "I fully admit to the charges that are formed against me as the patron of this big hunting party. I went to my home town in the village Batekock and went to seek the local Jean Baba, in the village Egnabi to go do the big hunt for elephants for me...". Jean Baba admitted to having killed elephants under the orders of Florent Mekozi. With his accomplices Thomas Simbo and Cyrille Mebith he was found in possession of the kalachnikov and two tusks.<sup>92</sup>



**August 23, 2017**

**On the River Dja, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo**

Seizure by a ETIC patrol (Espace Tridom Interzone Congo) of eight tusks, one Kalashnikov, loaders and 30 rounds of war ammunition. Arrest of Félicien Logo Ebab and Pépin Blaise Momata. The Tridom zone, (Trinationale Dja-Odzala-Minkébé) federates Congo, Cameroon and Gabon (cf. « A la Trace » n°13 p.102 and 16 p.80).<sup>93</sup>



**August 29, 2017**

**Dolisie, Niari Department Republic of the Congo**

Seizure of eight ivory tusks cut into 21 pieces weighing in total 45 kg. Two arrests. They were aged 28 to 40 years. They face up to five years prison.<sup>94</sup>

## GANG / FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 14, 2017

Owando, Cuvette Department, Republic of the Congo

Daniel and Jacques Konga (father and son) and their accomplice Léandre Ngassaï were arrested in possession of six tips weighing a total of 30 kg. Trafficking is the sole source of income for the father and son, who went in for slaughtering the elephants in the forests. Léandre Ngassaï carved the ivory and went in for finding customers throughout the country. They made a full confession. This operation was supported by members of the PALF (Project for the Application of Law for Fauna), who had informed the gendarmerie and the forestry department. For several hours, they had to fight against corruption and insider influencing attempts aiming to free the three men.<sup>98</sup>

End of September 2017

North Republic of the Congo

Ebete and Sambo poach another elephant in the forests in the north. The duo and their partners in crime keep a lookout for elephants in migration corridors and near water sources.<sup>95</sup>

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

### GANG

July 14-16, 2017

Okapi Wildlife Reserve and Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo

Attack on a group a rangers and journalists by the Mai Mai rebels. The four journalists, an American, two Dutch and a Congolese are safe and sound.

The next evening, the bodies of four rangers and a porter were discovered.

The Okapi reserve covers a fifth of the Ituri forest in the North-East of the country. It is home to chimpanzees, elephants and a few thousand okapis in an environment disrupted by civil war and illegal logging and mining.

In another ambush inside the park, near Mount Tshiaberimu where lives the only eastern lowland gorilla population, another ranger died because of the Mai Mai. Dudunyabo Machongani Célestin leaves behind a wife and two children.

According to the International Rangers Federation, 108 rangers died between July 2016 and July 2017. Rangers killed by the Mai Mai, cf. « On the Trail » n°2 p.29-32, n°12 p.103, n° 15 p.111.<sup>96</sup>



### GANG

August 14, 2017

Virunga National Park, Province of North-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo

The Park is listed a world heritage site by UNESCO. The rebels that gravitate around and filter in turn a blind eye to such a distinction. On August 14, three guards were killed. A fourth is missing. According to past experience, there is little chance of finding him alive. The ambush is attributed to the Mai Mai.<sup>97</sup>



## AMERICA

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 26, 2017

Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America

If New York State and California shut down the physical ivory market and are at the forefront in the United States, at the stern, the very prestigious and influential Washington, D.C. is a mess. While wandering through the streets of the capital, Traffic spotted 658 ivory pieces in 68 retail stores. . Browsing the auction sites and electronic marketplaces, Traffic also identified more than 2,000 pieces of worked ivory for sale in 47 States. New York and California round out the top trio. If street sales are in decline thanks to seizures and sanctions, online sales are flourishing.<sup>99</sup>

September 6, 2017

Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

First appearances in virtue of Law 96—which entered into force in July 2016, prohibiting the purchase and sale of ivory objects, except for a few impairments.

- Mark Slotkin, who runs an antique business called Antiquarian Traders Inc., which was selling ivory accessories and sculptures containing ivory.

- Oleg N. Chakov, who was offering nine small ivory carvings to a purchaser who was actually an undercover agent of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Chakov enticed customers on Craigslist. According to a report from the NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council), 80% to 90% of the ivory sold in Los Angeles and San Francisco is of illegal origin.<sup>101</sup>

## CHINA

**Beginning of July, 2017****Chizhou, Province of Anhui, China**

Dismantling of an illegal workshop for transformation of ivory and seizure of 7.6 kg of ivory objects.<sup>103</sup>

**Beginning of July, 2017****Shanghai, China**

Seizure of 54 carved objects weighing in total 2 kg in an art gallery for sculptures and paintings. The three suspects say they bought the lot at low cost in 1990. "I didn't think I would get in trouble, because I only sold ivory in small quantities".<sup>104</sup>

**July 4, 2017****Hong Kong, China****Kong Kong customs set a new record.**

Seizure of 7.2 tons of raw ivory in a 40 feet refrigerated container coming from Malaysia. A first in 30 years. The



bill of lading had a register for a cargo of 7 tons of frozen fish packed in 1000 boxes. Customs got suspicious because the container was only half filled with the registered cargo. After unloading the boxes, customs found in the second part of the container plastic bags filled with whole tusks or sections. Total value is estimated by the Treasury at 72 million Hong Kong \$, that is \$ 9.7 million US and \$ 1350 US/kg.

The following day, the director and two employees of a trade company were arrested. If the Chinese government intends to close the ivory trade market by the end of the year, the Hong Kong government has only set their eyes on 2021. Everything is going as if the Hong Kong ring wanted to stock up on ivory and work in full speed for four years. 370 shops and workshops have a license to sell or transform raw or carved ivory. They officially have available 70 tons of so-called legal ivory. If this contraband from Africa via Malaysia had been successful, the Hong Kong ivory hub would have seen its stock rise to 77.2 tons after some falsifications.

Thankfully to prevent Hong Kong from playing for at least four more years the perverse part of an ivory supermarket for local clientele and for the Chinese clientele coming from the continent, one can count on customs loyalty and certainly on the logisticians' and maritime consignees' blunders.<sup>105</sup>

**August 3, 2017****Central Park, New York, State of New York, United States of America**

Grounding up of raw and carved ivory. One to two tons depending on sources. Mainly elephant ivory. In 2014, the State of New York under authority of the governor Andrew Cuomo put in action the Fitzpatrick act, named in honor of John Fitzpatrick who within the New York DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) fought for years for elephant ivory to be withdrawn from the trade market. The law bans trade in all animal ivory including mammoth ivory. More than half of the ground up ivory came from the shop and storage of the Morano brothers who sold more than 4.5 million US\$ worth of raw and carved ivory in their Metropolitan Fine Arts & Antiques right smack in Manhattan ("On the Trail" n°14, p. 88). They have just admitted to being guilty.

This is the second ivory destruction in New York after the one in Times Square in 2015 and the third in the United States after the one in Denver in 2013. Besides the symbolic power of a public destruction ranking ivory as an unlawful and spoiled matter, the benefit is also to permanently prevent any loss, misappropriation, theft and reintroduction onto the international black market of seized ivory. No country is above such neglect or embezzlement (cf. among other in the United States "On the Trail" n°17, p. 81 et n°4 p.84).

The New York antique dealers moved with bad faith, wrongly claiming that 300- and 400-year-old antiquities had been shredded and trashed, citing the well-known example of the ivory buttons- that don't conduct heat- on the lids of tea pots from past centuries. Even if there might have been some misuses to enforce similar laws in other States than New York (see "On the Trail" n°5 p.95 et n°12 p.89) application has now been clarified by a panel of derogations, and by Carbon 14 dating that is nondestructive and inexpensive compared to the value of authentic antiques.<sup>100</sup>

**September 26, 2017****San Mateo, State of California, United States of America**

53-year-old Tao Zeng was indicted. At the gem show in San Mateo on September 11, 2016, the antique dealer was displaying her ivory jewels. She tried to hide them as the US Fish and Wildlife approached her stall.<sup>102</sup>

July 2017

**Putuo District, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China**

Four ivory object vendors were sentenced to 3 to 4 months prison time by a Shanghai Tribunal. In all 813 g of bracelets, pearls, knife handles and various ornaments were seized, made out of African and Asian elephant ivory. They were presented in a window display in a shopping mall. Arrested on 26 August 2016, another seller-nicknamed Wu- displayed ivory spoons, a tobacco pipe and other items. Admitting to having bought the ivory abroad, he said for his defense that he started this business after seeing other merchants do so. He was sentenced to 4 months prison suspended sentence because the tribunal noted that he had not in fact sold the illegal objects.<sup>106</sup>



July 12, 2017

**Chaoyang District, Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China**

A police raid in the Guanxin Market in trendy Chaoyang District, enabled the seizure on seven stalls of small items made in ivory for a total weight of 48,3 kg. Ten people were taken into custody.<sup>107</sup>

**TAILOR NETWORK**

August 25, 2017

**Hong Kong International Airport, China**

Arrest of a 22 year-old woman who was transporting a carry-on bag full of 23 kg of ivory blocks, entirely covered in plastic tape, some slipped into a specially sewn jacket. Customs estimate the seizure be worth \$58,900 US, or \$2,560 US/kg. The trafficker came from Harare, Zimbabwe, by way of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.<sup>108</sup>



**August 2017  
Hong Kong, China**

After banning the transport of shark fins on its airplanes, HK Express banned ivory transport in all its forms. HK Express christened one of its Airbus 320s as "Shark – Say No to Shark Fin". The company is considering replicating this symbolic gesture for elephants and ivory on another one of its aircraft.<sup>109</sup>

**TAILOR NETWORK**

September 9, 2017

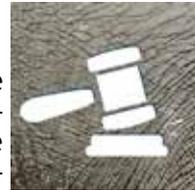
**Hong Kong International Airport, China**

The custom tailored suit was hiding 22 kg of semi-carved ivory. The passenger was coming in from Harare, Zimbabwe via Dubai. The suit was in his cabin luggage. Hong Kong customs estimates that the seizure is worth around \$ 440,000 HK (\$ 56,340 US, or \$ 2,560 US/kg).<sup>110</sup>

September 18, 2017

**Hong Kong, China**

Two men aged 53 and 54 were sentenced to two months in prison for ivory trafficking. They were coming in from Harare (in Zimbabwe) via Dubai (in the United Arab Emirates). Customs officers from the international airport had arrested them on September 16, when they tried to fraudulently transport 60 kg of ivory cut in small plates, meant to be carved afterwards. The cargo was hidden in four central processing units of computers. It is estimated to be worth \$ 1.2 million HK (\$ 153,000 US), or \$ 2,550 US/kg. The Harare - Hong Kong route via Dubai run by the Emirates airline is an ivory trafficking path that was clearly identified in "On the Trail" (cf. n°10 p. 64, n°11 p. 82, n°16 p. 83, and opposite).<sup>111</sup>



**INDIA**

**In India, an elephant is killed every four days by poisoning, train accidents, poaching, or electrocution.**

**The global inventory for 2017 notes a decline in the elephant population: around 27,000 compared to 30,000 in 2012.**

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

July 2, 2017

**Nawabganj, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Seizure on the road between Pratapgarh and Allahabad of 5 kg of raw ivory in the form of two tusks, a hand gun and 17 bullets in the vehicle of a couple that had been under police surveillance for 11 months. Naraian Mishra and his wife Sadhna had a domestic elephant non-registered with the competent authorities. They had just cut off the tusks and were about to open negotiations. The elephant was found safe and put in the care of an NGO.<sup>112</sup>

**July 25, 2017**

**Chenduvurai, State of Kerala, India**

A bulldozer demolished the tusker. Chillikomban got his name from his tusks that grew like pepper fruits. During the last two days of his life, he was accused of demolishing a tractor, a van and a bicycle and having uprooted some eucalyptus trees.



Last September he was lapidated and covered in wounds by broken glass bottles thrown at him by near the reservoir of the Mattupetty dam.

This end of July, he was in the whereabouts of a tea plantation belonging to the Kanan Devan Hills Plantations Company Ltd. Heavy means were used to move him away. After several assaults from the mechanical beast, the tusker was mortally wounded by the bulldozer's bucket. He was found dead a little further.

Other means were available. Two kumkis, domestic elephants specially appointed to such task, were available to guide Chillikomban back to the forest. Heritage Animal Task Force, the NGO based in Thirissur, demands the arrest of the plantation director. For the time being, only the driver of the bulldozer is being questioned by police.<sup>113</sup>

**Muthanga, State of Kerala, India  
Unified VAT benefits elephants**

Since the entry into force of the Goods and Services Tax that applies the same rate to the 29 States of the country, the elephants of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary can breathe again, and can drink deep in Noogu River without crossing the endless line of trucks (2 km) awaiting the tax tollgate of Muthanga. The tollgate has just been moved to Kallur, outside of the reserve. The harmonization of the tax has simplified procedures. The sanctuary wardens are delighted: "Dumping of plastic waste and cooking by truck drivers near the checkpoint also used to disturb the wildlife."<sup>114</sup>

**End of July, 2017**

**National Capital Territory of Delhi, India  
Chained by the feet in the city of 17 million residents.**



Two committees reunited in 2016 and again in 2017 upon demand for the justice are in unanimous agreement: the seven domestic elephants are confined in the town with conditions that did not allow for basic vital and social needs to be met. They are in poor health. The conditions of captivity are deplorable. The situation poses risks that include disrupting public order and creating damages to property and people if one of the elephants were to break his chain. Nothing would stop them from rambling through the streets. "Keeping elephants in an overpopulated and congested city is not reasonable," says the latest report written by veterinarians and representatives of the forest department. "In the case of escape, the owners have no means, not even a tranquilizer gun, to neutralize them." In the coming weeks, the seven elephants could be transported to a sanctuary outside the capital of India. The mahouts will not calm down. They say that the elephants will not survive being separated.<sup>115</sup>

**August 10, 2017  
State of Jharkhand, India**

Mercyless hunt down of a 25-year-old elephant accused of wreaking havoc in the States of Bihar and Jharkhand.

Ali Khan, an elite hunter from Hyderabad was recruited by local authorities to shoot the condemned. Khan has been camping the Sahibganj forest day and night for a week. The loner elephant is accused of killing 15 people since March. He enters villages after nightfall and charges any human that may pass. Forest guards are at their wits end. The elephant apparently isn't at all intimidated by the bonfires lit at villages' entrances to shoo him away. "Twice in the past three days, it came close to injuring our men," says one of the service's official. Losing the battle, Singh, the director in charge of wild life in Jharkhand ordered to shoot on sight. "Tranquilizing the elephant is risky due to the beast's aggressive nature and the dense vegetation in the area. The sedative takes more than 30 minutes to work once injected.

Shooting tranquilising darts at the elephant could have agitated it.

"It could open a blind charge at our men or at the settlements ».

Since this case, Jharkhand is thinking of equipping with the logistical and veterinarian means to neutralize without killing problem elephants. A pair of kumkis (domestic elephants) could be imported from West Bengal and a shelter specialized in temporary accommodation of elephants who leave the reserves and are confronted with human activity is being considered in the Sahibganj District.<sup>116</sup>

**August 11, 2017  
Chetganj, Varanasi district, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

The well-informed police stop two men at a crossing who are in possession of an 8 kg tusk cut in two, which is estimated at \$39,000 US, or \$4,875 US/kg. The inspector of Chetganj hopes that the interrogations will allow them to obtain information on the network.<sup>117</sup>

**August 2017**

**State of Tamil Nadu, India**

1800-4254-5456. Hotline in case of a man-elephant conflict.<sup>118</sup>

#### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**August 11, 2017**

**Mavoor, Kozhikode District, State of Kerala, India**

More proof of lineage in matters of poaching. Krishnan the father, 73 years old and Sivaramakrishnan the son, 45 years old, were caught in the act with two tusks and a money counting machine.<sup>119</sup>

**August 22, 2017**

**Falakata, Alipurduar district, West Bengal, India**

Arrest of Rathindra Sarkar, 55 years old, by the 53rd battalion and seizure of at least two tusks.<sup>120</sup>

**August 25, 2017**

**Jaigaon, Alipurduar district, Bengal West, India**

Seizure of a revolver, a pipe gun, three ammunitions, and an elephant tusk of 285 g. In a certain regard, it should be that the lighter the tusks, the heavier the sanctions.<sup>121</sup>



**August 29, 2017**

**Nadumalai, Tiruchirappalli district, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

The funerals did not end well. During the ceremony, one of the attendees was charged to death by a wild elephant. Two kumkis (domestic elephants), called to the rescue to put the intruder on the right path back to the neighboring forest, were attempting to complete their task when, 100 m ahead, the wild elephant collapsed. After waiting a period of time, in hopes that the female elephant would get back up, the wardens approached and declared her dead. She was actually about 55 years old. A combination of age, fatigue, fright, and hunger would be responsible for her death. The wardens explain that she had lost its molars and so it had difficulty eating leaves. For four days, she was looking to get closer to banana trees. The farm laborers, unclear if manipulated by directors, cut off the road between Pollachi and Valpari to protest and demand that local authorities take measures to remove the wild animal. The banana trees are 500 m from the forest. The autopsy was postponed due to heavy rains.<sup>122</sup>

**Near Bamonpokhari forest, State of West Bengal, India**

Like polar bears in the Arctic, and like elephants in southern Africa (cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p.85 and n°15 p.69), elephants of the Indian sub-continent are accustomed to rummaging through unauthorized dumps, and feeding off of them.

At the beginning of September, the autopsy of an elephant aged about 26 years, which had been dead for at least three months, revealed that a large amount of plastic had been ingested. According to chief head veterinarian, this could be the cause of death. The corpse had been found near Nadukani, where tourists and travelers often take a break. They throw out soda bottles and food packaging.<sup>123</sup>



**August to Mid September 2017  
Sundargarh and Angul Districts, State of Odisha, India**

Gender imbalance is producing tension amongst elephants.

Due to pressure from ivory poaching, males are becoming extinct. This is compromising the opportunities for mating and parturition. In the forest of Khandadhar and Angul, the ratio is 100 to 70 females for 6 to 20 males. Experts in social elephant behavior consider that the ratio can be considered as viable starting from one male for ten females. For the past 20 or so years, the opportunities for encounters and mating have been increasingly hindered by the human colonization of the migration corridor between the two forests.

These encroachments make elephants increasingly nervous, especially the females - and are also causing more and more conflicts with squatters.

The wildlife expert Sangram Parida is urging the government to open up the migration corridor, and emphasizes that there would be less conflict with humans if elephants had the possibility to mate, and if females could fulfill their needs for motherhood and education.<sup>124</sup>

**August 4, 2017**

**India**

The Supreme Court calls on the federal government to consider the clearing of elephant migration corridors a priority. The Supreme Court has been referred by Vidya Athreye, the specialist of conflicts between wild fauna/man in the Wildlife Conservation Society of India. In his address, her lawyer explains that with the average human density of 395 people per km<sup>2</sup>, it is impossible to keep the elephants away from human populations and that it is also impossible to confine them to the interior of parks, sanctuaries, and reserves. "Their migration routes have been hindered by new habitats, cultivation, roads and railway and canals. "Consequently, human-elephant conflict is taking a huge toll on human life and property as well as on elephants," "the ministry of forests and environment as well as States must consider securing the 27 identified elephant corridors, which were accorded high priority by the central government's task force in its August 2013 report." The Supreme Court gives the New Delhi government three months to respond.<sup>125</sup>

**Mid September 2017**

**Bamra-Gangpur Forest, Sundargarh District, State of Odisha, India**

A young sub-adult was found. His two tusks - which should usually be 15 to 20 cm long—were cut, along with his trunk.

Year after year, poaching continues and targets males. In human memory, the poaching that happened the most long ago was in 2008, when two males were victims of poaching. Their four tusks were found in the homes of people living in the area. In elephant memory, poaching goes much further back in time.<sup>126</sup>

**September 19, 2017**

**Latehar District, Jharkhand State, India**

A 20-year-old elephant blasted by a landmine in the forest of Latu. A Maoist-inspired rebellion group frequently opposes the regular troops in this region.<sup>127</sup>



**September 29, 2017**

**Bonai Forest, State of Odisha, India**

Riders on the Storm. 3 arrests. This does not seem to be a case of poaching. During the storm, lightning struck the elephant, and the three individuals tore out his tusks. According to the forest police, its death was natural. Two homemade rifles were also seized in the home of one of the ivory dealers.<sup>129</sup>

**Jharkhand, India**

The elephant population is in decline in the State. 688 in 2012, 555 in 2017, according to the latest census conducted in May and June. For the first time, the census was synchronized with those of three neighboring States. The forests around Palamau and the sanctuary in Dalma are particularly affected. "Our elephants over these years may have gone to neighbouring Chhattisgarh" the wildlife warden tries to reassure. According to him, the elephants suffered from willful forest fires encouraged by the army to improve visibility and to better fight against Maoist rebels.

A 6.5 km trench was dug in October and November 2016 to block the transboundary movement of elephants. This decision by the Bengal government would have prevented the return of a certain number of elephants that had left for Bengal in July and August. Everyone is in agreement that poaching is one of the causes of the decline.

Visual contact and observation of dung are the foremost indicators of the count. One elephant emits 16-18 dungs each day. The number of dungs and their rate of decomposition serve to consolidate census accuracy.

Each elephant dung acts as a micro-ecosystem in itself. It helps in seed dispersal and germination, in addition to providing food for insects. A sizeable presence of dung is an indicator of a healthy elephant population.<sup>128</sup>



Composition Robin des Bois

## INDIA - BANGLADESH

**July 27, 2017**

### **Shillong, State of Meghalaya, India India – Bangladesh**

Discussions are opening up in order to facilitate the back and forth trips of elephants that hold little regard for the border between Bangladesh and India. At least 20 elephants are going to regularly pass to Bangladesh to spend the winter and return to India in the summer, but there are also diffuse and occasional cross-border movements to seek food or mating partners. There are 12 migration corridors in the State of Meghalaya. There is one sole corridor in Assam. Several breakings open fences that mark the boundary have been reported. It is planned to open up official breaches and replace the fences with trees, and to avoid human encroachments and electric fences in the area around the crossings.

The subject of human immigration remains a source of tension between the two countries. That being said, the willingness to cooperate on the free movement of elephants is positive and encouraging. Last year, during the monsoon season, an elephant was swept to Bangladesh by the strong flows of the Brahmaputra River. It had died after 50 days of efforts between the two countries to save it. The people of Bangladesh had named it "Brave Banga (Bangabahadur)."<sup>130</sup>

## BANGLADESH

### **Bangladesh Kutupalong**

Confrontation between human migration and elephant migration.

The Ukhia forest is partially razed to hastily make space for Rohingya refugees coming from Myanmar. The elephant migration corridor is blocked. Two Rohingyas were trampled to death last week. The double barrier of the refugee camps and the route under construction Cox's Bazar-Teknaf threatens to disrupt and die down one herd of around 50 elephants.<sup>131</sup>



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## INDONESIA

**July 24, 2017**

### **Nunukan, Province of North Kalimantan, Indonesia. Border to Malaysia**

Tawau, State of Sabah in Malaysia, is linked by ferry-boat to Nunukan, Province of North Kalimantan in Indonesia.

Sabah and Kalimantan are coast by coast on Borneo Island. Should the ferry-boats that link within an hour Tawau to Nunukan be renamed Pygmy boats? This is the second time since the beginning of the year that ivory ripped from pygmy elephants in the State of Sabah have been uncovered by the Nunukan customs. The man had a 2.7 kg tusk in his bag. He says he bought it for \$ 350 US, i.e. \$ 130 US/kg in the harbor city Kota Kinabalu on the west coast of Sabah. The smuggler claims the tusks was to be used in traditional rituals. In January, a woman caught in the same position had claimed the ivories seized were to a dowry for a wedding (See "On the Trail" n°16 p.85). Information is currently being shared between Sabah in Malaysia and Kalimantan in Indonesia.<sup>132</sup>

**September 9, 2017**

### **Rimbo Ilir, Tebo Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia**

He was at his parents' house. The "Fox Team," a special anti wildlife crime squad had just received an overcoming report about him. The 40-year-old man was stopped in the early morning. He is suspected to have poached an elephant in Semambu, in the district of Sumay.<sup>133</sup>

## JAPAN

**July 2017**

### **Japan**

Rakuten, the largest global sales platform on Internet, has decided to rid its racks of any ivory or sea turtle items. "We expect it will take 1-2 months for all listings of these prohibited products to be removed". On the other side Yahoo Japan has no intention of putting an end to ivory trade. "We don't think that the legal ivory trade in Japan has any impact on African elephant numbers." Regarding e-commerce, only Yahoo persists in it. Rakuten, Google, Amazon.com, Alibaba, Tencent, Etsy and eBay removed ivory from their shelves. Yahoo is the largest ivory seller in Japan. Outsiders appear on the Internet trade market and C to C (Customer to Customer) market such as Mercari.<sup>134</sup>

Rakuten, cf. « On the Trail » n°4 p.72.

## **August- September Tokyo, Japan**

One step forward, one step back, one step sideways in Japan and progress planned for 2020. On August 24, police announced the indictment of 12 people: the President of the company Flores trading in precious metals, employees and clients. They are accused of having bought and sold nine raw ivory tusks without including in the transaction any proof of their lawful origin checked by competent authorities. Ivory deemed a precious metal!

On August 29, the attorney general in Tokyo announced he had dropped prosecution.

One the same day, the Ministry of environment launched an information campaign on the obligation for all tusks holders to register them within the next two years. "Unregistered ivory trade is illegal" "A strict regulation of ivory is necessary to conform to national law on the protection of endangered species and international law."

EIA (Environmental Investigation Agency) who wrote a recent report on the ivory trade in Japan believes the Ministry's announcement is just as useful as fairy dust.

Only the ivory imported before entry into force of ban on international trade in 1989 can be put on the market according to Japanese law but this dating is not genuinely checked and recent tusks are suspected to enter the country by circuitous means to make seals and other every-day-life articles sold in Japan or exported to China.

On 2 September 2017, Aeon, the mass distribution brand, announced their decision in view of 2020 and the Olympic Games to remove from their 180 outlets all ivory items including seal stamps.

Traffic lists all the ivory items available on the Japanese market: hankos (seal stamps), jewelry, chess games and other games, cooking utensils, tea sets, musical instruments, Buddhist ritual accessories, objects for smokers, home decoration.<sup>135</sup>

## **LAOS**

### **July and August, 2017**

#### **Laos - China**

The Chinese company, Jong Liew Tourism Development Investment, obtained a 50-year concession of 104 ha located 1.5 km from the laotian city of Sayaboury. The first developments for the "Elephant City" are in construction. Residents were paid to leave the land empty. The plan is to gather together 200 to 300 elephants and to organize non-stop parades and turns under the authority of the Laotian mahouts. A spokesperson for the company assisted by an interpreter took advantage of Elephant Day to locally promote the new park as a tourist attraction. 50 domestic elephants served as props. "In two years, we will have boats, hot air balloons, and elephant shows." "Every year we will mark this day and organize some activities to call on people to protect elephants and their habitat." To make a good impression and to reassure those who worry about the disappearing of elephants in Laos and in other Asian countries, the amusement park is also showcased as a breeding center.

Fortunately, there are some who won't buy the businessman's spiel. Edwin Wiek, founder of the WFFT, keeps his feet firmly on the ground. "In fact someone may think that breeding elephants to have many calves is called conservation. That does not increase the number of elephants in the forest, but rather it is only breeding for business." "To talk about elephant conservation, we must make laws to protect against deforestation and the illegal ivory trade."

The Chinese investors are ready to put in \$40 million US to attract masses of suckers who will come from China for the most part, just some kilometers away.

Karl Amman is a tireless defender of wildlife. His work and his documentaries on international trafficking of great apes and on the devastating effects of bush meat in Africa are well respected. With his team, since the beginning of the year, he has been investigating the fate of elephants in Laos and the main illegal import and export pathways. In comparison to zoos in Dubai and Kyoto, it's China who is winning out. In the span of two years, the number of expatriated elephants from Laos to China is approaching 100. Before finding themselves in circuses, zoos, and amusement parks in Chinese megapolises, the elephants undergo months of taming in Laos, to learn how to act like fools and perform circus acts. The mahouts, unemployed since the timber industry has been automated and in decline, earn \$900 US per month for taming the elephants. They are often sent abroad at the same time as the elephants.

In Europe and on the American continent, circuses, under pressure from the public opinion, are starting part from their elephants. In China, the public opinion demands elephants more and more. The price that the Chinese show owners pay for one elephant from Laos can reach up to \$300,000 US, two or three times more expensive than the elephants from Zimbabwe but much more cost-effective because of their clown tricks. The video testimony of the mahouts on the reproductive cycle of their herd is staggering. They tie the females in heat to a tree in the jungle, hoping that a male will come to mate her. Elephant calves borned from such schemes cannot under the CITES rules be entered into the records of Laotian domestic elephants and thus cannot be commercially traded at the international level. Nevermind! Laos has little to do with CITES.<sup>136</sup>

## MALAYSIA

July 14, 2017

### Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia

Arrest of a Vietnamese suspect coming from Addis Ababa. Seizure of 36 kg of raw ivory cut into small sections destined for the jeweler's shop. The shipment is valued at the equivalent of \$70,000 US, or \$1,944 US/kg.<sup>137</sup>

August 4, 2017

### Malua Forest Reserve, State of Sabah, Malaysia



The crime scene speaks of the motive. The poor little one was too close to the palm oil plantation. The plantation belongs to Golden Apex. Pygmy elephants are an emblem in Sabah and are used in international advertisements to attract tourists. She was about 10. While experts were taking down the ballistic forensics, a small herd of elephants were observing at the Kinabatangan forest edge about a hundred meters away.<sup>138</sup>

September 2017

### Kinabatangan river, State of Sabah, Malaysia

The cadaver was floating in the river, with its tusks cut off, a paw amputated, a square of skin cut off on its left flank. This is the 6th poaching in the park since the beginning of the year.<sup>139</sup>

## MYANMAR

### GANG

August 4 and 5, 2017

### Myittayar Forest Reserve, Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar

Death of a 25-year-old female and a four-year-old female hit by poisoned arrows 16 cm long.

Arrest of nine men in possession of 10 bows, 90 arrows and several vials of poison by a column of police men, forest agents and administrative officials. These poachers live in part in the forest. They take from the elephants' bodies the tail, skin pieces, tusks, meat and sell most of it to smugglers who road after road get closer to China. One to two elephants are killed every week in the country; an unbearable predation for a population composed at the most of 2000 individuals. Myanmar covers 770,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The remains of the two elephants were incinerated on site.<sup>140</sup>



August 13, 2017

### Thabaung Township, Ayeyawady Region, Myanmar

The case started with the discovery of an elephant carcass with no skin. The patrol then came upon a crowd of men in the process of curing the elephant skin that was cut into strips and pieces. Cho Tin, 55 years old, one of the poachers, pointed his gun at the law enforcement. A ranger shot on sight. Cho Tin is in the hospital. All of his accomplices disappeared into the jungle. On the premises, four small tusks, one tail, some meat, pieces of skin, two homemade weapons, gunpowder, an arrow, and an identity card were recovered by the anti-poaching patrol directed by the captain Myo Lwin. Once again, all eyes turn toward the Kyaiktiyo pagoda, at the foot of which confetti made from elephant skin sells for \$3.65 US, or \$5,660 US per m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>141</sup>



## NEPAL

August 24, 2017

### Punarbhas, Kanchanpur district, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal

The rains do not slow poachers. A trap for wild boars trapped one of the rare Nepalese tuskers. The ultimate fate of the tusks is unknown. The local press reports that people came to the site to pay tribute to the elephant. Children came too, as the flooding prevented them from going to school. Between eight and ten of the district's schools were closed. One schoolgirl laments that most of her books had been taken away by the flows of water.<sup>142</sup>



## QATAR

July 17, 2017

### Hamad International Airport, Doha, Qatar

Seizure of 310 kg of ivory "coming from an African nation and its final destination was an Asian country", according to the laconic custom's statement.<sup>143</sup>



## SINGAPORE

July 14 and August 2, 2017

### Singapore Changi Airport, Singapore

Seizure inside the luggage of a Vietnamese traveler and on the members of his family of six carved ivories bought in Viet Nam. The family's patriarch of 33 got off with a 10,000 Singapore \$ fine, i.e. \$ 7,350 US.<sup>144</sup>

## SRI LANKA

July and September, 2017

### Off the coast of Kokkuthuduwai, North Province and between Round Island and Foul Point, Trinquemalay, East Province, Sri Lanka

Habituated to boarding fishing boats engaged in illegal harvesting of sea cucumbers, the Sri Lankan coast guard assisted by divers succeeded within two operations to redirect towards the beach using ropes three wild elephants lost at sea. These two lovely stories remind that elephants are excellent swimmers and restore Sri Lanka's image tarnished by the sinister case of the two elephants executed as they climbed out of a water hole on dry land (see "On the trail" n°17 p.104).

### Ratnapura District, Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka

The relapse didn't take long. At the beginning of September in Balangoda, the vice-minister of vocational training and apprenticeship made a shocking statement. For him, 6,000 elephants is too many for the forests of Sri Lanka, 4,000 would be enough. "Laws must be amended, elephants must be considered as pets, the extras must be given to other countries."<sup>145</sup>

July 26, 2017

### Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Justice has ordered that the 15 domestic elephants seized because their owners had not been able to provide the legal adoption certificates be "off of seizure" from July 27 to August 15 to enable proper conduct in Kandy of Esala Perahera, one of the oldest and most spectacular Buddhist celebrations that gathers dancers, jugglers, musicians, fire eaters and other entertainers accompanied by several tens of tuskers, harnessed and decorated. Each petitioner must provide the public Treasury a guarantee worth 10 million rupee, that is about \$ 65,000 US.<sup>146</sup>



August 4, 2017

### Uda Walawe National Park, Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces, Sri Lanka

One of the last wild tuskers in Sri Lanka and Asia is gone. Despite the vets' intervention, «Hambegamuwe Ethaa » finally died. He had five rifle bullets in his body and several deep cuts. No doubt a poacher attack and a distraught escape.<sup>147</sup>



### Hambantota, Sri Lanka The Rigged pumpkin attack

Shot on site, electrocution, capture for domestication, risks are plenty for elephants and their young, without omitting the "hakka pattas". These handmade explosive devices filled with lead pellets are hidden in fruit or other bait for wild animals. The bomb-setters goal is to "collect" in the least possible amount of time the most possible meat and later sell it. This time, it was a four-year-old elephant looking too closely at a rigged pumpkin who was the victim. Shredded jaw, trunk a third ripped off, he roamed several days before being spotted and taken in by vets who still are very pessimistic about his chances of survival. Between 2012 and 2016, 1171 dead elephants were counted in Sri Lanka. Only 104 were from natural causes. The Minister in charge of wildlife says that investigations will be expanded to fireworks manufacturers who supply rural communities with explosive powder.<sup>148</sup>



## TAIWAN

**June 26 – July 9, 2017**

### Taipei, Taiwan

In a large-scale operation, national police in cooperation with the Forestry Bureau inspected 252 shops throughout the country.

105 items made of ivory were seized in two shops near the Xingtian temple. One of the sellers claimed it was mammoth ivory. Detailed examination of the Schreger lines (see "On the Trail" n°8 p.82) proved the ivory came from elephants in Asia or Africa. Another shop-owner claimed the ivory to be ancient but hadn't the least document or testimony to support the statement. Both merchants risk a six months to five years prison sentence and a fine between about \$ 10,000 to 50,000 US.<sup>149</sup>

## THAILAND

**July 24, 2017**

### Bangkok-Suvarnabhumi Airport, Thailand

Seizure of 74.8 kg of raw and worked ivory. Two Vietnamese were arrested and indicted. According to Dinh Van Hon and Nguyen Tuan Da's declarations, they were recruited by a person in Angola to transport the luggage full of ivory from Ethiopia to Luang Phra Bang in Laos.<sup>150</sup>

**September 7, 2017**

### Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Seizure of 28 tusks or pieces of tusks for a total weight of 41.09 kg and a value of 4 million baths, or \$120,000 US and \$2,915 US/kg. The package, made of cardboard and covered in black adhesive plastic came from Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.<sup>151</sup>

**Mid-September 2017**

### Nam Nao National Park, Phetchabun Province, Thailand

A decapitated male elephant. His body was buried on site.<sup>152</sup>

## VIET NAM

**July 8, 2017**

### Quang Phong, Quang Xuong Distrit, Province of Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam

Seizure in a trailer truck loaded with fruit of 2748 kg of raw ivory. The vehicle was driving to Hanoi from Ho-Chi-Minh-City. The driver had been informed of the illegal load and would have been paid to carry out the convoy. Other sources say the contrary. This is the largest seizure ever carried out in the province.

Transport by roadway of contraband ivory is not rare in the country. The samples that are sent to the tropical biology Institute immediately as they always are confirmed that it really is ivory and not fake.<sup>153</sup>

**July 12, 2017**

### Nà Tăm, Province of Lạng Sơn, Viet Nam

Seizure in the back of a car coming from Hanoi and heading for China of 22 kg of semi raw and worked ivory. Two arrests.<sup>154</sup>



**September 6, 2017**

### Cat Lai Port, Hô-Chi-Minh-City, Viet Nam New trick

Two containers declared as "barrels of tar" coming from Cotonou in Benin via Malaysia and heading for Cambodia?! Something attracted the attention of the customs officers of the port. Customs may have already had the freight agent on their radar— Empire Group Company Ltd from Ho Chi Minh City. The containers went through the scanner, which revealed strange shapes inside some of the barrels. A search resulted in the discovery of 1.3 t of tusks cut up into 50 to 60 cm pieces hidden in 13 barrels. Each one had 40 to 50 pieces of ivory covered in compressed sawdust, a layer of gypsum, and a top layer of 5 cm of tar. Le Nguyen Linh, deputy head of the customs department of Cat Lai Port, calls this technique a "new trick". In 2016, his officers seized 6 t of ivory.<sup>155</sup>



**September 18, 2017**

### Bac Lieu, Bac Lieu Province, Viet Nam

49 bags containing nearly 1.5 of ivory had just been loaded onto the truck. As the truck was arriving from the coast a few kilometers away, the police inspected it on Cao Van Lau street. The cargo has been transported by a fishing boat coming from Malaysia. The truck was heading north, and was probably heading toward China afterwards. Nguyen Thanh Long (35 years old), the driver, was arrested. The police are looking for the owner of the cargo.<sup>156</sup>

GERMANY

August 7, 2017

Düsseldorf International Airport, State of North Rhine Westphalia, Germany

Customs checked a 32-year-old man coming from Spain who was going through the “nothing to declare” gate. On his wrist, there



was a bracelet that looked like leather, but that turned out to be in elephant hair. The traveler explained he had bought it several years earlier in Senegal. A criminal procedure has been opened against him, and the bracelet was seized.<sup>157</sup>

In Vitam  
David Shepherd 1931–2017



David Shepherd, artist painter, was shocked in the 1960s when he discovered more than 200 poisoned zebras dead on the banks of a watering hole in Tanzania. As if to pay an unending debt to Mother Nature, he since often painted splendid tigers and elephants and sold his work to benefit worthy animal causes. In 1973, he gave the equivalent of \$ 200,000 US to the initiative Project Tiger, started by Indira Gandhi. In 1984, he founded the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation. The DSWF is today recognized as a “major” in the international network of medium-sized NGOs. These hardworking “little hands” disseminate—on the ground and in international conventions—

knowledge, support, figures, warnings, and materials useful in the fight against the persecution and the disappearance of the megafauna throughout the world. David Shepherd was also an admired painter of seascapes, aviation, and industry. David Shepherd died September 20.<sup>158</sup>



National Museums Northern Ireland

# Other Mammals

**AFRICA**

## SOUTH AFRICA

**September 2017  
Balule, Province of Limpopo,  
South Africa**

The Black Mamba rescued a female African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) whose neck was stuck in a trap. Conducted with a veterinarian dispatched to the scene, this emergency operation was effective for eight reasons. The mother is raising seven puppies in her den.<sup>1</sup>



© Black Mamba

**Black Mamba**

See "On the Trail" n°14 p.65.  
Bank Name:  
First National Bank (FNB)  
Account Name:  
Transfrontier Africa NPC  
Account Type:  
FNB Cheque Account  
Account Number: 626 068 595 46  
Branch Code: 270 652  
SWIFT Code: FIRNZAJXXX



## KENYA

**August 16 and 18, and  
September 5, 2017  
Kenya**

-Arrest of a poacher and seizure of two giraffe heads (*Giraffa spp.*), ostrich feathers and several other wild animal organs used in black magic rituals.



-Vain attempt to save a giraffe hit by an arrow.



-Arrest in the act of a giraffe poacher and butcher.

Thanks to Stephen Tankard, KWS agent, for this information.<sup>2</sup>



## UGANDA

**September 9, 2017  
West Nile sub-region,  
Northern Region,  
Uganda**

Seizure of three okapi skins (*Okapia johnstoni*). Two interrogations. Okapi cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p.98.<sup>3</sup>



## TANZANIA

**GANG  
July 23, 2017  
Simanjiro District, Region of Manyara, Tanzania**

Hussein Ibrahim Janjiti (56 years old) didn't run fast enough. Tanzania's Wildlife Division's anti-poaching unit (KDU) caught up with him, while his seven accomplices vanished into savannah. He was found with giraffe meat (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) and zebra meat (*Equus zebra*, Appendix II). Four motorcycles, flashlights and four machetes used to slaughter the eight giraffes and one zebra during the night were seized. Giraffes are regularly targeted for their skin and meat that is found in cities under the name "bush meat". They also are victims of an insidious rumor (see "On the Trail" n°7 p.96). The giraffe is the emblem of Tanzania.<sup>4</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

September 2017

### Matetsi, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

"It was hard time catching it" said the guy from Impondo Safaris with a fully satisfied and somewhat exhausted. And with reason, striped hyenas (*Hyena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in southern Africa are threatened with extinction because of poaching, habitat destruction and cyanide scattering to kill elephants and take their ivory.<sup>5</sup>



## AMERICA

## ARGENTINA

September 17, 2017

### Charadai, Chaco Province, Argentina

The gang moves around in a Ford F100. The hunting dogs were in the skip, with four Chacoan peccaries (*Catagonus wagneri*, Appendix I) covered in blood. Six interrogations.<sup>6</sup>

## BRAZIL

Sunday July 23, 2017

### Paulicéia, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Seizure at dawn of a paca carcass (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), two fire arms and bait in a camp site on one Rio Paraná Island. Two arrests and fines worth 6000 real (\$ 1800 US).<sup>7</sup>



July 29, 2017

### Sete Barras, Paraibuna, Paulinéia and Dracena, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 18 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), 4 kg of collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and caiman meat. 25,000 real (\$ 7600 US) in fine.<sup>8</sup>



July 25, 2017

### Uruçu, State of Goiás, Brazil

Seizure of one Central American agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras) and two birds from the trunk of a car. "It's for our personal use" explain the two men to the road police. The one who admitted to having shot is indicted for poaching.<sup>9</sup>

August 17, 2017

### Rio Vermelho Rural Area, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of ammunition, powder, a trap, paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and coati meat (genus *Nasua*). One arrest.<sup>10</sup>

August 17, 2017

### Engenheiro Beltrão, State of Parana, Brazil

A Chevrolet, a road block, three rifles, cut up pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras). Three arrests.<sup>11</sup>

September 14, 2017

### Medeiros Neto, State of Bahia, Brazil

Four armadillos (family *Dasypodidae*) in the freezer in the home of a young 19-year-old man.<sup>12</sup>

September 14, 2017  
Peruibe, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

In the home of a 22-year-old woman, seizure of traps, three guns and armadillo meat (family *Dasypodidae*) with paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) in two freezers.<sup>13</sup>



## PERU

July 11, 2017

### Iquitos, Loreto Department, Peru

Conviction of Alicia Alvarado Santillán caught red handed and now sentenced to three years and four months prison for transporting 123 kg of white lipped peccary meat (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) and collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and attempting to sell them.<sup>14</sup>



## CHINA

July, 2017

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

Seizure of five saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) from a woman's baggage.<sup>15</sup>



## INDIA

## GANG

July 6, 2017

**Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar, State of Gujarat, India**

The Dafer gang has been on the loose in the national park for at least 5 years. It targets blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) and blue bulls (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). That evening, the forest wardens were on the lookout. When they heard the shots, they rushed in their direction, and came across two men on a motorcycle with a sharp-edged weapon. One of them managed to flee, but Hanif Dekar was caught. He took the wardens to a hideout in the forest where there were blackbuck horns, bones, and other animal parts.<sup>16</sup>



July 12, 2017

**Coimbatore, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Seizure by the WCCB of 25,000 paint brushes made of mongoose hairs in six shops and a wholesaler. Local value, 1.5 million rupee, that is \$ 23,200 US. Chandrasekhar, a volunteer escorting the WCCB in its searches, believes the government does not do enough education regarding the extinction of mongooses and that penalties are too weak. The hairs are wanted to put a white and gray mop at the tip of brushes for aquarellists around the world. See "On the Trail" » n°3 p. 78, n°4 p.91, n°6 p.101, n°7 p.100, n°8 p.92, n°9 p.91, n°11 p.34, n°14 p.101 and n°17 p.24.<sup>17</sup>

August 21, 2017

**Kolkata, West Bengal, India**

It took many hours and a dozen people to reach a final count of 32,985 mongoose (familyHerpestidae) artist paint brushes, seized from four shops in the old Chinese bazaar. This would be the largest seizure ever made in India. According to investigators, the workshops are located 50 km away from Kolkata near Diamond Harbour and are supplied with hairs that come from many Indian States. Cf. "On the Trail" n°3 p.78.<sup>18</sup>



End of September 2017

**Jodhpur, State of Rajasthan, India**

Charges against Salman Khan have been dropped. With four other artists one night in October 1998, the Bollywood and TV star was accused of chasing down two blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) with a big car equipped with a bullbar. A forestry officer from Jodhpur and villagers from Kankani pressed charges. "On the Trail" has been following this affair since its second edition, since July 2013 (cf. n°2 p. 33, n°6 p. 99, n°8 p. 92, n°12 p. 100).<sup>19</sup>



## INDONESIA

End of September 2017

**Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia**

Two soldiers were transporting caged porcupines in their SUV. The 40 rodents were released into Rimbo Panti Reserve. Crooks are interested in porcupines (*Hystrix brachyura*). Porcupines, and antelopes, produce stony concretions called bezoars that develop in the stomachs of porcupines and antelopes. These bezoars have long been thought for neutralizing poison. The supposed curative properties now extend to a cure for tropical fevers and cancer. Porcupines are also hunted for their flesh. Their quills are used as toothpicks and when ground to treat fertility troubles and others.<sup>20</sup>

## IRAN

### August 10, 2017 Tafresh County, Province of Markazi, Iran

Extraction of a striped hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) stuck in a metal trap. The superficial wounds were cared for. She was injected with antibiotics. And off she goes on her way!<sup>21</sup>



### End of September 2017 Mount Damavand, Mazandaran Province, Iran

He claimed that the 10 kg of meat found in his home were from a domestic lamb. The genetic analysis proved that the meat was from a wild goat called "Wild Goat" (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Definitive sentencing of a poacher to four months suspended jail and to 100 million rial in fines (\$ 3,300 US) for inflicting damage to the environment.<sup>22</sup>



## THAILAND

### Mid August 2017 Thailand

An influx of small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II) at WFFT.

Small aquatic mammals are popular in Thailand. Otters are not pets at all when they are removed from their social groups, rivers, or rice paddies. They require live insects, shellfish, and amphibians to feed on and can bite the observers. It is said that there are otter farms that supply pet shops. The otters that WFFT collects are young and often fat due to the artificial diet that they are subject to. The foundation reiterates that wild animals belong in the wild. They do not belong to individuals.<sup>23</sup>



## VIET NAM

### August 18, 2017 Province of Yen Bai, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over in of a masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India) held captive in a restaurant and release into a nearby forest.<sup>24</sup>

## EUROPE

## FINLAND

### August, 2017 Finland

The arctic fox (*Vulpes lagopus*) is endangered in the Arctic. It was hunted and chased. It feeds on berries and the viscera of seals that are killed by polar bears or on the carcasses of beached whales. Sweden, Finland, and Norway host no more than 200 or 300 of these white foxes which, as an additional menace, enter into conflict with red foxes over food sources in the southern limits of their habitat. Arctic fox hunting is prohibited. The species has been intensively bred for the past 70 years from captured individuals. The Finnish NGO Oikeutta denounces the conditions in captivity. These bred foxes are force-fed meat meal, salt, and sugar to induce aggravated obesity and reduced mobility. The fur of a wild arctic fox weighs 3 kg on average, while the fur of a captive fox that is no longer arctic weighs nearly 20 kg. A coat made from captive arctic fox fur made in Italy, died pink, lined with silk, and signed Gucci, sells for 14,000€.<sup>25</sup>



## FRANCE

### September 13, 2017 Bougy-lez-Neuville, Loiret Department, France

Death of a dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius*) 100 km from Paris. The female was shot dead by two .12 caliber bullets for unknown reasons on the private estate of Frédéric Chesneau, who is a self-professed "tamer of non-domestic animals". Bears are his favorite. He considers that taming an animal improves it. He says that his bear company takes him to the most prestigious places, and that his adult plantigrades were born in captivity or were abused in circuses.<sup>26</sup>

# Multi-Species

## AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**August 12, 2017**

#### **Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Captain Chris Du Plessis, member of the special stock theft unit is entangled in a messy story. At the eastern exit of a hunting reserve, his bakkie Isuzu was searched and his three passengers intercepted. He had a whole little arsenal on board: a revolver without a permit, a .270 caliber rifle canon, a wooden rifle cross with 70 rounds of ammunition, a .303 rifle for large game with 10 rounds of adequate ammunition, a silencer and a telescope. At least one giraffe is in the bag of this outing. The three passengers were released on bail for 800 rand, that is a bit more than \$ 60 US. Chris Du Plessis will remain in pre-trial custody at least until the end of the month.<sup>1</sup>

**Beginning of September 2017**

#### **Molopo, North West Province, South Africa**

The company Wild West Safari is not devoted to gazing at wildlife. It's a war machine fighting against animals. Its co-owner Tommy van Vuuren is an experienced hunter whose address book is full of foreign clients. This company is in view at the Dallas Safari Club every year.

Wild West Safari has just won a 25-year-old concession for the Molopo Nature Reserve. In North West Province, the Bloemhof and Botsalano private reserves are yet reserved for hunting the Big Five and smaller mammals.

Pieter Nel of North West Parks & Tourism Board challenges the modalities of the bid that Wild West Safari won. The chief executive Mothobi Mothobi was suspended from his post, but a provincial government spokesperson says that granting Molopo to Wild West Safari went by the rule book. The reserve is near the border with Botswana. Since the beginning of July, the controversy has been raging on.<sup>2</sup>

### CAMEROON

**August 29, 2017**

#### **Ebolowa, South Region, Cameroon**

At the checkpoint of the police-gendarmerie-forest service at the entrance to the city, a 43-year-old man was questioned. He was transporting a live baby chimp in a bag, and 45 kg of pangolin scales that he wanted to sell in town. The man was coming from Meyo, Centre region, and is an active trafficker in the trade of young chimpanzees and gorillas that he resold to fake zoos. Poachers from the region were his suppliers. The little chimpanzee was suffering from malnutrition and dehydration. He was handed over to the primate rehabilitation center of the national park of Mefou.<sup>3</sup>

**September 12, 2017**

#### **Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon**

Arrest of a trafficker couple (23 and 22 years of age) who were driving in a rental car. They had a customer appointment in the neighborhood of Elig Edzoa to offer a young mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I) in a small bag, and 40 kg of pangolin scales. They had traveled separately from Mintom (Department of Dja and Lobo, in the South region) to Yaoundé. The man and woman have been brought before the court.<sup>4</sup>



### GUINEA

**July 4, 2017**

#### **Mamou, Mamou Region, Guinea**

The court of first instance issued its deliberation: the police officer Alhassane Bangoura from the central police station of Dalaba was found guilty of complicity in the flight of Mamadou Tounkara, a panther and crocodile skin trafficker ("On the Trail" n°17 p. 113). Bangoura was sentenced to 6 months in prison, suspended for 4 months, and to pay 5 million Guinean francs (\$ 567 US) in compensation to the environmental and forestry ministry, which brought a civil action. Guinea is considered to be a wildlife trafficking hub in West Africa, and Mamadou Tounkara is still at large.<sup>5</sup>



**August 29, 2017**

#### **Conakry, Conakry Region, Guinea**

In the neighborhood of Kipé, a cobbler by trade, Alpha Alimou Doumbouya (45 years old) was caught in the act of selling an entire panther skin and two tanned crocodile skins. He was arrested by the National Central Bureau of Interpol and officers from "Corps des conservateurs de la nature", a paramilitary unit specialized in combating environmental damage.<sup>6</sup>

## NAMIBIA

### Beginning of August, 2017

#### Namibia

"We were not elected by kudus or oryxes." Steve Biko Booyis, Parliamentary at the National Assembly for the Okahandja circumscription, Otjozondjupa Region, believes that the Controlled Wildlife Products and Trade Bill project is planning outrageous fines and too long prison sentences for both first offenders and repeated offenders.

Damian Nakambare, elected in the Nkurenkuru circumscription, Kavango West Region, highlights that the damages paid to the family after one of their loved ones has been mortally attacked by a crocodile does not even cover the cost of the coffin. Instead of reinforcing the sanctions, Nakambare would prefer an education campaign to enlighten the people.<sup>7</sup>

#### August 9, 2017

##### Namibia

After the criminalization of photos on social networks that exhibit triumphant hunters and the "Big Five" animals slaughtered (cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p. 63), Pohamba Shifeta announces the criminalization of photos or videos that exhibit animal cruelty. The declaration by the Environment and Tourism Minister follows an incident of viral images, which depict a large group of people desperately and viciously attempting to stone an antelope to death. The two misdemeanors should be registered in the new Protection Areas and Wildlife Management Bill.<sup>8</sup>

## NIGERIA

### July 24, 2017

#### Calabar, State of Cross River, Nigeria

The port customs uncovered a nightmare cargo: 400 snakes, some of which were identified as green bush vipers (*Atheris squamigera*), Gaboon vipers (*Bitis gabonica*), vipers (Colubridae family), 200 frogs including hairy frogs (*Trichobatrachus robustus*), 100 geckos (*Hemidactylus frenatus* and *Hemidactylus fasciatus*), centipeds (*Archispirostreptus spp.*) and spiders. The animals were hidden in three crates unloaded from a Cameroonian ship, the *MV Flesh*. They were headed for Lagos. Value is estimated at 6.9 million nairas (\$ 22,800 US). A Cameroonian



passenger Julius Novigana, was arrested. He claims that a "friend" charged him with convoy of the crates to Calabar where he was to call someone in Lagos whose name he doesn't know. The captain of the *MV Flesh* for his part declared that on departure he hadn't seen the crates, and they were not on the ship's manifest that lists each hauled goods. The two men and the animals were turned over to the Nigerian agricultural Quarantine Services in charge of the case. For Madam Nanbyen Burromvay, Customs officer, "We have enough snakes around Nigeria already and it will be suspicious importing this. I do not know what to think because I do not know what they can be used for." Several identified species are sought for on the international trade market because of their color or notable features. The animals' future is grim: the Quarantine Service has already announced the possibility they be killed. To the last news, they have been turned over to Uyo University and the three crates were heading for Netherlands and Luxembourg via Rotterdam.<sup>9</sup>

## UGANDA

### July 14, 2017

#### District of Rubirizi, Western Region, Uganda

Seizure of a python skin and a leopard skin. Two arrests.<sup>10</sup>

### August 23, 2017

#### Uganda

Seizure of a leopard skin, a cheetah skin, and six python skins (*Pythonidae spp.*, Appendix II).<sup>11</sup>

## SENEGAL

### August 22, 2017

#### Soumbédioune, Médina, Dakar Region, Senegal

Shock in the artisanal market. The city safety officials and the Water and Forest services seized 780 carved pieces of ivory (20kg), 403 warthog teeth, as well as lion and hippopotamus bones from the stalls as well as the homes of vendors. Most of the amulets come from Nigeria. Processing workshops from raw ivory to carved items are also set up in Senegal. The NGO WARA took part in the raid. Many suspects are in custody at the police station. Cf. "On the Trail" n° 5 p.88, 9 p.82, 12 p.87, 13 p.103, 14 p.84.<sup>12</sup>



## ZAMBIA

### End of July, 2017

#### Chikwa, Province of Muchinga, Zambia

Raid done by the agents from the Department for National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) supported by the squad of sniffer dogs in the village Chikwa, near the border to Malawi. Fourteen suspects were arrested. The various seizures include four lion claws (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), two wildcat skins (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II), two python skins (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), a crocodile skull (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), 4.5 kg of porcupine meat (genus *Hystrix*), 5 kg of kudu meat (genus *Tragelaphus*), seven gnu tails (genus *Connochaetes*), a zebra skin (*Equus zebra*, Appendix II), a piece of elephant skin and four warthog teeth. A bow and arrows, gun powder, lead pellets and various tools to make fire arms were also seized.<sup>13</sup>

## ZIMBABWE

### July 2017 Zimbabwe

On the occasion of the Mining, Engineering and Transport expo "Mine Entra," the Minister of Mines and Development, Fred Moyo, announced the declassification of one million hectares of protected land in favor of mining. The main objective is to increase gold mining. Aplonia Munzverengwi, president of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation, welcomed this decision, saying that certain concerned zones are already being exploited by secret miners that resell the extracted gold on the black market. "As soon as the land is officially released they should register their activities and they will be able to access loans from (government owned gold buyer) Fidelity, mechanisation and the working capital." In Zimbabwe, mining companies are a protected species. Wildlife, on the other hand, can go to hell.<sup>14</sup>



### August 2017

#### Zimbabwe - Mozambique

The Ministry of Environment Oppah Muchinguri is accused by the Mugabes of having illegally sold 2000 wild animals to Mozambique, a sort of massive contraband under the cover of solidarity between counties that signed the agreement on the Grand Limpopo trans border conservation zone. Madame Muchinguri had declared that Zimbabwe would "give" the wildlife to Mozambique, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.97.<sup>15</sup>

### September 19, 2017

#### Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

A police officer from the capital city, Alois Mabika (46 years old), was taken to court for helping himself to the inventory of the National Armoury of the police to supply his business selling or renting weapons to poachers. He was reported by Obiat Shumba, a poacher who was standing trial the day before, for the prohibited possession of two firearms. Alois Mabika is charged with taking advantage of his assignment to the Morris armaments depot since 2009 to steal 10 loaded guns and selling them. He is being detained until the verdict.<sup>16</sup>

## AMERICA

## ARGENTINA

### September 25, 2017

#### San Martín, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

Feathers, a head and 22 Darwin's rhea paws (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I), 20 tails and seven armadillo shells (family Dasypodidae), two southern three-banded armadillo tails (*Tolypeutes matacus*), one Geoffroy's cat skin and tail (*Leopardus geoffroyi*, Appendix I), two fox tails, one skin, one front paw and four puma claws, one rhea egg (genus *Rhea*); and nine golden-billed saltators (*Saltator aurantiirostris*), one mourning Sierra-finch (*Phrygilus fruticeti*), one white-throated cacholote (*Pseudoseisura gutturalis*), all alive; traps, birdcages and ape cages—this is the detailed inventory of the rural police, after they cordoned off a farm.<sup>17</sup>

## BRAZIL

### July 12, 2017

#### Arapongas, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of a parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), a buff-throated saltator (*Saltator maximus*), two common iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), a common tegu (*Tupinambis teguixin*, Appendix II) and five snakes inside two houses.<sup>18</sup>



**July 20, 2017**

**Pirapozinho, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure of a blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), six blue fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), two white-eyed conures (*Aratinga leucophthalmus*, Appendix II), a red-brested toucan (*Ramphastos dicolorus*, Appendix III), seven red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II) and five *Hydromedusa tectifera* turtles. 15,400 real (\$ 4,680 US) in fine.<sup>19</sup>



**August 17, 2017**

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

Ocelot skins (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), tiger eyes (*Panthera tigris*, Annex I), leather and rattlesnake rattles (genus *Crotalus*), hippocampus, crow and bat wings, owl skulls, eagle and fox bones, crocodile and raccoon jaws, bear teeth, lion claws, sloth claws, squirrel and wolf tails, pheasant and parrot feathers, turtle shells, reptile, dried amphibians and insects, stag and mountain deer antlers, goat horns, armadillo paws, wolf skulls, and items made of bone (necklace, dagger, knife).

The drug trafficker's home was a big bazaar of dead animals. His noiselessly company sold online. This is the largest and broadest selection of wildlife products ever found in Brazil. IBAMA confirms that this is a case of international trafficking.<sup>20</sup>

**August 18, 2017**

**Serra da Capivara National Park, State of Piauí, Brazil**

The ranger Edilson Aparecido dos Santos was shot dead. With two colleagues, he was patrolling in the park which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site when he was ambushed by four poachers. The park is known for its rock carvings that are 25,000 years old. In particular, the park hosts agoutis (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III) and collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II).<sup>21</sup>



**August 23, 2017**

**Santa Maria, Federal District, Brazil**

Seizure inside a private home of 70 wild animals mistreated including a parakeets (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and a tortoise from an endangered species. The operation was coordinated by the Instituto Brasília Ambiental (Ibram), the Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (Ibama) and police.<sup>22</sup>



**August 23, 2017**

**Campina Grande, State of Paraíba, Brazil**

Seizure of 13 animals including a common caracara (*Caracara plancus*, Appendix II) and a black-capped capuchin apelle (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II) at the home of a 70-year-old woman. Fine worth 6500 real (\$ 2,060 US). She had bought the animals at the local town market.<sup>23</sup>



*Caracara plancus*

**September 1, 2017**

**Jundiá, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**

Two juvenile tortoises (genus *Chelonoidis*, Appendix II), one white-tufted-ear marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II), and two iguanas were in a car. It is suspected that the driver is an online merchant.<sup>24</sup>

**September 8, 2017**

**Jardim, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil**

The federal highway police intercepted a pick-up truck, with some difficulty. A stag, a bird, and two collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) were lying down in the back of the truck. In the front part, there were about 20 cartridges. It appears that during the attempted escape, the rifle was thrown onto the shoulders.<sup>25</sup>

**CHILE**

**FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**July 10, 2017**

**San Marcos de Arica, Province of Arica, Chile**

Seizure of a jaguar, an Andean hairy armadillo (*Euphractus natioides*, Appendix II), both stuffed and 480 cannabis plants from 30 cm to 3 m high, 26 kg of cannabis resin, a rifle with ammunition and 52 million Chilean pesos in cash (\$ 78,580 US). The 32-year-old man says he hunted the feline and the armadillo to decorate his home and acknowledges that the plantation- the largest ever uncovered in the area- was grown with the help of his dad.<sup>26</sup>

## COLOMBIA

Beginning of September 2017

**Puerto Triunfo, Antioquia Department, Colombia**



Theft happens all the time on the private fenceless reserve of the medical doctor Rodrigo Gaviria. The environmental police release birds and small mammals that they have seized into this sanctuary. The aim is to repopulate natural environment and to decrease the number of attacks on domestic livestock by large carnivores such as jaguars and pumas. Rodrigo Gaviria is almost ready to give up. A female howler monkey (*Alouatta* spp. Appendix I or II) has just been killed, and her litter was stolen. Out of the 35 capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) he was responsible for, only seven of them are left. People trespass on the reserve early in the morning. They capture the peaceful capybaras and turn them into roast.<sup>27</sup>

## HONDURAS

July 25, 2017

**Siguatepeque, Comayagua Department, Honduras**



Seizure inside a restaurant of a fox, a paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III), a white-nosed coati (*Nasua narica*, Appendix III), two grey-headed chachalacas (genus *Ortalis*) and a raptor. The animals were temporarily given to the Joya Grance zoo in Santa Cruz and the Capàn park.<sup>28</sup>

## MEXICO

July 17, 2017

**Omitlán de Juárez, State of Hidalgo, Mexico**

Seizure in a restaurant of a stuffed red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II) and a stuffed coyote (*Canis latrans*). The person in charge was unable to show the Profepa officers the least document suggesting a lawful origin of the ex-wild animals. No receipt, no trace of their lineage, no hunting permit or registration.<sup>29</sup>

.....  
**August 3, 2017**

**Toluca, State of Mexico, Mexico**

Under the supervision of PROFEPA, all-out incineration of 48 stuffed animals, including three common iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), one axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*, Appendix II), one tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), and several by-products including two Morelet's crocodile skins (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), pieces of jaguar skin (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), brown bear skins (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I), lion skins (*Panthera leo*, Annex II) and boa constrictor skins (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II). All of these animals and animal parts were from seizures.<sup>30</sup>  
.....

August 13- 15, 2017

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

Seizure of 10 orange-fronted parakeets (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), eight parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), one American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I) and one common green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II).<sup>31</sup>

August 14, 2017

**State of Michoacan, Mexico**

- **Tacambaro.** Seizure inside a restaurant of three white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III in Guatemala), a female peacock and an eagle.

- **Los Reyes.** Seizure inside a veterinarian clinic used as an underground pet shop of a baby jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), three common iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), two four-toed hedgehogs (*Atelerix albiventris*) and six helmeted guineafowls (*Numida meleagris*).<sup>32</sup>

August 14, 2017

**Puebla, State of Puebla, Mexico**

Seizure of one wildcat (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II), three African ostriches (*Struthio camelus*), three greater roadrunners (*Geococcyx californianus*), one toucan (family *Ramphastidae*), one eagle (Accipitridés, Appendix I or II), one peacock (genus *Pavo*), four falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), 13 head of feral cattle (*Bos taurus*), 10 common quails (*Coturnix coturnix*), 20 sheep, 20 bovines and 10 rabbits, one firearm and munitions, 13 cars, and 3 racehorses that were stolen in the preceding days. They were part of the "Los Rojos" drug cartel.<sup>33</sup>



*Geococcyx californianus*

18 août 2017

**Guadalupe, State of Nuevo León, Mexico**



Seizure of a lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) in a posh house. The two individuals were transferred to Parque La Pastora. Inspectors from the Profepa believe the

place where the lion cub was kept is not an ideal one for the animal's wellbeing and at term could present a risk for the neighbors and household.<sup>34</sup>

**August 23, 2017**  
**State of Yucatan, Mexico**

Conviction of the director of Harley Circus, sentenced to two years prison and \$ 4,100 US in fine. See "On the Trail" n°4 p.99 and n°6 p.108.<sup>35</sup>



**August 30, 2017**  
**Ocoyoacac, State of Mexico, Mexico**

Seizure thanks to an alert from a customer of stuffed animals in a small family restaurant by the Toluca-Mexico road of one great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II), one eagle (*Accipiter* spp. Annexe II), one northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), one blackspotted puffer (*Arothron nigropunctatus*), four Collie's squirrels (*Sciurus colliaei*) and one armadillo (Cingulata).<sup>36</sup>

**September 21, 2017**  
**Road between Amozoc, State of Puebla and Perote, State of Veracruz, Mexico**

Seizure of one spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II), two toucans (family Ramphastidae), and 120 "blue-colored" birds.<sup>37</sup>

**PERU**

**July 27, 2017**  
**Iquitos, Loreto Region, Peru**

Seizure of 54 canary-winged parakeet nestlings (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II) in two green tubs covered with a rag, and a Humboldt's woolly monkey (*Lagothrix lagotricha*, Appendix II) tethered under a table. The dealers fled. The local value is estimated at 740 soles (\$230 US).<sup>38</sup>

**September 21, 2017**  
**Piura Region, Peru**

Seizure of 81 Pacific parrotlets (*Forpus coelestis*, Appendix II), 17 scrub blackbirds (*Dives warszewiczi*), one red-backed hawk (*Buteo polyosoma*, Appendix II), 11 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), one brown-headed tamarin (*Saguinus fuscicollis*, Appendix II), one common squirrel monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*, Appendix II), and one Humboldt penguin (*Spheniscus humboldti*, Appendix I). The operation was coordinated by the regional and environmental police and by SERFOR, the "Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre". The degree of domestication of all the animals will be examined. To the extent possible, they will be released into their natural environment. If not, they will stay in refuges or zoos. Each offender is punishable to the maximum 40,500 Peruvian soles (\$ 12,500 US) fine.<sup>39</sup>

**URUGUAY**

**August 7, 2017**  
**Paysandú Department, Uruguay. Border with Argentina.**

Interrogation of three hunters between 21 and 25 years of age, thanks to a video by a "group for the conservation of species native to Uruguay". Seizure of peccary meat (family *Tayassuidae*, Appendix I or

II), capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), a hunting gun, an air gun, and three motorcycles. The three shot peccaries were part of the hundred or so specimens recently reintroduced back into the country from which they had disappeared because of a merciless hunt.<sup>40</sup>

**ASIA**

**CAMBODIA**

**August 17, 2017**  
**Sen Monorom, Mondol Kiri Province, Cambodia**

The police and forestry administration raided the home of a trafficker who was in possession of several deer antlers, pangolin scales, and various live animals, including two lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I). The man, Kuy Leanghour (35 years old), was arrested. The lorises should be released into the forest.<sup>41</sup>

**August 21, 2017**  
**Prek Khsay Kor, Prey Veng Province, Cambodia**

The search that the Peamro police, the Forestry Department, and the military police conducted at the home of Dan Kimngang, a 36-year-old woman, was fruitful. The trafficker was in possession of 332 animals, including 17 tortoises, 60 turtledoves, 203 other animals, and various other animals. Many of them were dead. 16 turtles that were still alive were released into a lake. The woman was heard but not arrested.<sup>42</sup>

**August 29, 2017**  
**Chi Kraeng District, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia**



The Crystal Express was trying to go from Siem Reap to Phnom Penh with 22 turtles and five monitor lizards on board (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II).

But the military police had information. The police stopped the bus on the road and discovered the animals. Ung Vutheara, the director of the Banteay Srey forestry administration cantonment, stated that the reptiles would be released into the wild on August 31. As for the bus driver, he was authorized to leave, and could be fined for the illegal transport of wildlife.<sup>43</sup>

**September 6, 2017**  
**Sameakki Mean Chey District, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia**

On national highway 5, the military police arrested a bus driver from the company B.P.A. who was transporting three civets and 11 reptiles (turtles and serpents, including one cobra and one python). The vehicle was serving the Poipet (on the border with Thailand) - Phnom Penh route. The animals were handed over to the NGO WildAid.<sup>44</sup>

**September 11, 2017**

**Santuk District, Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia**

At night, a car was transporting 150 lesser whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica*), 10 monkeys of an unspecified species, and five ferrets. The provincial prosecutor Ith Sothea announced that the seized animals were handed over to the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre in Takeo province.<sup>45</sup>



*Dendrocygna javanica*

## CHINA

### OPERATION SENWANG 2017

**July 2017**

**Province of Guangdong, China**

Forest police sums up results of the operation that lasted from March to June 2017. 5304 messages and videos on Internet and social media mixing wildlife and cuisine were analyzed. The main victims are pythons, lizards, gibbons, macaques, boas, calaos, pangolins and turtles.<sup>46</sup>

## INDIA

### REPEATED OFFENSE

**August 3, 2017**

**Darrang district, Assam, India**

Arrest of Idu Ali, Shovan Ali, and Abdul Hussain, a trio of expert "jail and bail" poachers, which is to say that they play the game box jail to box bail. Their favorite terrain is the Orang National Park.<sup>47</sup>

**August 10, 2017**

**Dehradun and Haridwar Districts, State of Uttarakhand, India**

Officials of the Rajajai Tiger Reserve are informed that a resident of the Sapera Basti neighborhood in Dehradun is hiding wild animal parts in his home. The individual, Rakesh Kumar, is shadowed and caught with a sack full of monitor lizard meat (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) that he recently hunted in the forest. "Seizures of pangolin meat and scales have been made in areas inhabited by particular communities in Dehradun. They have sometimes injured forest employees during raids. We are now developing a network of informers to keep a tab on poaching activities," declares a divisional forestry official.<sup>48</sup>

### REPEATED OFFENSE

**August 12, 2017**

**Megamalai, Theni District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Seizure of a leopard skull, teeth, claws, and a piece of tusk. Arrest of the "trader". P. Sasikumar, 42 years old, claims to be a specialist in the sale of old hunting trophies. His two suppliers have, for the moment, escaped the police. Skeptical of the claims that the old trophies come from basements or attics, Traffic is demanding genetic testing and a comprehensive investigation on poaching in the neighboring Megamalai Wildlife Reserve.<sup>49</sup>

**August 26, 2017**

**Simen Chapori, Dhemaji District, State of Assam, India**

Macabre discovery in the trunk of a Maruti: 43 deer heads with antlers, two clouded leopard heads ad skins (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I), a bear head and skin (*Ursus* spp., Appendix I or II), a goat head with horns, four otter skin, a hornbill beak (*Buceros* spp. Appendix I or II) and 800 g of bones from various species. The two men were coming from Pasighat and heading to Itanagar, capital of the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The larger portion of the 550-km route is situated in the State of Assam. The passenger denies any responsibility. He claims he was hitch-hiking after having missed his bus to Itanagar.<sup>50</sup>

**August 29, 2017**

**Near Laxhanpur, Bargarh District, Odisha, India**

Seizure of 80 sambar deer antlers (*Rusa unicolor*) and four bear claws (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II). Arrest of a 27 year-old suspect by a coalition of forest wardens and two inspectors from WCCB. The district is not spared from poaching (cf. "On the Trail" n° 8 p. 53 et 10 p.67).<sup>51</sup>

**Mid September 2017**

**Arikerā, State of Andhra Pradesh, India**

Scandal in the Hindu school. Some boarders of the prestigious establishment, and some members of the teaching and management staff have been indulging in deer and peacock poaching (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the nearby forest, for several years.

The poachers were selling feathers, antlers, meat, and skins at a high price, and they kept a sales record. They divided a substantial kitty among themselves. Ten recently poached stags were sold for 16,000 rupee (\$ 250 US) each. The forestry department seized several accounting books. The director is talking about a plot aiming to ruin the reputation of the establishment. Traps, nets, and projectors were seized here and there on the premises. The cooks seem to be the bedrock of this secret organization.<sup>52</sup>

## INDONESIA

July 12, 2017

### Batu Hitam, South Aceh Regency, Province of Aceh, Indonesia

Seizure at the home of a 53-year-old man known under the initials A.S. of a Sumatran rhino horn (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*), a sambar deer head (*Rusa unicolor*), two stuffed deer fetus, 29 tongues and 4 kg of pangolin scales. A.S. had been trafficking for a year at least. He was supplied by local hunters and taxidermists.



Batu Hitam is about twenty kilometers from the Mount Leuser reserve. While admitting that poachers from the outside enter the park and “rent” local guides, Rudi Putra, one of the officials in charge of protection of wildlife in the park, says that poaching is restrained if not cut off thanks to patrols and other surveillance methods put in place. Muhammad Nasir, spokesman for WALHI, the Indonesian Forum for the Environment, is much less confident. “The penalties are much too light to be deterrent.” The Parliament and Government are working on reinforcing the 1990 law with heavier sanctions and adding an offense of sale over the Internet.<sup>53</sup>

August 13, 2017

### Medan, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia

Seizure at the home of a retired captain from the Special forces of a rhino horn, elephant ivory and a tiger skin. He was arrested, his wife also, as well as his probable supplier known under the aka Herman.<sup>54</sup>



## IRAN

End of September 2017

### Mahan, Kerman Province, Iran

Weapons, suspicious meat, 12 stuffed wolves and goats, and 20 birds silenced for life were taken out of two gloomy homes of traffickers.<sup>55</sup>



## NEPAL

August 20, 2017

### Katmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of 70 passerines belonging to the genus *Lonchura*, four “dumsis” (Indian porcupine *Hystrix indica* in Nepalese) and two red pandas (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I).<sup>56</sup>

## THAILAND

July 12, 2017

### Bangkok, Thailand

Seizure of eight oriental small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereal*, Appendix II), two slow lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I), two spotted owlets (*Athene brama*, Appendix II), a barred eagle-owl (*Bubo sumatranus*, Appendix II), an oriental pied-hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II) and a common hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II). The barred eagle-owl was smuggled in from Indonesia. They were all for sale on the Internet. Two men, aged 21 and 31, were arrested. According to police, a slow loris on the local trade market is worth \$ 75 US, the price of a hornbill is about \$ 220 US and that of a barred eagle-owl is \$ 323 US.<sup>57</sup>



**August 9, 2017**

**Bangkok, Thailand**

Twenty officers from the “Wild Hawk” task force invited themselves over to Luang To To—a restaurant in the Wang Thong Lang area that has been open for 8 years. Two dishes of cobra bits were on the menu. The slaughterhouse was behind the kitchen. The search also allowed the seizure of one pangolin carcass and 90 g of scales, and reptiles: one yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), four buckets of 21 Thai soft-shelled turtles (*Ptyas korros*), four Indochinese rat snakes, and one cobra that was still alive. Luang To To offered “homemade” liquor presented in nine containers bearing snake heads. Many Chinese gourmets and tourists go to this establishment. The manager, Chamu Sae-Yi (66 years old), was arrested and charged with breaching the wildlife conservation Act. Although the six Burmese employees were not charged, they were still detained while their work permits were inspected.<sup>58</sup>

**VIET NAM**

**July 19, 2017**

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

Seizure in an antique store of a stuffed civet (Viverridae family) and roaring leopard.<sup>59</sup>



**August 1, 2017**

**Phu My, Tan Thanh District, Province of Ba Rịa-Vung Tau, Viet Nam**

Seizure in a tea shop of an adult hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), a stuffed leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) and a jar of alcohol containing wild animal extracts.<sup>60</sup>

**September 2, 2017**

**Tay Ninh, Tay Ninh Province, Viet Nam**

Seizure of a stuffed jungle including one leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), one douc (*Pygathrix* spp., Appendix I), one civet (family Viverridae), and one leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I).<sup>61</sup>

**EUROPE**

**BELARUS**

**September 12, 2017**

**Minsk National Airport, Belarus**

A Russian citizen coming from Vienna was stopped by customs. He was transporting 54 snakes, 5 lizards, 25 spiders, and 9 scorpions of unspecified species in his hand luggage. The pickpockets were hot.<sup>62</sup>

**OCEANIA**

**NEW ZEALAND**

**August 2017**

**New Zealand**

Is New Zealand opening its doors to wildlife smuggling? The WEG (Wildlife Enforcement Group) was actually disbanded back in 2014. Thanks to the WEG, 24 smugglers were taken to court for reasons ranging from exporting *Sphenodon* to importing ocelot skins. The sole job of the WEG was to fight against animal and plant smuggling. The defenders of the small institution that was scrapped denounces the current system, which is solely based on CITES permits. They say that a significant portion of the trafficking is not covered by the CITES permit system. The Ministry for Primary Industries says that there are still people working on the issue, even though they are not part of a dedicated intervention force anymore. Indeed, customs conducted 19,221 seizures between 2011 and 2015. But the courts are not solicited: There have been only seven trials under New Zealand’s Trade in Endangered Species Act. Certainly in New Zealand, and in many other countries as well, customs are just animal pounds.<sup>63</sup>



*Sphenodon*

# Donkeys

## After the pack, the slaughterhouse

**The trafficking of domestic donkeys originating from the wild species continues to provoke demonstrations of compassion and hostility among the general public, farmers, and veterinarians, due to the cruelty, violence, and amplitude of the trade.**

**On one hand, several governments are concerned and they are suspending the export of skins to China. On the other hand, some governments validate the “state-of-the-art” abattoir projects set up by Chinese interests and “specialists.”**

**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

### BOTSWANA

July 11, 2017

#### Francistown, North-East District, Botswana

A 24-year-old Chinese man is charged with cruelty to animals. He had locked up 500 donkeys in horrid conditions, their health being so grave and unstable in all regards that they had to be put down. The case came to light in June in the suburbs of Botswana's second largest city and police communicated on it in July.<sup>1</sup>

#### Botswana

##### The spiral dive of donkeys

In 2001, the Ministry of Agriculture recommended, on a trial basis, the export of donkey meat to Belgium, France, Germany, Denmark, and other European countries that consume donkey sausage: “This could help to stem the country's growing donkey population, which is believed to be the highest in southern Africa.”

In 2016, the government approved the licensing of a donkey slaughterhouse: “Local farmers would benefit from breeding donkeys for hide exports.”

Between February and July 2017, several scandals erupted (cf. “On the Trail” n° 16 p. 110-111 and this issue). They prove that the Chinese expatriates are pulling the strings of trafficking and pushing their henchmen to unimaginable cruelties. Several hundred donkey robberies have been recorded. The piles of skin and male genital organs are exported through the port of Pemba, Mozambique. Pollution in the rivers is reported. At the end of June 2017, the government suspended the slaughterhouse licenses and export of skin, meat, and other products derived from donkey slaughter, effective immediately (cf. “On the Trail” n°17 p. 124).

In mid-August 2017, a truck going toward Zimbabwe carrying around 1,200 skins in its trailer was intercepted, proving that the donkey martyrdom is still secretly taking place.

On August 20, 2017, the government announced that public meetings would be held in Maun Maun, Francistown, Serowe, Molepolole, and Kang. It is a matter of discussing necessary amendments to the Animal Cruelty Act, which is dating from 1936. The government estimates that 10% of the donkey population is exposed each year to illegal slaughter. “The well-being of donkeys is compromised”. This is a concern to us, hence the urgent need for the development of a code for donkeys and horses.” It's the new roadmap for the government.<sup>2</sup>

### ETHIOPIA

Mid September 2017

#### Ethiopia

Shandong Dong Group is growing impatient. His abattoir Debre Zeit has been closed for 5 months (“On the Trail” n°17 p. 125) due to a decision of the city mayor. A national social media campaign had relayed the protests of residents against the misfortune forced upon the donkeys. The abattoir was opened three years ago and covers 15,000 m<sup>2</sup>. It can kill up to 200 donkeys a day. The animals were bought in Adama, Modjo, Meqi, Dukem, Ziway, and Addis Ababa. They still keep coming in. Ever since the killing has stopped, Shandong Dong Group has still exported 75 tons of meat which appears to come from donkeys killed prior to the closure. The company lodged a complaint against the prime minister to challenge the decision to close the butchery. It considers that this was unfair. Suppliers support the Chinese company. Mesfin Temesgen, for example, said “We have now around 100 donkeys waiting to be supplied to the company. Due to the ban, we cannot sell them.”<sup>3</sup>

### KENYA

July 24, 2017

#### Naivasha, Nakuru County, Kenya

The slaughterhouse is back in business after being closed two months (see “On the Trail” n°17 p. 125). The Kenya Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (KSPCA) and veterinarian services had denounced the cruelty and lack of hygiene in the establishment. “All the required conditions for operations to resume are now fulfilled” declared Enos Amuyunzu, director of the county veterinarian services.<sup>4</sup>



Naivasha's water carriers are protesting against the resurgence of donkey robberies.

## NAMIBIA

**September 10, 2017**

### **Khorixas District, Kunene Region, Namibia**

Donkeys have passed out of sight around Omutiuanduko village for one month. With the last theft, the police followed the human and animal prints, and ended up in Tsawises, where they found 4 cut-up carcasses and 10 live donkeys. A 20-year-old suspect was arrested, and four others fled. But they were spotted. They were interrogated later: two of them (19 and 31 years old) in Otjohorong village, and the two others (24 and 31 years old) in Tsawises. The donkeys belonged to several owners. Their total value is estimated at 19,000 Namibian dollars, or \$ 1,450 US.<sup>5</sup>

## NIGERIA

**August 17, 2017**

### **Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos State, Nigeria**

Customs suspended the activities of two shipping companies, Skyway Aviation Handling Company Limited (SAHCOL) and Nigeria Aviation Handling Company Plc (NAHCO Aviance), whose warehouses were used as stasher for Chinese exporters of donkey's skins who subsequently used the services of Emirates Airlines. Other exporters of fresh and perishable products are resisting this "outrageous and anti-economic" decision.<sup>6</sup>

**August 31, 2017**

### **Ikpoba Okha, Edo State, Nigeria**

The "State Butchers Task Force" arrested at the market four women who had been long-time donkey meat traffickers. The suppliers are men that go to Niger to fetch the meat. The skins are exported to China under false name and origin.<sup>7</sup>

## UGANDA

**August 2017**

### **Uganda**

After Botswana and Tanzania (cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p. 124 and 125), Uganda are falling into step and banned the trade and slaughter of donkeys. Donkey slaughterhouses will need to be closed "indefinitely with immediate effect." The Africa Veterinary Technical Association commends Uganda for its decision and asks the Kenyan government to emulate the action.<sup>8</sup>

## CHAD

**Beginning of July, 2017**

### **Etena, Chari-Baguirmi Region, Chad**

The video of Chad Info shows all, the only thing missing is the stench. Dozens and dozens of dead donkeys on the ground, some still with their skin, others already skinned, stomachs swollen, dark pools dirtying the ground and attracting flies; some donkeys still living, on their knees, the ears tucked back and eyes half-closed, already half dead; and some survivors standing, grouped under the shade of a palm tree with, in the background, the blasted logistical link, a container.



The authorities of Chari intercepted at 30 km from the capital of N'Djamena, two containers loaded with about 280 donkeys. Three Chadians and two Chinese were stopped. This dirty trick would be their trial shot. According to their first statements, the animals came from Abéché, a 12-hour drive away, and were heading to Moundou. The story that hasn't been told yet, is that they had either bought or stolen the donkeys. The traffickers had taken a break at an acquaintance's house in Etena and realized that the donkeys were starting to die in the improvised livestock truck. They decided to finish off the weakest ones on the spot, recruiting the help of villagers whom they paid \$5.50 US for each donkey taken down.

The corpses needed to be "incinerated" on the orders of authorities. "It's a very bitter observation. Etena has become a cemetery of donkey corpses. There is a network behind this trafficking. What proves that these donkeys were on their way to being exported? Here in Chad, neither Christians nor Muslims eat donkey meat. Now that this observation has been made, a judicial investigation will be opened to determine when and how this network functions. The community must pay careful attention when buying meat in the market. You never know if the meat is really destined for exportation. The investigation will reveal of the contours and the perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions," declares Ahmat Mahamat Bachir, the Minister of Public Security, noting the damage. The two Chinese arrested were determined to supply the ejiao industry (cf. "To Save the Donkeys from the Chinese Predators," "On the Trail" n°15, p. 119).<sup>9</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

### Zimbabwe

"On the Trail" has presented evidence of livestock trafficking, notably of stolen donkeys, between Zimbabwe and South Africa. The donkey shipments converge by the South African slaughterhouse in Randfontein, Gauteng province. But the killing is also taking place inside Zimbabwe. A secret slaughterhouse used by the so-called Liu and Chen was located in Tongwe at the end of last year. According to veterinarian's testimonies to journalists of Oxpeckers, "the donkeys were confined for at least a week before slaughter, fed on a diet of dry mopane leaves and totally deprived of water." One skinner said that water deprivation

helps to desiccate the hide and increases its gelatin concentration. Liu and Chen were quickly released on bail, since they had received backing of elected officials who affirmed that the donkeys had been knowingly sold by the villagers at an average price of \$25 US. According to the Sunday News from October 1<sup>st</sup>, Battlefront Investments, based in Bulawayo, is in the process of finishing the construction of a "state-of-the-art" slaughterhouse with a nominal capacity of 2,170 donkeys per month. "We have already started buying donkeys from as far as Gokwe, Plumtree, Gwanda and Gweru." "The company planned to invite a "senior" government official to open the abattoir," specifies a director who did not forget to mention that he has yet recruited a few Chinese "specialists".<sup>10</sup>

## ON the TRAIL n°18

### 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.

For instance, for the last event of "On the Trail" n°18 : chapter Donkeys, Zimbabwe, reference 10.

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