

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunaion bulletin
Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
n°21. Events from the 1th April to the 30 of June 2018
Published on July 31, 2018

Original version in French





"On the Trail", the defauna magazine, aims to get out of the drip of daily news to draw up every three months an organized and analyzed survey of poaching, smuggling and worldwide market of animal species protected by national laws and international conventions.

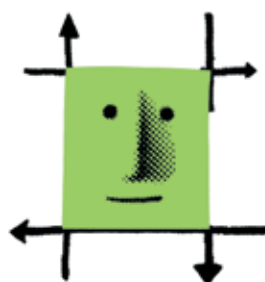
"On the Trail" highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new *modus operandi* of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. "On the Trail" gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling. End to end, the "On the Trail" are the biological, social, ethnological, police, customs, legal and financial chronicle of poaching and other conflicts between humanity and animality.

Previous issues in English

<http://www.robindesbois.org/en/a-la-trace-bulletin-dinformation-et-danalyses-sur-le-braconnage-et-la-contrebande/>

Previous issues in French

<http://www.robindesbois.org/a-la-trace-bulletin-dinformation-et-danalyses-sur-le-braconnage-et-la-contrebande/>



ROBIN DES BOIS

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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

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.

Seahorses

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



ASIA

CHINA

May 15, 2018
Gongbei Port of Entry, Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China
Seizure of 200 dried seahorses, 5 g on average.¹

June 1st, 2018
Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, China
Seizure from the trunk of a car of around 7750 dried seahorses, 31 kg, i.e. 4 g on average.²

INDIA

April 17, 2018
Between Mandapam and Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu State, India
Seizure of 6kg of seahorses on board a coach going to Mandapam. Malik, 21 years old, said to be only a carrier. He was going to deliver in Chennai. Mandapam along the Indian Ocean is at the heart of sea cucumber and seahorse trafficking to Sri Lanka or Indian megacities. The Chennai airport and port are good hideouts for contraband.³

PHILIPPINES

June 9, 2018
Bacolod-Silay International Airport, Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines
Seizure of 58 kg of dried seahorses, or some 11 to 12,000 specimens, valued at \$23,000 US or nearly \$400 US/kg. The seahorses were reported to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources as "dried fish." The sender is an uncertain Jerry Co from Silay City.⁴

Corals



Orangutans crab on bubble-coral

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS
June 18, 2018
Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America
Vazquez pleads guilty (cf. "On the Trail" n°18 p. 5). He admits having used his mother as a delivery woman for live corals in Mexico. He risks a year in jail and deportation. He does not have a US passport.¹

ASIA

CHINA
April 25, 2018
Futian Port of entry, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China
Seizure of 30kg of "red coral".²

April 30, 2018
Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China
Seizure by airport customs of a nice-sized hard coral (*Scleractinia* spp, Appendix II) from the baggage of a Chinese citizen arriving from Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). The specimen weighs around 6.1 kg, its length is 28 cm and its width is 24 cm.³

EUROPE

NETHERLANDS
May 7, 2018
Netherlands
Seizure of coral in the belongings of a traveler coming from Mauritius Island.⁴

Abalones

Haliotis spp.



AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 11, 2018

Port Shepstone, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

During a check carried out early in the morning at the Oribi tollbooth on the N2 highway, the police came across a man transporting 655 abalones in his car. The man was to deliver them to Durban and was traveling with a pistol loaded with 9 bullets. The value of the catch is estimated at 90,000 rand (\$7700 US or \$128 US/kg). The man was driven to the police station; the vehicle and the abalones were seized.¹

Mid-April 2018

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

More than 200 lobster tails (family Astacoidea) and 11 shucked abalone seized by the police. Two arrests.²

April 17, 2018

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Joint operation between the K9 dog unit and Dark Water OPS, a private security company enlisted in the fight against poaching. Seizure during the night of 890 abalones, no arrests.³

May 15, 2018

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Five men in police uniforms attack the strong room where the provincial government stores seized abalones. The gang broke in at 3:00 in the morning in a two-cabin bakkie, took possession of the security guard's weapons and bulletproof vests. The massive stealing was not quantified. The abalones were loaded onto three other bakkies arriving in support and the gang fled in the night.⁴

May 23, 2018

Ottery, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Always the same scenery and the same seizures: fans, gas burners, bottles of gas, racks of abalones – 7670 specimens estimated at \$280,000 US. One arrest.⁵



June 2, 2018

Kimberley, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Far from Cape Town (900 km), a 34-year-old man was engaged in the trafficking of abalones and rock lobsters.⁶

June 12, 2018

Gansbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The town is living up to its reputation. Suspicious activity near Marais Street. Police chase on foot. Four large bags abandoned in the gutter. One breathless man arrested. 208 good-sized abalones seized.⁷

GANG

June 13, 2018

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The nine crooked agents from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) went back to work in their offices after being freed on bail for 20,000 to 50,000 rand (\$1600 to \$4000 US). They were arrested after a two-year investigation and an overwhelming compilation of telephone conversations giving detailed explanations on their dealings with traffickers to whom they sold the abalones seized by their own administration. See "On the Trail" n°20, p.9.⁸

June 13, 2018

Near Gordon's Bay, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The search of the Toyota abandoned by the driver following a high-speed chase with the police led to the count of 8330 abalones worth an estimated \$40,000 US.⁹

June 22, 2018

Aliwal North, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of a Nissan X-trail and 2326 abalones found inside. Arrest of the 34-year-old driver.¹⁰

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 8, 2018

Between Bawley Point and Kioloa, State of New South Wales, Australia

Would Australian abalone beds also fall prey to shameful appetites? Local sectors mainly take interest in shellfish whose “mother of pearl” is used to make earrings, necklaces, and other jewelry. But they are also found on the menus of some seafood restaurants (cf “On the Trail” n°16, p. 17). In 2017, 6000 abalones were seized in the State and authorities, faced with an increase, decided to be more active against abalone poaching (cf “On the Trail” n°20, p. 10). Today, a particularly harmful individual was arrested in the company of three minor boys who he had enlisted in his trafficking. Arrested during a surveillance operation conducted by the Fisheries Service of the Department of Primary Industries with the help of the police, the four were transporting 261 shelled abalones of the local species *Haliotis rubra* and their diving equipment. The fishing quota is limited to 2 shells per day per person. The adult leading the group had already been arrested March 15 with 365 shelled abalones. He was also helped by three sidemen, and legal proceedings are underway against the foursome. In this new case the three minors had to be brought before the juvenile court, while the adult faces maximum penalties of 10 years in prison and a \$44,000 AU (\$33,200 US) fine for illegal fishing with aggravating circumstances, as well as \$5,500 AU (\$4,100 US) for shucking the abalones.¹¹

Nautiluses, Clams and Date Mussels

ASIA

CHINA

May 15, 2018

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of three nautiluses (Nautilidae, Appendix II).¹

Early June 2018

Zhengzhou Customs, Henan Province, China

A clam (Tridacnidae, Appendix II), 1.9 kg.²

June 19, 2018

Xiamen Customs, Fujian Province, China

Three clams (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) 3.06 kg.³



EUROPE

ITALY

April 13, 2018

Naples, Campania Region, Italy

Interrogation of two underwater divers and seizure of 20 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). The Barcelona Convention and the Bern Convention are also protecting the species. The shape and color of the date mussel look like those of date palm fruit, but its other name, *lithophaga* date, from the Greek lithos (stone) and phago (to eat), reminds of the drilling ability of this bivalve mollusk. The date mussel is a pioneer species that facilitates the installation of other sessile marine species and juvenile lobsters. The poaching is frequent in the Sorrento Bay and the protected area of Punta Campanella. In December, a seizure of 70 kg occurred thanks to the intervention by Navy Forces based in Naples. See also “On the Trail” n°15 p.9.⁴

April 27, 2018

Mattinata, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of 8 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II) by a highway police patrol from a vehicle traveling at night with two men inside. The gear used to extract the mollusks from the rock was also confiscated. One of the two associates has been charged with fishing and transporting protected species and destroying marine environments (reefs, cliffs). Fishing for date mussels is banned in Italy since 1998 and in the European Union since 2006. These bivalves dissolve limestone thanks to glands that secrete a mucoprotein, and dig a tunnel up to 20 cm into the rock. Poachers use hammers, chisels, or even an underwater jackhammers or explosives to access date mussels.⁵



Early May 2018

Trieste, Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region, Italy

The refrigerated van registered in Italy was driving on the Grande Viabilità Triestina (GVT) that links the Port of Trieste with Venice. A customs patrol intercepted it. A search of the vehicle, performed with the help of fishing specialists, resulted in the seizure of 225 kg of mollusks, mainly mussels and oysters, but also 15 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). All of the cargo came from Croatia – where date mussel poaching is intense – and was destined for fish markets and Italian restaurants. The sanitation and food safety rules were not respected, and no import document was available. The driver was charged with possession of a protected species.⁶

May 29, 2018

Civitavecchia, Latium Region, Italy

Police raid in a posh ocean-front restaurant. Seizure of several kilos of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). It takes five minutes to prepare a dish of pasta with date mussels, but it also takes the destruction of 1 m³ of seabed or rocks. The restaurant risks temporary closure, and the owners a fine between 2000 € and 12,000 € and two months to two years in prison.⁷

June 2, 2018

Castellammare di Stabia, Naples Metropolitan area, Campania Region, Italy

The fish market manager was arrested, along with two purchasers of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II), both business owners who are well-known all the way to the foot of Vesuvius. The Carabinieri want to save the date mussels. Through cross-referencing of information, search warrants and anonymous tips, they now have endless lists of consumers and vendors of all types – street vendors, fish markets, trattorias, luxury shops – anyone who all year long, and especially during the Christmas holidays, sells date mussels, either fresh or frozen, for as much as 150 € per kilo. More and more, date mussel trafficking in southern Italy resembles abalone trafficking in Cape province, South Africa.⁸

Sea Cucumbers

The European Union's proposal to include a few sea cucumber species in Appendix II is going to cause a stir. China, on the tune "Don't touch my sea cucumbers", is resolutely standing up while noting that the species named in the project are not the most commercialized.

Meanwhile, trafficking rages between Mexico and the United States, in the Indian subcontinent and in the Far East between Russia and China (see also Various Marine Species chapter).

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

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Early June 2018

El Dorado International Airport of Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure. The 540 dried sea cucumbers were to be aired to Hong Kong.¹

MEXICO

April 8, 2018

On the road between Campeche and Champotón, State of Campeche, Mexico

A good many complaints had reached the ears of the Agencia de Investigación Criminal (AIC). After having obtained a search warrant from a judge, federal agents backed-up by staff of the Secretary of Fishing in Campeche invested in an aquaculture farm. They seized 1683 kg of sea cucumbers and put under sequestration the storage and process work room. The owner was brought to the prosecutor. Photos of the warehouse show deplorable sanitary conditions.²



April 9, 2018

Tijuana Airport, State of Baja California, Mexico

In search of drugs or smuggled goods in the freight area of the airport, federal police officers took interest in a white carton from the Merida Yucatan province. It contained 20kg of sea cucumbers. The lot was seized.³

April 22, 2018

San Luis Río Colorado, Sonora State, Mexico. Border with the United States of America.

Traffic control on the road between Guaymas and Mexicali, Baja California State. Seizure of 20,000 dried brown sea cucumbers (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III in Ecuador) in a truck.⁴

Mid-May 2018

Progreso, State of Yucatan, Mexico

Interception of two pick-up trucks in the port. Black bags are in the truck beds. Seizure of 650 kg of sea cucumbers and two vehicles.⁵

Early June 2018

Dzilam de Bravo, State of Yucatán, Mexico

Seizure of 84 kg of fresh sea cucumber of the species *Isostichopus badionotus*, i.e. approximately 250 specimens, a compressor and diving equipment. Four arrests. The canoe and equipment were also seized.⁶



June 15, 2018

Cucapah Control Post, Sonora State, Mexico. Border with the United States of America.

Seizure at 3 a.m. on board a Redpack truck of five cardboard boxes full of sea cucumbers. The truck came from the port of Guaymas.⁷

ASIA

SRI LANKA

May 11, 2018

North Western and Eastern Provinces, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 40 kg of sea cucumbers and snorkelling equipment. Five in custody.⁸

May 15, 2018

Off the coast of Point Pedro, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Interception of several boats by Navy Forces. Seizure of forbidden nets, 130 kg of fish, snorkelling equipment, and a large quantity of sea cucumbers. 15 in custody.⁹

May 23, 24 and 26, 2018

Off the coast of Point Pedro, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Interception of several boats. Seizure of snorkelling equipment. 14 in custody. The Navy Forces – illegal fisheries conflict is in sight of Elephant Island.¹⁰

June 4, 5, and 7, 2018

Irrakkakandi, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure by naval forces of 162 kg of fish caught with explosives, 15 nets banned from use or deployed in protected areas, 502 kg of Indian Tendu leaves that serve as paper for Beedi and 54 kg of heroin on a beach and in the dunes, 3600 Tramadol psychotropic tablets, and 5 kg of sea cucumbers. Six arrests.¹¹

June 19, 2018

Vidaltativu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure during a beach cleaning of sticks of dynamite, forbidden nets, 29 kg of cannabis from Kerala (India), fish, and 33 sea cucumbers on board a Wallam, a wooden boat typical in Sri Lanka.¹²



June 28 and 29, 2018

Off Point Pedro, Northern Province and Panadura, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizures of 2591 sea cucumbers in one dinghy and 8 kg in another with four conches (genus *Strombus*). Several arrests. Seizure of boats and diving gear.¹³

Fishes

AMERICA

BRAZIL

April 25, 2018

Santarém, State of Pará, Brazil

The city's environmental police boarded a boat near the "2000" market after receiving complaints about the stench of rotten fish. Arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), the largest freshwater fish on planet Earth, were on deck. The owner of the boat was all-wrong: nothing about the origin of the fish, no fishing or transportation license between the different Brazilian states of the Amazon basin. The 1200 kg of rotting meat were disposed of in a landfill. The trafficker risks a fine of up to \$188 US/kg if the penal code is applied.¹



May 30, 2018

Santarém, State of Pará, Brazil

Santarém, the damned harbor for the pirarucus, vernacular name for arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Seizure of one ton, or 50 juvenile fishes, under the legal size and caught off-season. The edible meat will be donated to charities.²



June 6, 2018

Manaus, Amazonas State, Brazil

Seizure of 11,482 kg of fish, tambaquis (*Colossoma macropomum*) and arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). The "goods" had been bought in Coari on the banks of the Rio Solimões, 360 km from Manaus. They were to be sold on the markets and in the supermarkets of Manaus.³

June 21, 2018

Lábrea, Amazonas State, Brazil

Seizure in Lábrea, on the banks of the Rio Purus, tributary of the Amazon, 7 km from Manaus, of 77 kg of arapaima flesh (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and four aquatic turtles.⁴

June 22, 2018

Salvador de Bahia, State of Bahia, Brazil

Harpooning a hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna* spp., three species in Appendix II). "He scared us," they say to defend themselves.⁵

June 22, 2018

Porto Velho, Rondônia State, Brazil

Seizure of 1.682 t of fish and 470 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) on BR-364. The edible fish were donated to charity.⁶

REPEATED OFFENSE

End of June 2018

State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Arrest of a poacher on the Araguaia River near São Félix do Araguaia. He held 141 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). He had already been arrested in December 2017 while fishing out of time and catching turtles.

The Environment Week from 22 to 30 June was an opportunity for local IBAMA (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) agents to focus on illegal fishing in the municipalities of Ribeirão Cascalheira, Novo Santo Antônio and São Félix do Araguaia. Their booty is substantial: six boats, six engines, one canoe, 10 fishing rods with reels, seven reels of line, five boxes of fishing instruments and seven nets. 10 kg of various fish and 12 turtles are added to the seizures. In all, fines amount to 142,000 Reals (\$ 38,300 US).⁷



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 3, 2018

Portland, State of Maine, United States of America

Conviction of three traffickers of American glass eels (*Anguilla rostrata*).

- William Sheldon to six months in prison followed by three years supervised release, a fine of \$10,000 US, and a payment of \$32,000 US corresponding to the value of the truck that he used for the traffic. Sheldon was a certified eel breeder and at the same time the head of a network for the commercialization of poached eels. Sheldon is furthermore prohibited from managing permits to breed and market eels.

- Timothy Lewis to six months in prison followed by three years supervised release and a fine of \$2,500 US.

- Thomas Reno to one year probation.

Cf. "On the Trail" n°19 p.12.⁸



June 19, 2018

Off the coast of South Sound Creek, State of Florida, United States of America

Initially, the fishing boat *Miss Shell* was inspected by the coast guard because it did not have navigation lights. In the end, sharks and their fins were found in two different areas on board. This is a violation of the Shark Conservation Act, which forbids cutting off the tails and fins while on board. It is illegal to disembark sharks if those organs are not naturally attached to their bodies. The most common species of shark off the coast of Florida in this season is the snowbird blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*).⁹

MEXICO

April 21, 2018

Mexico City International Airport, Mexico

The Chinese passenger had taken a gamble. In a bag, he had 355 dried totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) weighing a bit less than 30 kg evaluated at a little less than \$24,000 US. He is being held in Mexico under judicial control with the obligation of presenting himself to the Ministry of Justice once a week and leaving a deposit.¹⁰

April 23, 2018

San Luis Río Colorado, State of Sonora, Mexico

The 45 kg of totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) were approaching Los Angeles. The Mexican federal police seized them from a vehicle on the Santa Clara-San Luis Río Colorado Golfo expressway. Asian restaurants in Southern California were without doubt awaiting the bladders. Retailed, they would be sold at around \$500,000 US.¹¹

End of April 2018

Mexico City International Airport, Mexico

Arrest of a Chinese national who was trying to fly to South Korea with, in his luggage, 408 dried totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I). Drug traffickers would control trafficking in the Sea of Cortez.¹²

Early May 2018

State of Baja California, Mexico

Seizure from one cooler on the passenger seat of a car and another cooler in the backseat of 229 totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I). Total weight: 100 kg. Retail selling price on the Asian market: \$8000 US/kg.¹³

Mid-June 2018

El Doctor Control Post, Sonora State, Mexico

Three sharks were seized, one was decapitated.¹⁴

ASIA

CHINA

May 30, 2018

Hong Kong International Airport, China

The wheeze was twofold: fins of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II) were hidden among fins of other shark species not protected by CITES, and the shipment (989 kg) was declared as "dried seafood." The airline Singapore Airlines has been dazzled and took care of it at the airport in Colombo (Sri Lanka) heading to Hong Kong via Singapore despite its shark fin transport exclusion policy since 2014. Singapore Airlines blacklisted the shipper and sent a note to all its branches asking them to be wary of shipments of "dried seafood" and to carry out sample checks. The airline Cathay Pacific also forbids the transport of shark fins since 2016.¹⁵



June 27, 2018

Xiamen-Gaoqi International Airport, Fujian Province, China

Seized in three boxes of milk powder of 2.75 kg of dried shark fins.¹⁶

INDONESIA

April 7, 2018

60 Nautical Miles from Weh Island, Aceh Province, Indonesia

The Indonesian Navy had inspected the *STS-50*. Togo is supposed to have taken her off its register in April 2017. However, she is not on the recently published official list of ships removed between 2012 and November 2017. Interpol was looking for the *STS-50* for multiple illegal fishing activities. If it is confirmed that the *STS-50* (ex *Ayda*, *Sea Breez 1*, ...) is stateless, she will be enrolled in the Indonesian fishing fleet, which does not seem very credible given her state, or scuttled. The vessel was notably compromised in an illegal fishing of Antarctic toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*) in Australian waters in 2016. She had escaped from Mozambique at the beginning of 2018.¹⁷



KAZAKHSTAN

April 2018

Atyrau, Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure of 8 kg of black caviar from sturgeons' poaching (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II).¹⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

GANG

Gijón, Piedras Blancas and Soto del Barco, Principality of Asturias and Algeciras, Andalusia autonomous community, Spain

Early April 2018

Big glass eels blow by the Spanish Guardia Civil, the Portuguese Autoridad de Seguridad Alimentaria y Económica (ASAE), and Europol. Arrest of a gang of 10 Chinese, Spanish, and Moroccan nationals. Since at least 2016, they gathered a net profit of 37.5 million Euros. The glass eels were rounded up in

Gijón, Piedras Blancas and Soto del Barco in Asturias and transferred by express truck to Algeciras where they were repackaged and then trucked to Morocco where they were flown to continental China or Hong Kong or to South Korea. Pato and Lisbon airports were also used. More than five tons of glass eels or 16.67 million specimens were seized. They were destined to supply eel farms. At least 10% of the glass eels would have died during the trips, or 1.67 million specimens. Spain and glass eels, cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p. 8, n°16 p. 9 to 11.¹⁹

FRANCE



GANG

Early April 2018

Vendée, Loire-Atlantique, Ile-et-Vilaine and Morbihan Departments, France

Dismantling of a network of poachers and traffickers of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*), arrests of 13 individuals, seizure of several hundred kilos of live fry: the investigation lasted five months and mobilised a hundred police officers using shadowing, vehicle markings and phone-tapping. The men and women gang members are also accused of selling another several hundred kilos of glass eels. Professional river and sea fishermen and two authorized fishmongers with illegal fishponds were among them. Vehicles, fishing gear, packaging and shipping equipment were seized as well as cash and bank accounts. The traffic was destined for Asia where one kilo of eels is negotiated at 1000 to 4000 € in Hong Kong (\$1,160 to \$4,650 US). For Jose Jouneau, Regional fishermen's board President in Pays de la Loire, "The eel is almost as profitable as coke, with less trouble!"²⁰

April 18, 2018

Basse-Goulaine, Loire-Atlantique Department, France

They poached eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in the Goulaine, a tributary of the Loire. There were four, two ran away, the other was just "watching". The person who has been fined is summoned to the Court in Nantes on 4 September for the "glass eels" hearing.²¹

May 3, 2018

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

Customs was targeting the baggage of travelers heading to Asia. They discovered 33 kg of live European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) divided into several suitcases. They have been released in the Somme river. Already in February 2017, 140 kg of eels destined for Thailand had been intercepted by airport customs and released in the Somme (cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.10).²²

May 31, 2018

Bordeaux, Gironde Department, Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region, France

Found guilty of trafficking glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), known as "pibales" in the region. Two years in prison for Steven Chesse; and two years, including one year suspended, for Pascal Labiche, absent at the trial.

It all started in February 2016, after customs officials intercepted a vehicle heading toward Spain, transporting 163 kg of glass eels.

Four conveyances were attributed to the network that used the logistical techniques of drug-traffickers. The public prosecutor had called for five-year prison terms without suspension. The sentences were softer, but it is the first time in France that this sort of case is considered "trafficking by an organized group." This is a precedent that will carry weight in future trials.²³



June 2018

Guiana Region, France

The captains of two Brazilian "tapouilles", the *Falcao 3* and the *Arpia*, were sentenced to 3 and 6 months in prison for voluntary acts of violence against commandos of the French navy when they boarded the two boats, caught in the act of fishing in French Guiana waters. 6 t of fish and 85 kg of dried swim bladders were seized. They were probably the swim bladders of grey snappers (*Cynoscion acoupa*, see "On the Trail" n°19, p.12). The boats will be destroyed, the crews were taken back to the Brazilian border.²⁴



French Guiana. Destruction of a Brazilian "tapouille" seized in 2017.

June 30, 2018

Ouilly-le-Vicomte, Calvados Department, France

Arrest of three Portuguese eel poachers (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) along the Touques, a coastal river flowing into the English Channel at Trouville-sur-Mer. They were fishing "à la vermée". It is, explains the ONCFS, a traditional technique without hooks. Vase worms are threaded onto cotton yarn and then rolled into a ball. The eels cling to the ball with their teeth and are collected in an inverted umbrella as soon as the line is raised. 33 eels were returned to the river. In the same region, in Honfleur, a Belgian fisherman was arrested for the same reasons in May.²⁵



On sale at the Trouville-sur-Mer market stalls, June 2018. Selling eels from Seine river and estuary is forbidden because of high level of PCBs.

ITALY

April 21, 2018

Torino di Sangro, Abruzzo Region, Italy

They were poaching European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in the Sangro River under a bridge. Seizure of the material and an overall fine of 3200 €. ²⁶



Early May 2018

Venice Marco Polo international Airport, Veneto Region, Italy

Seizure of 700.000 glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in 90 goatskins full of water, on their way to Asia. Valued at 1 million euros. One Italian national was arrested. The glass eels were released in different locations along the Sile river.²⁷



May 4, 2018

Casalbordino, Abruzzo Region, Italy

Giuseppe Zappetti is angry. The regional chairman of the sport fishing federation Arci Pesca Fisa calls for the summoning of a round table "to deal with the problems of poaching, a phenomenon that is repeated every day in every river in Abruzzo due to lack of controls." Giuseppe Zappetti is on all fronts. He himself released 30 European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) caught in the Sinello River by poachers who had been reported to the fishery guards by a witness. A few days earlier, he had discovered a camp of poachers along the Sangro. Fishing nets, plastic lockers, inflatable seats, and a loaded crossbow had been seized (see above).²⁸

May 22, 2018

Messina, Sicily Region, Italy

Seizure of Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) without a valid catch document (Bluefin tuna Catch Document – BCD – required by the ICCAT, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas). After a veterinarian inspection, both specimens were donated to charities. Two fines of € 8000.²⁹



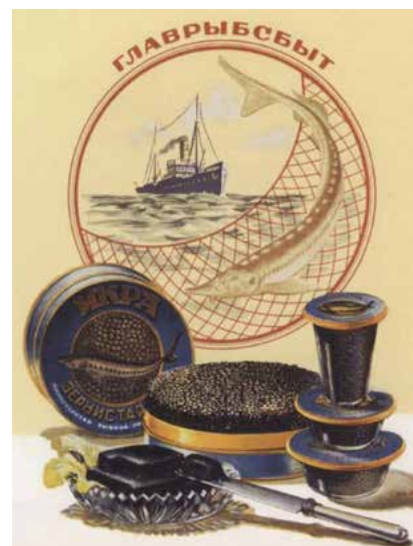
May 31, 2018

Carbonia, Sardinia Region, Italy

Seizure in a van of 125 kg of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), cut in slices and packed in Styrofoam cases, along with an electric scale and plastic bags. The seizure will be donated to a charity. The origin of the tuna and the delivery man's mysterious door-to-door method have yet to be elucidated.³⁰

RUSSIA

Sturgeons (Acipenseridae) are in Appendix I or II.



April 2018

Moscow, Central Federal District, Russia

Four three- to five-year suspended prison sentences for trafficking sturgeon caviar between Khabarovsk in the Russian Far East and Moscow, 8 hours by plane. The network benefited from complicities in an airline company and at Domodedovo airport. The caviar arrived in Moscow in packages of 15 to 20 kg. It was conditioned by the wife of a police officer stationed in Domodedovo and kept in a freezer on the balcony of the flat. Part of the caviar was regularly sold in Rostov on the Don thanks to the complicity of at least one coach driver. The average price per kilo of caviar on the local market is 20,000 rubles (\$310 US) for black and 2,800 rubles (\$40 US) for red.³¹

End April 2018

Karaozek Checkpoint, Astrakhan Oblast, Southern Federal District, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.

Seized in a 14.5 kg truck of black sturgeon caviar is 5 kg of red salmon caviar. The precious cargo came from Kazakhstan. Astrakhan caviar is internationally renowned.³²

May 2018

Moscow Domodedovo International Airport, Central Federal District, Russia

This shipment will have been missed at the football world cup festivities. Seizure of 454 kg of black caviar distributed in 810 anonymous boxes in the freight area of the airport from Chita, Krai of Zabaykalsky, 7 hours flight.³³

June 15, 2018

Bureysky District, Amur Oblast, Far Eastern Federal District, Russia

Conviction to 200 hours of compulsory labour for attempting to deliver 110 kg of caviar to Blagoveshchensk, Chinese border, in July 2016. The goods were bought on the black market in Khabarovsk. The judgment orders that the 110 kg of caviar be destroyed.³⁴



Marine Mammals

Seals continue to be struck to death in northern France. India bans the import of seal pelts and is going to struck to death the Canadian industry.

Just back from Antarctica with 333 Minke whales and 5 foetuses in its bag and hundreds of anecdotal anatomical data in its scientific baggage, the Japanese whaling fleet is doing it again in the Pacific Northwest. 224 whales are in sight.

The native population around the Arctic justify the marine mammals harpooning or shooting by cultural and food traditions, which does not prevent some of their representatives from forging fruitful links with the Russian and Chinese mafias, as shown by the seizure of several hundred narwhal and walrus tusks.

After a pas de deux, Iceland gave up part of its commercial whaling season for reasons of profitability.



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 6, 2018

Boston, State of Massachusetts, United States of America

John "Jake" Bell pleads guilty. Between November 2004 and April 2008, he fraudulently introduced into the United States from Ukraine 34 sperm whale teeth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) weighing nearly 25 kg and worth some \$37,000 US, and then sold them unprocessed or carved by himself. The sale of nine scrimshaws brought him \$20,300 US. Bell was selling ivory in part to Nantucket, on the East Coast of the United States, flagship-city for the hunting of sperm whales. His accomplice was sentenced in 2010 to 33 months in prison.¹

SAINT-VINCENT-ET-LES-GRENADINES

April 15, 2018

Barrouallie, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Three orcas (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix II) were chased down and harpooned. They were butchered in a bay. The meat is eaten fresh or smoked in restaurants. The oil is used in local medicine. The fat is served as crispy chips. The bones and intestines are the only parts that are dumped or fed to animals.

Hazelwood, director of operations, is pleased with himself. "We make money and it's not illegal," he says. He did not mention the trafficking of some 120 conical orca teeth. (Orca teeth, see "On the Trail" n°7, p.7).²



ASIA

INDIA

April 2018

India

New hard blow on the Canadian seal industry. Six seal types – the harp seal (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*), the hooded seal (*Cystophora cristata*), the grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*), the ringed seal (*Pusa hispida*), the bearded seal (*Erignathus barbatus*), and the harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*) – live along the Canada's Atlantic coast. India, the biggest potential importer along with China, forbids the import of seal skins. "We are certain that this choice will be the last nail in the coffin for the sealing industry." That is the opinion of the director of the International Humane Society in India.³



Pagophilus groenlandicus

JAPAN

Southern Summer 2017/2018

Antarctic

Brief description of the NEWREP-A scientific campaign in the Southern Ocean, zone VI (170°W - 120°W south of the 60th parallel) by Japan.

925 Minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I with Japan reservation) were observed over 4164 nautical miles. 344 harpoon shots were fired. 11 Minke whales escaped thanks to the abundant sea ice cover, 333 were captured (152 males and 181 females including five foetus). 1011 organs were collected from males and 1405 from females to study reproduction mode, growth mode, age scale, parasitology. Marine litter and stomach contents were observed in accessible stomachs. 15 stomachs were destroyed by the explosive harpoons. The physical characteristics of each individual were measured "down to the cm". A blue whale was biologically sampled. The campaign mobilized the *Nisshin Maru*, the *Yushin Maru* and the *Yushin Maru n°3*. Each whale was weighed "to the nearest 10 kg thanks to an electronic scale" on board the *Nisshin Maru*.⁴



April 5- November 30, 2018

Northwest Pacific

It is all happening again (cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p.15). Allocation to the Association for community-based whaling of Fukuoka-shi by the Ministry of Fishing of scientific hunting licenses for 47 Minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I, reservation from Japan) in the coastal waters of the Sea of Okhotsk, near the island of Hokkaido and 80 minke whales in the Pacific coastal waters. The vessels authorized for whaling are the *Kouei maru* No. 8 belonging to Toba Hogeï Ltd and Ayukawa Hogeï Ltd, the *Taisho maru* No. 3 belonging to Oshika Fisheries Cooperative, the *Seiwa maru* belonging to Yoshiiti Simomiti, the *Sumitomo maru* No. 51 belonging to Gaibo Hogeï Ltd, the *Katsu maru* No. 7 belonging to Taiji-cho Fisheries cooperative and the *Yushin maru* belonging to Kyodo Senpaku Ltd. The scientific objective of the two permits is to contribute to the definition of a "Sustainable" Catch Limit of Minke whales in the coastal waters of Japan.⁵

May 17 – August 19, 2018

Pacific Northwest, High Seas, North of 35°N, West of 170°E

The Ministry of Fisheries issued the Institute of Cetacean Research with a special permit allowing the catch of 43 Minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I, reservation for Japan) and 134 sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*, Appendix I with Japan reservation) for scientific research purpose. The vessels authorized to whaling are the *Nisshin Maru*, the *Yushin Maru* and the *Yushin Maru No. 3* owned by Kyodo Senpaku Ltd. If the EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) of a foreign country is affected, its previous approval is needed. The scientific purposes are to contribute to the definition of a "sustainable" catch limit for Minke whales in Japanese coastal waters and to the development of a revised sei whale management procedure. Any whale caught may, as far as possible, be butchered after scientific observations and biological sampling have been carried out.⁶

EUROPE

GERMANY

Early May 2018

Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden Airport, Land of Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Seizure from a passenger's baggage of 19 kg of wild, unspecified animal meat and a carved walrus tusk (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada).⁷

May 14, 2018

Nürnberg, Land of Bavaria, Germany

Seizure by customs of a dolphin skull (*Delphinidae* spp., Appendix I or II). The young woman living in Thailand said she received it as a gift from a friend who had found it on a beach.⁸

DENMARK

May-June 2018

Gotuvik, Hvalvík, Faroe Islands, Denmark

The Faroe Islands, ferocious islands.

–146 pilot whales (*Globicephala* spp. Appendix II) stabbed on the beaches after a high-speed chase at sea.

–10 Atlantic white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*, Appendix II) butchered.⁹



FRANCE

April-May, 2018

Opal Coast, Pas-de-Calais Department, France

Discovery on the beaches of Le Touquet by local naturalists of two dead harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*). One suffered eight lead bullets and violent blows, the other died from drowning in fishing equipment according to post-mortem reports from the University of Liège, Belgium.

A new body was spotted on the shore one month later, the fins cut off. This is the 5th dead seal found in the area since the beginning of the year. The public prosecutor's office of Boulogne-sur-Mer entrusted the investigations to the naval police force of Le Havre. See also "On the Trail" n°20 p.19.¹⁰

ICELAND

April 17, 2018

Iceland

The Icelandic industry is struggling down the hole. After a two-year break, the company Hvalur is granted a license to hunt 161 fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*, Appendix I reservation for Iceland), with the option of adjusting with 30 specimens unused in the 2017 quota. Hvalur uses two whale-hunting ships.

The resumption of the hunt is motivated by a new agreement between Iceland and Japan that would be less strict about the content of phytosanitary products in the flesh of whales captured by Hvalur in subarctic waters. On the other hand, work lead by academics could lead to the commercialization of drugs that correct iron deficiencies using the liver and bones of whales.

Another company, IP-Utgerd Ltd, captures minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I or II reservation for Iceland).

In mid-June, a group of pro-whale non-violent activists and the NGO Hard to Port gathered in Reykjavik Harbour to condemn the official opening of fin whaling, and Prime Minister Jakobsdottir called for a review of the impact of whaling on Iceland's economy and reputation.

Latest news: According to Hard to Port International, Iceland has decided to put away the harpoons. Robin Hood is eagerly awaiting the scrapping of the *Hvalur* whaling boats. The Icelandic delegation to the 67th plenary meeting of the International Whaling Commission to be held in Brazil in early September is expected to provide further details.¹¹

Cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p.13, n°5 p.10, n°9 p.7 and 8, n°14 p.11, n°18 p.15.

Marine Turtles

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

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

End of April 2018

Cartagena, Bolivar Department, Colombia

Seizure of 25 hawksbill turtle scale bracelets. The value of the lot is around \$1,600 US.¹

MEXICO

Mid-April 2018

Between La Ventosa and Tehuantepec, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

A motoring offense ended in the record seizure of 22,800 sea turtle eggs. Federal policemen patrolling route 185 linking Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz noticed an pick-up truck registered in the State of Mexico that was driving over the white line. They intercepted it. Faced with the evasive responses from the driver, the police searched the vehicle and discovered a tarp under which were 57 black plastic bags each containing 400 olive Ridley eggs. It was the biggest seizure of turtle eggs ever undertaken by federal police.²

End of May 2018

Tecomán, Colima State, Mexico

Seized on a beach of 99 Olive Ridley turtle eggs in a looter's bags. They were put back into incubation in a specialized institution.³

June 13, 2018

Mexico City, Mexico

Arrest of a woman at La Nueva Viga fish market. Seizure of 557 sea turtle eggs. According to article 420 of the Penal Code, she is liable to 4 to 12 years imprisonment for having marketed products from a species protected by national and international regulations, and for having herself or through accomplices harmed a protected ecosystem.⁴

Mid-June 2018

Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure and destruction of 1557 marine turtle eggs in the trunk of a woman's car already convicted of homicide.⁵

Mid June 2018

Tamaulipas State, Mexico

Surprise return of 8000 Kemp's Ridley turtles and green turtles on the beaches of Aldama and Soto la Marina. This would be the result of a fierce fight against egg looters, according to the director of parks and biodiversity of the State. "Arribadas" also took place but in smaller numbers on the beaches of Tepehuaje and La Pesca.⁶

ASIA

CHINA

June 2018

Guangxi Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of 63 naturalized hawksbill turtles. Four arrests. The local market value would be \$3,000 US per turtle.⁷

INDIA

April 11, 2018

Ganjam District, State of Odisha, India

Commotion on the beaches near the Rushikulya river mouth. Since last night, olive Ridley turtle eggs began to hatch. All Bherampur forest district agents were mobilized. "We have taken all possible steps to protect the baby turtles. Adequate forces have been deployed. Local volunteers and fishermen have also been roped in to help the forest staff to protect the turtles." The coastline was enclosed for 5km, from Podampet to Bateswar, to prevent predators like wild dogs, fox and jackals from entering the hatching ground. The Forest Department demanded that local authorities suppress public lights for the next few days to avoid drawing the little turtles in the wrong direction. As for mobile phones, they are forbidden in the perimeters to prevent all attempts at untimely selfies. In this way, observers cannot approach closer than 500m from the egg laying and hatching sites. This year, a record number of 445,000 olive Ridley turtles will come to mate along the coast between the 21st and 28th of February. In 2017, there were a total of 370,000 between the 14th and 22nd of February. The females then gather together for collective egg-laying named *arribadas*. They each dig a nest in the sand and lay on an average of 105 eggs. 9 units of the Forest Department are protecting the rookery too. Since the end of 2017, the female turtles were lucky: the beach between Gokharakuda and Purunabandh is naturally expanding.⁸



June 26, 2018

Mumbai, State of Maharashtra, India

Rescue of a hawksbill turtle thanks to one hotel keeper by the sea. She had just been captured by two individuals who were taking selfies while sitting on it. The witness immediately called the Help Line -1926 and the police arrived on the spot took back in hand the turtle in spite of the resistance of some inhabitants of the area. She's been put back at sea. The aftereffects for her of this brutal event are not known.⁹

SRI LANKA

May 9, 2018

North Western and Eastern Provinces, Sri Lanka

Seizure by Naval Forces of 10 kg of marine turtle meat. Two in custody.^{9bis}

VIET NAM

May 2, 2018

Vũng Tàu, Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in the aquarium of a restaurant of a green turtle of 4 kg. She has been freed.¹⁰

End May 2018

Phú Quốc District, Kiên Giang Province, Viet Nam

Three green turtles seized in a seafood restaurant. Their destiny was to be eaten.¹¹

Early June 2018

Vũng Tàu, Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a handicraft shop for tourists of 72 naturalized hawksbill turtles and green turtles.¹²

June 4, 2018

Nha Trang, Province of Khanh Hoa, Viet Nam

Four years after the discovery of sea turtle shells trafficked by the thousands, Hoàng Tuấn Hải known as Formol Man is sentenced to 4-and-a-half years in prison.¹³ Cf. "On the Trail" n° 7 p. 11, n°15 p. 14 and n°20 p.22.



End of June 2018

Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam

New seizures at two tourist souvenir shops: 47 naturalized hawksbill turtles.¹⁴

OCEANIA

FRANCE

June 21, 2018

Papeete, Overseas collectivity of French Polynesia, France

The professional fisherman fished regularly for sea turtles, traded meat and buried shells in his garden. In court, he was fined \$15,000 US and sentenced to publish in one local print media a judicial announcement stating that “the cultural explanation concerning the consumption of these animals is inadmissible, since turtles were considered sacred animals” and that “traditional fishing at the time was done without modern means that leave absolutely no chance to these animals”.¹⁵

Various Marine Species

AMERICA

MEXICO

June 1, 2018

Mexico City, Mexico

Flight 7926 with Hanoi Airlines. Immediate boarding for Beijing. Seizure from a Chinese passenger's baggage of 740 g of dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), 3 kg of sea cucumbers (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III in Ecuador), and 1.77 kg of totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) swim bladders. The file is in the hands of the prosecutor.¹

ASIA

CHINA

April 26 2018

Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China

Seizure of 406 walrus tusks (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada), 226 narwhal tusks (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) and 320 kg sea cucumbers in the false welded compartment in the front of a Russian truck trailer.²

Continued on page 116.



May 31, 2018

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure on three travelers: 13 clams (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 8.86 kg, seven staghorn corals (*Acropora cervicornis*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 0.74 kg and one rose coral (*Manicina areolata*, Appendix II) weighing 0.12 kg.³

June 4 and 6, 2018

Hong-Kong, China

Discovery of approximately 140 kg dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and 220 kg of dried shark fins in a 20-foot container that arrived at the maritime terminal of Kwai Chung, coming from Indonesia. Two days later, the customs investigation led to the arrest of a 64-year-old man and a 63-year-old woman who manage a dried seafood shop in the Sheung Wan neighborhood. It is famous for its dozens of traditional medicine shops and its Dried Seafood Street. The suspects were released on bail, and the investigation is on-going.⁴

EUROPE

ITALY

End of May 2018

Palermo, Sicily Region, Italy

The CITES Carabinieri specialists seized coral branches and dried seahorses from two stands at the Piazza Marina market.⁵

Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

Cumulative quarterly seizures: Examples

- 11,228 Madagascar radiated turtles (*Astrochelys radiata*, Annexe I)
- 2,500 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Annexe I)
- 1,438 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Annexe II)
- 60 Hermann's Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Annexe II)

AFRICA

MADAGASCAR



Early April 2018

Antananarivo, Antananarivo Province, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

A woman's fat suitcase at one gas station in the "67 hectares" neighborhood drew the attention of witnesses and provoked the arrival of police officers. Inside the suitcase were 75 radiated tortoises from Madagascar (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), babies.¹

April 6, 2018

Ivato International Airport, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

A man was attempting to break into a freight-parking area at night when he found himself face-to-face with a scouting patrol. By surprise, he ran away towards the rice fields nearby and dropped his bag. The police found 26 young radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). As adults, they weigh 15 to 20 kg. They live 100 years. The most famous radiated tortoise from Madagascar had been offered to the royal family of Tongas in 1777 by explorer James Cook. Named Tu'i Malila, she died May 19, 1965 at the age of 188.²

April 10, 2018

Tolaria, Atsimo-Andrefana Region, Madagascar

This is the biggest seizure of turtles ever carried out on the island and one of the most important in the world. 10,976 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) were discovered in a house of horror, covering the ground in every room, undernourished, dehydrated, and bathing in their excrement. The unbearable odor had alerted neighbors who let the authorities know. When the police investigated the grounds, accompanied by agents from the Regional Management of Environment and Forestry, two men were in the middle of burying turtle bodies in the garden. They were arrested along with the owner of the house. It took 6 trucks to transport the 9988 survivors to "Turtle Village," a private refuge situated in Ifaty 25 km away. They were disinfected and rehydrated but within a week 574 others died. The investigators are now looking to identify the mastermind behind the traffic. Specialists remarked that the turtles were small to medium sized, which leads to the suspicion that they were intended for export and not to be eaten locally for their meat.³



April 26, 2018

Mahajanga, Mahajanga Province, Madagascar

Conventional scheme: capture near south Toliara, bush taxi going towards the north. Three-day voyage. Partial death on arrival. Search and seizure of 143 radiated tortoises from Madagascar (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and eight dead. Ms. X, age 45, is in custody.⁴

AMERICA

BRAZIL

April 3, 2018

Rio de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

17 year-old, charged with selling species of wild fauna and mistreatment towards the animals. Seizure of six turtles and a budgerigar (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II).⁵

OPERATION QUELONIOS

May 3, 2018

Belém, State of Pará, Brazil

Environmental police are fighting against clandestine freshwater turtle breeding in the State capital. Seizure of 57 turtles from an individual's home including *Rhinoclemmys punctularia*, known by the local name "galap," and *Kinosternon scorpioides*.⁶



© James F. Parham

Rhinoclemmys punctularia

June 4, 2018

Lábrea, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 39 aquatic turtles trapped in the Rio Purus, tributary of the Amazon. John Cicero trades them.⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 12, 2018

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

A flight crew member on a China Eastern Airlines flight to Shanghai pleads guilty for trying to leave US soil with 10 spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II) and 14 box turtles in his professional luggage tagged with the name of his company. Huaqian Qu would not be a novice in this matter. The investigators suspect him of having exfiltrated a dozen turtles in a luggage compartment in January. He is accused of gang smuggling with Renfeng Gao, a crew member of the same flight, who was attempting to exfiltrate 21 spotted turtles. The value of the 45 turtles transported by the twosome would be \$40,000 US in China.⁸



June 15, 2018

New Orleans, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Robert Glenn Hennessey, 65 years old, was charged with trafficking common box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II) between March 2016 and June 2017. The circumstances of the trafficking were not specified in the prosecutor's report. However, it was noted that the U.S. Postal Inspection Service contributed to uncovering the evidence.⁹

June 19, 2018

Columbia, State of South Carolina, United States of America

We finally know his name (see "On the Trail" n°20, p.24): Steven Verren Baker pleaded guilty. At 38 years old, he already has a long court record in the reptile trafficking department. Baker was the leader and the accountant of a network that worked for years organizing a whole series of fraudulent turtle-shipments between Hong Kong and South Carolina, and vice versa. The financial results of the trafficking added up to over \$400,000 US. Baker appeared in court wearing his orange prisoner's jumpsuit. He has been a guest at Lexington county prison for the past 2 months. Five of Baker's accomplices pleaded not guilty.¹⁰

PERU

June 13, 2018

Peru

One year after their discovery in Peru in a tourism coach inspected on Piura-Sullana road, the Galapagos giant tortoises (*Chelonoidis Niger*, Appendix I) that had been temporarily collected by the Cecilia Margarita zoo in Piura will return to Ecuador. Upon their departure they were 29, two died during the bus trip, another in the zoo. They are thus 26 going back to the Galapagos archipelago thanks to the cooperation of the CITES offices of the two countries concerned.¹¹

ASIA

CHINA

April 6, 2018

Lok Ma Chau, Hong Kong, China

One arrest. It took place in Hong Kong on a train. He was transporting 2 living turtles tied in plastic. \$60 US each.¹²



© Hong Kong Customs

April 17, 2018

Shenzhen Bay Control Point, China

One arrest. He is 19 years old. He was transporting 150 living turtles. The value is estimated at \$30,000 HK, or \$3,800 US. He was heading towards Hong Kong by car.¹³

INDIA

April 12, 2018

Dhanbad, Dhanbad District, Jharkhand State, India

Seized by the railroad brigade under the seat of the wagon 59 of 141 river terrapins (*Batagur baska*, Appendix I). The Doon Express is linking Dehradun in the North and Kolkata in the South. Bishwa Biswas claimed this was the first time. The turtles will be released shortly in a river.¹⁴



April 22, 2018

Hemraj, Bijnor District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

A certain Mahesh was stopped in the village. Agents of the Forest Department, helped by an informant, found more than 5kg of turtle flesh at his house. He had the intention of selling it at the local market. Investigators searched to identify his network. A park ranger willing to be unnamed said that the poachers sold turtles to traffickers who supplied the kitchens in 5 star hotels, where the turtle ended up in the visitors' soup plates. The major season for the poaching is the summer when the Ganges' flow is at its lowest.¹⁵

May 1, 2018

Malda District, West Bengal State, India. Border with Bangladesh

Seizure in two stages by the Border Security Force of 100 kg of turtle bones divided into five bags at a North Bengal State Transportation Corporation bus stop. Three arrests. Shashi Kapoor, Kishan Kumar and Arvind are from Uttar Pradesh. The traffickers' goal was to break through the Indo-Bangladeshi border.¹⁶

May 5, 2018

Kalyan, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Ahmad, a 24-year-old man, was arrested in a hotel room near the train station, Saturday night. Seizure of 46 live black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) and four dead turtles. The turtles came from Bihar, where they sell for around \$10 US each, and were going to Mumbai, where they sell for as much as \$74 US.¹⁷

May 10, 2018

Pudukkottai, Pudukkottai District, Tamil Nadu State, India

1438 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) inside a store room. They were destined for Sri Lanka. The departure was imminent. The tortoises were in nine bags and three boxes. Their value is estimated at 160 million rupees (\$2.4 million US). Three arrests. The planned exportation port was Rameswaram. If the affair had succeeded, the disembarkment or transshipment would have taken place somewhere in the Gulf of Mannar off Sri Lanka, over 200 km away.¹⁸

May 26, 2018

Near the Dhulagarh toll plaza, West Bengal State, India

The truck was awaited resolutely on two tollbooths on the NH6 – two roadblocks worth more than one – on this Saturday morning. The traps are set 25 km away from Kolkata. Seizure of 2500 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), 701 dead. They did not survive the voyage from Bhubaneswar (400 km). A third of the 92 cartons were turtle coffins. The survivors will be released in a lake. Four arrests, seizure of the truck.¹⁹

SINGAPORE

April 25, 2018

Singapore

One-month jail conviction for a fraudulent import attempt of 22 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II). Cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 17.²⁰



EUROPE

SPAIN

End of April 2018

Nijar, Province of Almeria, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Saving of two common tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) thrown over at the door of a house. They were delivered for health testing to veterinarians in Almeria.²¹

ITALY

April 2018

Rivoli, Piedmont Region, Italy

Search. Seizure of one African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), three common tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II), and six Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II). The man said to have bought them from a pet shop in Turin 12 years ago. No CITES certificate is available.²²

April 29, 2018

Volla, Campania Region, Italy

Speed dating for protected turtle mercantilists. Stealthy rendez-vous are set on social networks. The turtles are at the back in the trunk. The transactions are swift. Agents from the organisation Agriambiente seized three turtles from a shoebox.²³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 2018

Pozzuoli, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure of cannabis and eight Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) from a 57-year-old mother and her 25-year-old son.²⁴



REPEATED OFFENSE

May 2018

Acquedolci, Sicily Region, Italy

The man was exhibiting animals whose sale is legal but had an illegal stock hidden in a van. Guardia di Finanza officers seized 27 Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and 15 passerines, including European serin (*Serinus serinus*), finches (genus *Carduelis*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*) and European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*). The man had already been prosecuted for similar acts. The animals joined the Stretto di Messina Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre before being released.²⁵

Early June 2018

Cavallino, Lecce Province, Apulia Region, Italy

Three Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*) seized. They have been included in Appendix II since 1975.²⁶

June 15, 2018

Milan, Lombardy Region, Italy

Found by a jogger in the Montanelli public garden: 16 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in a cardboard box.²⁷



Snakes

AFRICA

GUINEA

April 18, 2018

Faranah, Faranah Region, Guinea

Mamadou Saidou Deba Barry, coordinator of the project Guinée Application de la Loi Faunique (GALF), was not expecting a dissuasive verdict against Abou Mara identified as being a "brain" of wild fauna trafficking in the region. According to him, a "considerable" corrupt practice, combined with the soothing address of the prosecutor, came to this decision. Caught in the act on April 1st of possession of 20 African Python skins (*Python sebae*, Appendix II), Abou Mara was only condemned by the court to one month and a half of prison, a fine of 90,000 Guinean francs (\$10 US), and one million Guinean francs (\$112 US) for damages to the Ministry of the Environment, Waters, and Forests. His clients in Mali and Guinea were not investigated.¹



AMERICA

BRAZIL

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 8, 2018

Goiânia, State of Goiás, Brazil

Arrest of a 20-year-old man. He was going to deliver from his bag a 3-month old boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) at the bus station. It's the second time that he was caught. In April 2017 he had been arrested in the act of transporting nine boas, an anaconda, 24 lizards, an iguana, two pythons, and about 15 other reptiles. Clearly the first conviction, if there had been one, was not dissuasive.²



June 7, 2018

Brasília, Federal District, Brazil

Two boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) for sale on the streets of the capital! "I was taking them to the veterinarian" said the possessor. Both snakes are under the good care of IBAMA.³



ECUADOR

April 3, 2018

Puerto Misahuallí, Napo Province, Ecuador

During Easter, one boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) was not at the party in the Amazonian country town. A minor brought him in a backpack and offered visitors to take pictures with the reptile on boats and in beach restaurants. Police officers and agents of the Provincial Management of the Environment put an end to the exhibition. The owner of one of the restaurants and the mother of the minor were accused of wild fauna trafficking. The specimen was transported to the refuge "El Amazónico" where it stayed under observation before releasing.⁴

PERU

Mid-April 2018

Huaraz District, Province of Huaraz, Ancash Region, Peru

The young anaconda (*Eunectes* spp., Appendix II) was used to hook the buyers of "medicinal products." The street vendors were questioned, the reptile put up temporarily in a zoo.⁵

ASIA

CHINA

May 2018

Fengkai County, Guangdong Province, China

A villager by the name of Wu had captured and killed on December 15, 2016 a good-sized (2 m long, 10 kg) python (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) with the help of an accomplice paid 300 yuans (\$47 US) for the labor. Bad luck, another villager had taken a photo and uploaded the image on the social network WeChat. The Chinese cyber police saw it. Wu was sentenced to a one year jail term with a two-year suspension.⁶



INDIA

May 13, 2018

Vadodara, Vadodara District, State of Gujarat, India

1.2 m long, 17.8 m wide, 3.5 kg, the Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) is sold at close to \$100,000 US. Sellers present it from ward to ward. At 17:30 near a tearoom, fake buyers from the Gujarat Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals (GSPCA), supported by the wildlife police, took interest in a boa considered magic. Four arrests.⁷

May 17, 2018

Wakad, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

The four young men aged 19 to 22 were trying to sell three Indian sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) when a patrol approached them thanks to a tip-off.⁸

VIET NAM

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Early May 2018

Ba Ria, Province of Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu, Viet Nam

Two volunteers from Education for Nature – Vietnam came across a street vendor who was selling snakes with her son. The reptiles were seized and released in the wild. The woman should be fined.⁹

Sauria

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

End of May 2018

Cape Town, Nuwerus and Lutzville, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Sentencing of a Japanese "tourist" to 13 years in prison or 1 million rand in fines (\$79,500 US). Koji Ikoma, scared by a roadside check at the end of the road, threw out the back window of his car a cooler that landed in a ditch. It was retrieved by a patrol. Inside there were 48 Armadillo girdled lizards (*Ouroborus cataphractus*, Appendix II).

It was in November 2017.

In December 2017, another Japanese "tourist" Takasha Handa was also raking up the bush around Nuwerus to capture Armadillo girdled lizards. He had five in his car. He has just been sentenced to 6 months in prison or a fine of 300,000 rand, or \$23,800 US.

In March 2018, two German "tourists" Leo Träger and Holger Pelz were stopped near Lutzville on private property. They were on the trail of reptiles and already had on their hunting tally 21 Armadillo girdled lizards, two Karoo girdled lizards (*Cordylus aridus*, Appendix II) and three Peers nama lizards (*Namazonurus peersi*, Appendix II). They were sentenced to 2 years in prison or 250,000 rand in fines, or \$20,000 US. Cf. "On the Trail" n°19, p.27.¹



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AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Early May 2018

Valledupar, Cesar Department, Colombia

Seizure of 22 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) – 12 living, 10 dead – a yellow-fronted Amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) and two brown-throated conures (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II). The survivors were very lucky. The house specialty was to sell meat and kebabs of wild animals on social networks. Arrest of a man aged 50 and a minor aged 17.²

ASIA

INDIA

May 18, 2018

Guwahati, Kamrup District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of three tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*) estimated at 1,400,000 rupees or \$20,770 US by local authorities. One arrest. There is a boom on geckos because of a pernicious rumor about their meat. Eating geckos would cure cancer and AIDS. Last November, the Nagaon police took down a gang in possession of 53 geckos.³

May 26, 2018

Khudengthabi, State of Manipur, India



© Brian Gratwicke

This is a drug against AIDS according to fake news launched by wildlife marketing. Assam Rifles seized two specimens from under the clothes of a 25-year-old biker on National Highway 102.⁴

End June 2018

Malda District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure at the train station, in the hands of 23-year-old Helarish Hasda, of two chameleons (Chamaeleonidae) identified as “a very rare species” and estimated at \$150,000 US on the black market. The man was coming from Assam and heading for Bangladesh.⁵

VIET NAM

June 29, 2018

Con Dao Islands, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a coffee shop of a Bengal monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) in a cage. He would have been released into an appropriate natural spot.⁶

EUROPE

NETHERLANDS

April 18, 2018

Netherlands

Seizure of a cut-up common iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) from a piece of baggage.⁷

June 25, 2018

Netherlands

Seizure of a pair of tegu skin boots (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II), a saurian from South America, in a passenger's luggage from South America.⁸



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RUSSIA

June 3, 2018

Moscow Domodedovo Airport, Moscow Oblast, Russia

Seizure on a Russian national coming from Madagascar of 250 geckos and chameleons. The 30-year-old man lives in the Primorsky krai, which is well-known as a launching pad for wildlife species heading for China. He planned to sell part of his booty immediately, and use the rest to start a breeding farm. The Madagascar press mentioned that “airport controls at the Ivato international airport, the customs scanner, the air and border police scanner and the Madagascar airport security scanner (SAMADA) all apparently proved unworthy.” It is possible that the reptiles will be sent back to the African island. It will depend on the cooperation between the Russian and Madagascar CITES offices, and on the health of the exiled reptiles during the transit phase.⁹

Crocodilians

AMERICA

BRAZIL

May 3, 2018

Mairinque, State of São Paulo, Brazil

The female caiman (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II), 1.50 m long, was seized, tied up onto a stretcher by firefighters, and transported like such to the Center for Studies of Wild Animals in Botucatu 190 km away.¹

MEXICO

April 29, 2018

Zapopan, Jalisco State, Mexico

The butcher detained a female Belize crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II) in an aquarium. Clients alerted the police. The reptile was seized. The butcher did not have documents on his origin. It had been locked up in conditions disrespectful to the animal welfare.²

EUROPE

FRANCE

May 21, 2018

Perros-Guirec, Brittany Region, France

A cyber patrol detected a stuffed crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) on the website leboncoin.fr. This is the third species seized in Brittany in one month. Britons are marine travelers and in their attics, they have sawfish rostrums, sea turtle shells, stools made of elephant's feet...³



ITALY

May 2018

Matera, Region of Basilicata, Italy

Seizure of a 40-cm long spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) from an aquarium. Adult, it is 3 m long. Despite its sharp teeth, formidable bites, apparent lack of affect for humans and other animals, the caiman native to Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Central America is valued as a pet throughout the world.⁴

UNITED KINGDOM

April 27, 2018

London Heathrow International Airport, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of 50 one-year old saltwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II). They were meant for a clandestine farm and meat market. The five boxes where they were crammed came from Malaysia.⁵

Various Reptile Species

AMERICA

BRAZIL

OPERATION MARRAKESH

May 10, 2018

Macapá, State of Amapá, Brazil

Exotic wildlife bazaar on Facebook. A red-eyed crocodile skink (*Tribolonotus gracilis*) on special offer with snakes and imported chameleons smuggled from Oceania and Asia. Some bargains make between \$500 and \$1000 US. Named Marrakech in reference to its snake charmers, the operation was put together by the federal police and IBAMA. Three raids, arrest of a 25-year-old man.¹



June 5, 2018

Guarapuava, State of Paraná, Brazil

Five boas constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), two bearded dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*), a corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*), a computer and mobile phones seized from a man suspected of trafficking on the Internet.²

MEXICO

April 9, 2018

Isla Ixtapa and Acapulco, State of Guerrero, Mexico

Two reptiles being exploited for commercial purposes were seized by PROFEPA (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) agents on patrol on the beach. First, a young hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) being used for tourist photo shots. After it was examined by a veterinarian, the turtle was released in the ocean, several miles from the coast, to be sure that it would not be quickly captured again. Then, a green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) that a man was playing with on Icacos beach in Acapulco. The reptile was dehydrated and its claws had been clipped. The tourist had no documents to prove its legal origin, so the reptile was seized. It was handed over to the UMA (Unidades de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) "Aracnée," a sort of amusement park specialized in exhibiting and selling tarantulas.³

May 31, 2018

Merida, State of Yucatán, Mexico

Seizure on the delivery service platform at the international airport of three green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), five scorpion mud turtles (*Kinosternon scorpioides*) and two narrow-bridged musk turtles (*Claudius angustatus*). The lizards and turtles were in cardboard boxes labeled "spare parts." These three species are considered endangered by CITES or Mexican law.⁴

PERU

OPERATION CUIDEMOS NUESTRA FAUNA 2018 FAMILY AFFAIRS

Early June 2018

Chaupimarca, Pasco Province, Peru

Seizure in a butcher shop of a crocodile head (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), five sauria beheaded and skinned, two heads and 20 vials of snake fat. The arrested charged his brother with poaching the victims of the family business in the Pucallpa forest.⁵

ASIA

CHINA

Early may 2018

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Customs and the maritime police searched a boat in the fishing harbor of Shekou. They found 628 common iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and 30 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II), all alive and estimated at 3 million yuan (\$467,300 US). The reptiles were apparently brought in fraudulently from Hong Kong and were destined for the pet market.⁶



Mid-May 2018

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

A Chinese national coming from Dubai was transporting 16 live reptiles in his baggage. The seizure included 10 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), a turtle of the *Chelonia* family (Appendix I) and a box turtle (*Cuora* spp., Appendix II).⁷



Amphibians

ASIA

CHINA

May 1, 2018

Gongbei Port of Entry, Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of two Chinese giant salamanders (*Andrias davidianus*, Appendix I) from a passenger's baggage. At first, she claimed that they were farmed carps. Chinese giant salamander, see "On the Trail" n°20 p.122.¹

INDIA

June 1, 2018

State of Goa, India

Friends of the frogs and NGOs are ready for the fight as the monsoon rains approach. Restaurant owners are called upon to exclude frogs from their menus. The Indian bullfrog (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*, Appendix II) is threatened with extinction locally. Poachers and traffickers risk up to 25,000 rupees (\$370 US) in fines, and the local population is asked to denounce them. The species is useful and when it thrived, it participated greatly to keeping mosquitoes under control, according to Nirmal U. Kulkarni, the expert on frogs and toads in Goa.²



EUROPE

FRANCE

Early May 2018

France

Seizure and return to the wild by the ONCFS (Office national de la chasse et de la faune sauvage) of 17,950 common frogs (*Rana temporaria*) between 15 February and the end of April. A commendable figure which shows a willingness shared with all administrations to curb looting but laughable compared with the scale of poaching. What follows after the seizures is not known. The catch of less than 1500 frogs per year is assimilated to "family" consumption. Beyond 1500, the license holder must be able to justify his sales to restaurants with invoices in the event of audit. In the Doubs, Jura, Haute-Saône and Belfort departments alone, license holders may catch 1,500,000 common frogs per year by way of derogation from the ministerial order of November 19, 2007 listing the common frog among the amphibians and reptiles protected on national territory. Poaching is countless. The main types of fraud are quota overruns, unlicensed catches and off-season catches. The trend is upwards like all other "gatherings" of tiny animals, birds or plants in forests, marshes, mountains and shellfish and crustaceans on the seashore. .../...

Catching common frogs is toxic to aquatic environments. To fight against the massive amphibian deaths caused by the *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (or "Bd", an aquatic fungus), the public authorities and the Société Herpétologique de France are calling for the spraying of all the equipment used to collect red frogs (boots, waders, landing nets, traps...) with Virkon®, a Dupont chemical product harmful to aquatic organisms. Treatment must be carried out at the place of capture. One of the causes of the spread of the deadly Bd is the uncontrolled introduction of infested exotic frogs into Europe.

It is also noteworthy that the common frog legs, unfortunately one flagship dish of French gastronomy, are not subject to any analysis of PCBs, lindane or other plant protection products, even though they live from generation to generation in polluted environments and watersheds.³



Arachnids

AMERICA

MEXICO

June 19, 2018

Guadalajara International Airport, State of Jalisco, Mexico

The ordinary package came from Austria. The UPS worker detected live "things". The PROFEPA found inside twelve tarantulas labeled as *Liphistius jarujini*, a species not in CITES. They were sent to a UMA for species determination and pending clarification for their future.¹ See also Multi-Species chapter p. 108.



Birds



AFRICA

KENYA

May 11, 2018

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Two poisoned vultures, dead one next to the other. The two carcasses were taken to avoid collateral victims and for a post-mortem exam.¹



TUNISIA

June 10, 2018

Tunis, Governorate of Tunis, Tunisia

In these hard times, everything is good to earn money, even selling flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*, Appendix II) in the souk.²



ARGENTINA

Mid-May 2018

Bahia Blanca, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

Seizure of 94 birds, yellow-bellied siskins (*Spinus xanthogastrus*), black-chinned siskins (*Spinus barbatus*), Northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), 18 tortoises and 12 cage traps.³



BOLIVIA

May 19, 2018

Department of Chuquisaca, Bolivia

Seizure at private homes of three ara macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), six parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and a Bolivian hairy armadillo (*Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II). They caught the attention of the neighbors with their cries, and the neighbors reported their presence to the police.⁴



BRAZIL

Early April 2018

Toledo, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure in two steps:

- An Andean sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*), two green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*) and a saffron finch (*Sicalis flaveola*);
- Six ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), four green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*) and two chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*).⁵

April 4, 2018

Sorocaba, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure from an individual's home of 130 cartons of cigarettes and 17 contraband birds, including five parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), two Atlantic canaries (*Serinus canaria*), two saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), one red-cowled cardinal (*Paroaria dominicana*) and an ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*).⁶

April 5, 2018

Itatiaia, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Km 318, road from Sao Paulo to Fortaleza. Seizure from the coach baggage compartment of two ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), two double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*) and two red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*) in boxes, and seven empty cages, all belonging to the passenger in seat 35. The 99th brigade of the Itatiaia police heard him.⁷

April 16, 2018

Olinda, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

In the middle of the afternoon the police seized the toco toucan (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) from behind bars, in exile from western Brazil. With a chick as its comrade, it was taken to the closest sorting center for wild animals and will later be freed in its region of origin in the Amazon rainforest or in the center of Brazil. One man is heard. In defense, he said to have bought the birds from a market to remove them from the distressing conditions of captivity.⁸



April 17, 2018

São Bernardo do Campo, State of São Paulo, Brazil

The environmental patrol stopped short in front of a cage on the doorstep of a house in the Jardim Calux neighborhood. Inside the cage, a bird of many colors looking like a shop sign, and inside the house there was a whole assortment of feathers and songs to sell: two parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*), Andean sparrows (*Zonotrichia capensis*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), notebooks with retail prices and a list of buyers.

Birds were transferred in a transit and exam institution. Man was transferred in court. A fine equal to \$25,000 US was inflicted on him.⁹



April 22, 2018

Recife, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

For sale Sunday morning on the Cordeiro market, in the hands and tiny cages of two street vendors, ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), yellow-rumped caciques (*Cacicus cela*), red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*), and again, toucans (family Ramphastidae). In the afternoon, the birds were seized then driven to a "sorting" center in Pernambuco, and the men to the police station.¹⁰

April 28, 2018

Esperança, State of Paraíba, Brazil

Selling by the BR-104 of cactus conures (*Aratinga cactorum*, Appendix II). They were 11 in a cage covered by a cloth. The seller on the route pretending to be a farmer was sentenced to a fine equal to \$1500 US. The cactus conures were driven to a "sorting" center in Joao Pessoa.¹¹



April 28, 2018

Gravatá, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Seizure by the 5th company of police of 251 wild birds in the Feira do Troca (Swap Trade Fair). Six interrogations.¹²



April 28, 2018

Café sem Troco, State of Brasília, Brazil



On the way to the IBAMA depot where the birds will be identified, examined, and possibly released. They are 25 seized from an underground vendor.¹³

April 29, 2018

Fortaleza, State of Ceará, Brazil

40 birds, parakeets (Appendix I or II), red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*), lined seedeaters (*Sporophila lineola*), white-throated seedeaters (*Sporophila albogularis*), thrushes from the family Turdidae, saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), about to be exchanged at the Feira do Troca were saved by the morning intervention of the environmental police battalion.¹⁴

End of April 2018

Florida Paulista and Junqueirópolis, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure based on confidential information of an orange-winged Amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II) held illegally. The bird was headed towards a legal establishment. The man was sentenced to a fine equal to \$1300 US. Seizure of six saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) and three double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*), destruction of all cages, fine equal to \$1350 US. Release of the birds.¹⁵



May 1, 2018

Patos de Minas, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

A road block at the intersection of the roads to Teófilo Otoni and Fátima Porto. Three saffron finches were found (*Sicalis flaveola*). At the driver's home, another 32 birds were seized: other saffron finches, chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*). 31 out of 35 of the passerines were released in the wild. Fine of 90,000 reais, or \$26,156 US.¹⁶

May 5, 2018

Monte Castelo, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of two chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*), two green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*) and a great-billed seed finch (*Oryzoborus maximiliani*) from an illegal breeder. Fine equal to \$1150 US.¹⁷



May 8, 2018

Gravatá, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

A man suspected of murder was arrested. Search and seizure of fire arms and knives. Seizure of a parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II).¹⁸



May 9, 2018

Viçosa, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Retention camp of saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*). The 108 passerine birds will be released in the wild. The 59 cages will be destroyed.¹⁹

May 12, 2018

São Caetano, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Seizure of 1220 chicks in a car on the sinister Route BR-423. They were allegedly purchased in Bahia. In the suspects' home, 83 other birds were seized.²⁰

May 15, 2018

Manaus International Airport - Eduardo Gomes, State of Amazonas, Brazil



Seizure of 32 eggs hidden under the clothing of a passenger who was about to board a plane to Lisbon, Portugal. He came from Belém.²¹

May 19, 2018

Santa Terezinha, State of Pará, Brazil

Private Medeiros, Private Salis-mar, Corporal Afonso, and Sergeant Aldeir seized from Rodrigues's home a blue-winged parrotlet (*Forpus xanthopterygius*, Appendix II), a cactus conure (*Aratinga cactorum*, Appendix II), a red-cowled cardinal (*Paroaria dominicana*), three saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), white-throated seedeaters (*Sporophila albogularis*), a six-banded armadillo (*Euphractus sexcinctus*), cages, a hunting rifle, 14 rounds. As a first step, Rodrigues received a 4,000 reais fine (\$1,079 US).²²



May 20, 2018

Osvaldo Cruz, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure on board a bus, in the backpack of a 71-year-old woman, of saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*). At her home, 32 other specimens were discovered. The birds, which showed no signs of domestication, were released. Fine of 40,000 reais (or \$10,800 US) for the trafficking and cruelty towards animals.²³



May 22, 2018

Teófilo Otoni, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure on the BR-116 on board a coach between Campinas, State of São Paulo, and Salvador, State of Bahia, of 12 green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*). One interrogation.²⁴

OPERATION ANGRY BIRDS

May 22, 2018

Belém, State of Pará, Brazil

Police raid on illegal bird stores. Seizure of a parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), an orange-winged Amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), three chestnut-bellied seed-finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), a copper seedeater (*Sporophila bouvreuil*), a thrush (family Turdidae), and a plumbeous seedeater (*Sporophila plumbea*).²⁵

May 28, 2018

Taslimã, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Seizure of 249 chopi black-birds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*) and six chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*) in a clandestine bird warehouse. One person was arrested. The man did not simply listen to the birds' sad songs. He sold them. The little troop, that had been locked up in cages, was freed around Gurupi. A fine of 250,000 reais (\$ 73,300 US) was imposed; it is reasonable to wonder whether it will ever be paid.²⁶



End of May 2018

Cassilândia, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of 106 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) and various catch equipments. Fine of 53,000 reais or \$15,200 US.²⁷



Early June 2018

Palmeiras do Tocantins, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Federal police check on BR-226 National Highway. Two trucks without license plates stand out. In the first, the police discovered 90 kg of fish in two polystyrene boxes. No transport document is available. The driver and his two passengers say they fished them in São Felix do Xingu (Pará State). In the second truck, there are two black-bellied whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*, Appendix III in Honduras) in a cardboard box. The passenger takes responsibility for them. The Aguiarnópolis military environmental police confirmed the identification of the species and institute proceedings against the possessors.²⁸



June 5, 2018

Itaboraí, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Seizure from four private properties of 16 birds including one yellow-fronted Amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II).²⁹



June 6, 2018

Piracicaba, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 45 birds including an ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanoloxia brissonii*).³⁰

June 7, 2018

Aliança, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Seizure of 32 birds, yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), campo troupials (*Icterus jamaicae*), copper seedeaters (*Sporophila bouvreuil*), bananaquits (*Coereba flaveola*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*) and white-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila leucoptera*).³¹

June 7, 2018

Pereiras, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of a turquoise-fronted parrot (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), two guns and 6 rounds of ammunition.³²



June 20 and 21, 2018

Tangará da Serra, Mato Grosso State, Brazil

Seizure of 44 birds including chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) in two private homes. Destruction of the cages. All the birds have been released. One of the holders was wanted for attempted murder.³³

June 23, 2018

Abreu e Lima, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Seizure of 72 birds including Andean sparrows (*Zonotrichia capensis*), red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*), yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), tanagers (genus *Thraupis*), chesnut-capped blackbirds (*Chrysomus ruficapillus*), copper seedeaters (*Sporophila bouvreuil*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), and violaceous euphonias (*Euphonia violacea*) at two Saturday markets.³⁴



Euphonia violacea

June 17 and 24, 2018

Ceilândia, Federal District, Brazil

- Seizure of three chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*), two red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*), one yellow-bellied seedeater (*Sporophila nigricollis*), one white-bellied seedeater (*Sporophila leucoptera*), three double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*) and four saffron finches. "Feira do Rolo" has hard skin. Several police operations have marked the history of this illegal marketplace. Traffickers always come back. - It's chirping in Ceilândia and calling for help. The police were alerted by the songs of captive birds in two houses. Seizure of two parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), two hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*) and a double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*).³⁵

June 25, 2018

Cananéia, State of São Paulo, Brazil

While police were questioning the owner of a house about a rufous-bellied thrush (*Turdus rufiventris*) locked in a cage on the front porch, they heard melodious calls and discovered inside the house 9 chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), a red-capped parrot (*Pionopsitta pileata*, Appendix I) and a thrush (family Turdidae). Fine of \$13,800 US.³⁶



June 25, 2018

Ivinhema, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of 5 chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*), two rufous-bellied thrushes (*Turdus rufiventris*), two saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) and a blue-fronted parrot (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). Total fine of 5000 reais (\$ 1350 US).³⁷



June 29, 2018

Abadia dos Dourados, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of 192 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), nine rufous-bellied thrushes (*Turdus rufiventris*), two green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), two black-throated grosbeaks (*Saltator fuliginosus*), a hooded siskin (*Spinus magellanicus*), a plumbeous seedeater (*Sporophila plumbea*), an ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), a parrot (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II). Global fine of 300,000 real or \$78,000 US. Confiscation of a sling, a harpoon, two nets, a boat, glue, traps. Release of birds. About ten arrests.³⁸



OPERATION CANARIO PISTOLA

June 29 and 30, 2018

Capanema, Nova Santa Rosa, Capitão Leônidas Marques, Boa Vista da Aparecida el Palotina, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of some 100 birds, parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), thick-billed saltators (*Saltator maxillosus*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), red-headed cardinals (genus *Paroaria*), yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), red pileated finches (*Coryphospingus cucullatus*), Brazilian tanagers (*Ramphocelus bresilius*), black-throated grosbeaks (*Saltator fuliginosus*) and chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*). Seizure of four weapons, ammunition and traps.³⁹

June 30, 2018

Planaltina, Brasilia, Brazil

The police are on the lookout. Once again, a street patrol heard birds singing in a house. Release of double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*), yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*), plumbeous seedeaters (*Sporophila plumbea*). The lady of the house will be summoned.⁴⁰

End of June 2018

Cananéia, State of São Paulo, Brazil

The patrol always on the alert heard a birdsong coming from a house on Antonio de Moraes street. Drawn by duty and the music, the officers wanted to talk to the owner of the property and discovered an imprisoned hyacinth Macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I). First instance, fine of 5000 reais or \$1350 US.⁴¹



COLOMBIA

Mid-April 2018

Between Balsillas and Neiva, Huila Department, Colombia

Two men on a motorcycle were transporting two blue-headed parrots (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II) and one blue-and-gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II).⁴²



End of April 2018

Santa Fe de Antioquia, Antioquia Department, Colombia

Seizure on board a coach of two parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II). One interrogation.⁴³

May 11, 2018

Quindio Department, Colombia

Weird noises in the baggage compartment drew the attention of the police during an inspection of the coach. Seizure of six flamingos (*Phoenicopterus* spp., Appendix II) from two boxes.⁴⁴



ECUADOR

April 12, 2018

Province of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Ecuador

Seizure of a parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), an orange-winged Amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), a red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), all injured and stressed. One interrogation.⁴⁵

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 2017 – April 2018

Florida, United States of America

Dismantling of a gang of bird catchers and traffickers. The six men used solar panels to power electronic calls and draw the birds toward trees coated in birdlime.



They also engaged in archaic practices by nailing loggerhead shrikes (*Lanius ludovicianus*) considered evil or black-masked songbirds (*Geothlypis trichas*) onto wooden crosses. The singing birds and birds of prey were part of their favorite targets.

In 4 years, they captured more than 400 birds, including indigo painted buntings (*Passerina cyanea*) and rose-breasted grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*). 130 survivors seized from the homes of suspects have just been released in the Everglades national park.

Juan Carlos Rodriguez, the oldest, 54 years old, or "El Doctor", Hovary Muniz, 42 years old, Alberto Iran Corbo Martinez, 38 years old, Carlos Hernandez, 34 years old, Reynaldo Mederos, 28 years old, and Miguel Loureiro, the youngest, 27 years old, were charged with selling and smuggling wild birds.⁴⁶

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 21, 2018

Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

Dong is convicted to a year and a half in prison. He specialized himself in contraband from Viet Nam of singing and "lucky charms" birds, including hwameis (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II). Estimated at \$400 US each in 2016 (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p.31), today they reach \$1000 US in Chinese markets in southern California.⁴⁷



May 31, 2018

New Orleans, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Indictment of five men aged 59 to 76 for having in conspiracy dispatched or attempted to dispatch to Taiwan under false names 90 birds including macaws and parrots. 14 of the birds had been intercepted at Houston Intercontinental Airport before export. All the specimens are registered in CITES Appendices I or II.⁴⁸

MEXICO

April 5, 2018

Morelia, State of Michoacán, Mexico

Rescue by the civil protection and Benito Juarez zookeepers of a blue-and-gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) lost on the Garcia de Leon Boulevard. The bird probably escaped from a cage: the species only lives in South American forests. It was taken to the zoo.⁴⁹

April 6, 2018

Between Tepic, State of Nayarit and Guadalajara, State of Jalisco, Mexico

767 singing birds in bad condition were crammed in two four-story cages concealed in two bags in the luggage compartment of a private coach connecting Tecuala to Guadalajara. The federal police and the PROFEPA put an end to their ordeal early in the morning at the Santa Maria del Oro toll booth during a targeted inspection, following the discovery on last March 15 of 172 birds being transported in similar conditions on board a bus (cf. "On the Trail" n°20, p.44). In both cases the birds were travelling alone. This time the driver claimed that he loaded the packages in the city of Ruiz, State of Nayarit. 62 white-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila torqueola*), 23 varied buntings (*Passerina versicolor*) and 682 painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*) were seized. Their value is estimated at 360,000 pesos (\$19,600 US). They were released in a place called "El Mirador de las Aguilas" in a Nayarit forest.⁵⁰



Passerina versicolor

April 6, 2018

Lagos de Moreno, State of Jalisco, Mexico

Crammed into two discarded cages on the side of the road, 20 yellow-headed blackbirds (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) and 55 painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*) did not have much more time to live. Luckily, a Federal police patrol passed by and put an end to their martyrdom. Unfortunately, 20 painted buntings were already dead. The other birds suffered from thirst. The fauna rescue unit from Tlajomulco rushed to rehydrate them and send them to the PROFEPA who released them in the protected forest "La Primavera" near Guadalajara.⁵¹

April 11, 2018

Tepic, State of Nayarit, Mexico

The municipal police, accompanied by PROFEPA agents, arrested a man offering for sale on the street superb rare or endangered birds. Two lilac-crowned Amazons (*Amazona finschi*, Annexe I), two blue grosbeaks (*Passerina caerulea*), two hooded orioles (*Icterus cucullatus*), two indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), one brown-backed solitaire (*Myadestes occidentalis*) and four painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*) were seized. As often, the detention conditions of the birds were disgraceful: without water or food, stuffed in cramped cages, some did not even have the space to turn around. The unfortunate 13 were transferred by PROFEPA to a refuge in Xalisco.⁵²

April 22, 2018

San Felipe, State of Baja California, Mexico

Four Northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), three lesser goldfinches (*Spinus psaltria* or *Carduelis psaltria*), three lazuli buntings (*Passerina amoena*), four house finches (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), four Northern mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*), four red-winged blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), four passerine birds (genus *Lonchura*) and two white-throated magpie-jays (*Calocitta formosa*) were seized from a pet store. National law protects them all. They were all held in conditions disgraceful and disrespectful to the animal welfare.⁵³



Passerina amoena

Between mid-May and end of May 2018

State of Sinaloa, Mexico

- Seizure of 10 orange-fronted conure chicks (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) in Mazatlán. In a shoebox, hatched barely a month ago, they were sold on the Internet.
- Seizure by the PROFEPA of 34 orange-fronted conures in San Ignacio. They were sold on the Internet. The sellers disappeared.⁵⁴

May 26, 2018

Chalco, State of Mexico, Mexico

Seizure on board three coaches connecting Acayucan and Orizaba, State of Veracruz, and Mexico (500 km) of 155 red-lore parrots (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 75 Aztec parakeets (*Eupsittula nana*, Appendix II), 35 mealy Amazons (*Amazona farinosa*, Appendix II), 15 yellow-headed Amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), 36 white-fronted parrots (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), 9 white-crowned parrots (*Pionus senilis*, Appendix II), two keel-billed toucans (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II), two boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 58 common sliders (*Trachemys scripta*) and 778 plants including 110 orchids (*Prosthechea vittelina*) specially protected by Mexican regulations. The sender of the animals first identified under the nickname "El Caballo" was finally arrested with three accomplices. The value of this "Noah's Ark" is estimated at 1.7 million pesos, or \$90,000 US.⁵⁵



June 5, 2018

Guadalajara, State of Jalisco, Mexico

Three seizures from the same person:

- A yellow-headed parrot (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I). The species is very threatened. It still exists in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Venezuela, Colombia, and Honduras.
- A lilac-crowned Amazon (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I). The species is very threatened. It still exists in several regions in Mexico, Pacific side.
- An orange-fronted conure (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II). The species is threatened, still exists on the Mexican Pacific coast, in El Salvador and Costa Rica.⁵⁶

June 18, 2018

La Paz, Mexico City, Mexico

Seized from the home of a private individual with no authorization or certificate of origin, eight birds protected by national law and/or CITES: two military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I), one red-ored parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), one slate-colored solitaire (*Myadestes unicolor*), one brown-backed solitaire (*Myadestes occidentalis*), one white-throated thrush (*Turdus assimilis*), one American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and one rufous-backed thrush (*Turdus rufopalliatus*).⁵⁷

June 20, 2018

Amealco, State of Querétaro, Mexico

Seizure at the municipal market of six red-ored parrots (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), one yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and one lilac-crowned parrot (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I). It has been illegal to sell Psittacidae anywhere in the country for ten years now.⁵⁸



June 29, 2018

Chimalhuacán, Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure of 5 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), a white-fronted Amazon (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), a red-ored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and 2 emerald toucanets (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*). The seller did not have a sale and detention permit. The birds were all from unknown origins.⁵⁹

PARAGUAY

April 25, 2018

Asuncion, Paraguay

Seizure on the market No. 4 of a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), a monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), and a nanday conure (*Nandayus nenday*, Appendix II). All had cut wings. They are under observation at the zoo in the capital. Services acted on a tip-off and in application of the law from 1992 on the protection of wild fauna.⁶⁰

Mid-May 2018

San Lorenzo, Central Department, Paraguay

Saving of two Illiger's macaws (*Primolius maracana*, Appendix I), victims of mistreatment by two traffickers. They were treated with hydrogen peroxide so they would turn yellow. Yellow macaws sell for more. The bleaching of plumes is a frequent practice. It is dangerous: the birds are often burned in the eyes and left blind. One of the Illiger's macaws died several hours after his release. The survivor is undergoing treatment at a veterinarian specialist. It will take it a year to heal from the poisoning and to regain its natural coloring.⁶¹



PERU

April 9, 2018

Juliaca, San Román Province, Puno Region, Peru

Sunday market. Seizure in a cardboard box of two thirsty American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II).⁶²



June 18, 2018

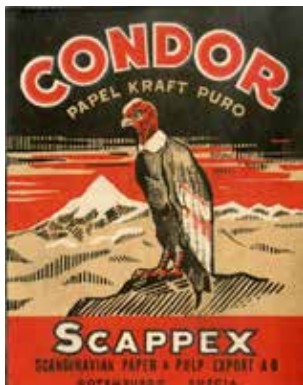
Chanchamayo Province, Junín Region, Peru

Thanks to a tip that reached police ears, a very sad and malnourished mascot (yellow-headed parrot, *Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) was transferred to the zoo for observation and treatment.⁶³

End June 2018

Puno, Puno Province, Peru

Thanks to another tip that reached police ears, turbulent seizure in a public park of Andean condor feet (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I) and Andean flamingo feathers (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*, Appendix II) during a shamanism session. The healers and their patients tried to oppose the seizure.⁶⁴



ASIA

CHINA

June 20, 2018

Tongchuan, Shaanxi Province, China

Confirmation on appeal of the 8- and 10-year prison sentences delivered by the court of Yaozhou district in December 2017 against two men accused of having killed a crested ibis (*Nipponia nippon*, Appendix I). The crime had been committed in June 2016. The two poachers had used a slingshot to knock down the bird and then brought it back to their car. But they were scared off upon noticing an identification band on one of its legs and had abandoned the body by the side of the road. The crested ibis needs tall trees for nestling and wetlands for feeding crabs, frogs, small fish, river snails, other mollusks and beetles. In winter it enjoys rice fields, riverbanks and reservoirs. Deforestation and the use of pesticides in the rice fields brought it almost to the brink of extinction. The species mostly disappeared from its former area of distribution that extended from the Russian Far East to Japan and China, including incursions in both Koreas and in Taiwan. It is now only observed in the wild in Shaanxi Province, where a 2006 census concluded that there remained only 500 individuals, including 330 adults.⁶⁵



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Mid-April 2018

Sharjah, Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Seizure of 400 exotic birds under CITES protection.⁶⁶

INDIA

Early April 2018

Rampura, Bathinda District, Punjab State, India

National symbol victim again of poaching. One arrest. The man had captured the peacock (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II or *Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) thanks to a net. The bird tried to untangle itself. He died.⁶⁷

Early April 2018

Sariska Tiger Reserve, State of Rajasthan, India

For the past 15 days a number of peacocks (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II, or *Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) have been found dead around Bala Kila, in the buffer range of the reserve. Post-mortem analysis showed that they succumbed to liver infection. The origin is unknown. According to the veterinarian in charge of the inquiry, the peacocks have not died from malice poisoning. Other peacock bodies have since been reported in the area, bringing the number of deaths to 23. 4 were autopsied and also died of liver infections. A hailstorm is suspected to have contributed to the process of intoxicating by leaching soil polluted by pesticides. The park rangers now work on emptying retention basins in the surrounding areas and refilling them with clean water.⁶⁸



April 6, 2018

Siliguri, West Bengal State, India

The mystery hangs over the death of 49 black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II). They were probably killed by air pollution. Siliguri (513,000 inhabitants in 2011) is not an industrial city, but the air is polluted by the circulation of decayed two-, three-, and four- wheeled running on diesel. Pollution rating is steadily greater than in Delhi, yet known for breaking all the records for fine particles and other poisons for the lungs. The Mahananda, which crosses the city, is the most polluted river in West Bengal State. Three years ago, a similar episode struck black kites. Animesh Bose, coordinator of the NGO HNAF (Himalayan Nature and Adventure Foundation) still remembers it and underlines that the autopsy reports were never made public.⁶⁹

April 7, 2018

Tavadva, Bhavnagar District, Gujarat State, India

Eight peacocks (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II or *Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) dead from food poisoning. Two survivors are under treatment.⁷⁰



Forest officials record statement of a villager

April 14, 2018

Gujarat State, India

Three in custody for three days. Seizure of 105 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) and 48 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) in a coach that was heading to Delhi 1000 km away.⁷¹

April 15, 2018

Dabarasi, Amroha District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Strange atmosphere in Dabarasi. After the death of more than 100 monkeys between the end of March and early April (cf. page 52), the keeper of a mango plantation is suspected of the death of 3 peacocks (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II or *Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Poaching for meat is at the root of the crime.

A few days later, three new peacocks were found dead in the village of Dabarasi. The option of bird poisoning with pesticides sprayed on mango trees is now favoured.⁷²

April 20, 2018

Chennai, Tamil Nadu State, India

Seizure of a little bird of prey held in a cage. The little banded sparrowhawk (*Accipiter badius*, Appendix II) was going to be sold by a 25-year old man on the pet's market or for macabre uses in black magic.⁷³

May 17, 2018

Thenur, Madurai District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Poisoning of 13 peacocks (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II or *Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 12 females and a male, by a mixture of rice and rat poison deposited at the bottom of an empty water tank. As the harvest approaches, farmers protect their crops. The peacocks were accused of pillaging.⁷⁴



May 29th, 2018

Khokhar, Nagaur District, State of Rajasthan, India

11 peafowls (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II or *Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) died from poisoning. Two young men, ages 16 and 18, sprayed seeds with concentrated pesticides. The youngest was questioned; the oldest is on the run. The practice is common. With no regard for public health, the meat is sold on the market. The main revenue from trafficking comes from selling the feathers on the international market for decorative or ritual uses.⁷⁵



June 3, 2018

Kolkata, West Bengal State, India

Seizure of 65 parakeets (*Psittacula* spp., Appendix I or II) and three hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II). The auto rickshaw was heading towards the Sunday market on Galiff Street.⁷⁶

GANG

June 5, 2018

Sankeshwar, Belagavi District, Karnataka State, India

Seizure of four rock eagle-owls (*Bubo bengalensis*, Appendix II). Pramod Mokashi (30) and Bhausaheb Sakhare-Kamble (50) were biking with three accomplices on the road linking Bangalore to Pune. Five teams of rangers were waiting for them in Sankeshwar. Three of the suspects managed to escape. According to the statements of the two arrested, the nocturnal raptors were caught in the State of Kerala. Investigators accuse them of being part of a gang whose activities boomed during the election period earlier this year. Hundreds of candidates from all parties sacrificed owls to attract luck or bad luck to their competitors. The skull, feathers, beak, blood, eyes and bones are staged by quacks of black magic.⁷⁷

INDONESIA

Early April 2018

**Buduran, Sidoarjo Regency,
East Java Province, Indonesia**

facebook

Arrest of two wholesalers well established in the business of rare birds for around three years on Facebook. SS and HS had two accounts on the social network through which they came in contact with buyers. When the Special Criminal Investigation Directorate sleuths searched their premises, they discovered cages containing 26 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), 11 white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II), six western black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), three Pesquet's parrots (*Psitttrichas fulgidus*, Appendix II), three eclectic parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), two lesser birds-of-paradise (*Paradisaea minor*, Appendix II), and two other birds of paradise (*Paradisaea* spp., Appendix II). The suspects multiplied at least by three the selling price of the birds that they bought from the poachers. A parrot costing 2 million rupees (\$145 US) was found offered on Facebook for 6 or 7 million rupees (\$430 to \$500 US). The inquiry is only just beginning: the police are looking to assess the scope of the trafficking thanks to selling registries, savings books, and delivery notes. They also want to understand how the birds got to east Java and bring to light the export channel. The team from a merchant ship regularly docking at the Buduran port is scanned by the investigators.⁷⁸



Cacatua sulphurea

April 17, 2018

Bogor Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia

Seizure of a brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II), a changeable hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II), and a falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) from a garage.⁷⁹

IRAN

May 28, 2018

**Zabol, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran,
border with Afghanistan**

Seizure of 22 dead flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, Appendix II) and a rifle from a vehicle that tried to escape border patrol. The trip back from hunting in the swamps of Hamun-e Saberi or Daryäkeh-ye Sistan ended poorly for the driver. As a first step, even before being tried, he must pay a fine of 20 million rials (\$470 US) per flamingo, or \$10,340 US altogether. .../....

The future is dark for flamingos. The reproductive cycle is disturbed by mechanical and human intrusions motivated by curiosity and venal egg collection, and power lines cut off migrations. Swamps are often polluted with hunting pellets and flamingoes are killed by lead poisoning. Poaching for meat and feathers is growing in migratory stop-over and in nesting times. The drying up of wetlands and food shortage complete the gloomy picture.⁸⁰



SINGAPORE

April 25, 2018

Singapore

Sentence of a coach driver to 8 months in prison for trying to introduce from Malaysia several illicit goods including Fischer's lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*, Appendix II). Cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p. 47.⁸¹



EUROPE

GERMANY

June 24, 2018

Berlin, Germany

Rio 2. After the episode of the 3D film "Rio" of 2011 where a Spix's macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*, Annex I) landed from icy Minnesota to lead his life in Brazil, it will be the turn of around fifty Spix's macaws freezing their beaks in Berlin, Germany, to join at the beginning of next year an enclosure of about thirty hectares on the Bahia side before being released in the forest in 2021 (if there remains forest).⁸²

BELGIUM

May 7, 2018

Verviers Arrondissement, Province of Liège, Wallonia Region, Belgium

Seizure in five houses with gardens, of 670 birds: chaffinches (*Fringillidae*), linnets (*Linaria cannabina*), redpolls (*Acanthis flammea*), crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*), and especially European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). After being captured in bushes, prairies and thickets, they will return to the wild once they are in good health. Several are injured, stressed and have lost mobility.⁸³



CYPRUS

End June 2018

Cyprus

Battle of Ambelopoulia in Cyprus

See "On the Trail" n°16 p. 35.

Is the British army on the way to gain a victory in the Eastern Mediterranean? The facts and figures are in favour of the yes.

The 50 hectares of fast-growing acacia trees planted by poachers on the Dkekalia military base's buffer zone have been razed, despite threats, rottweiler attacks, crushing attempts, and intimidation gunshots. The 70 km of pipes used to irrigate the acacias have been dug up. The forest that the fanatics used to cover with glue or nets to trap migratory passerines has disappeared. The day of zero or near zero tolerance has arrived. The 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment mobilised to eradicate the plague can be proud of the figures announced by Colonel Mark Lancaster to the newspaper The Guardian, which has been following the case closely for years. Poaching has decreased by 70% in 2017 compared to 2016 and the death toll has decreased from 800,000 to 240,000. Singing and colourful birds sell for a dozen or so €60 at restaurants in Larnaca and tourist resorts on the island to end up on skewers to be tasted under the name of Ambelopoulia. Eurasian Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) and garden warblers (*Sylvia borin*) are among the sacrificed species. The British army with its drones, infrared cameras and bulletproof vests is not alone in fighting the practice. The Cypriot government is strengthening sanctions and intends to carry out an intense campaign from August to October, at the height of passerine migration, to seize acoustic decoys and nets.⁸⁴

SPAIN

April 5, 2018

Cornellá de Llobregat, Province of Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Seizure of 45 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 18 cages on the bird market. All the vendors fled at the arrival of Catalan police.⁸⁵

April 9, 2018

Cuelgamures, Zamora Province, Castile and León Autonomous Community, Spain

The dead red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) was on the surface of an irrigated water reserve. He was carrying a beacon. His immobility was signaled to the local authorities by the Swiss ornithological station based in Sempach. The mystery of the poisoning of birds of prey persists in the northwest of Spain (cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p. 48).⁸⁶



REPEATED OFFENSE

Early May 2018

La Rioja Autonomous Community, Spain

Alberto Sierra Oliván arrested. This wildlife trafficker was wanted by Interpol. In Peru, his bad reputation is well established. In April 2016, he was arrested at Lima's Jorge-Chávez International Airport on his way to Madrid on an Air Europa flight with ten Andean cocks-of-the-rock (*Rupicola peruvianus*, Appendix II) inserted in plastic tubes in his luggage. In June, he had tried again with 14 toucans and 19 violet-backed starlings (*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*) in his luggage. He had been sentenced - together with a Spanish accomplice - to two years' suspended imprisonment with a ban on leaving the country during that time. He is currently in prison in Spain awaiting a potential extradition to Peru.⁸⁷



Female





Rupicola peruvianus male

FRANCE

GANG

April 6, 2018

Pau, Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques, France

Their nerve seems limitless. The gang of 13 ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*) poachers – including Jean-Marc Dutouya, the famous “man with the shovel,” who had attacked the president of the LPO Allain Bougrain-Dubourg – are going to take the case to the Supreme Court after the Court of Appeal confirmed yesterday their suspended fines sentences and damages sentences (cf. “On the Trail” n°17 p. 38). Given the lawyer’s fees to take on for this type of legal marathon, no doubt they have financial support from the hundreds of poachers and hunters who mobilised to support them in the first instance.⁸⁸



April 12, 2018

Senlis, Oise Department, France

Three months suspended jail sentence, 400 € in fines and 1250 € in damages to the LPO (Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux) for having captured in 2014 with the help of five cage-traps four European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), one European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) and three common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*).⁸⁹



April 2018

Saint-Antoine, Doubs Department, France

Completion of a long investigation by ONCFS. The facts go back to August 2017. A common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) had been shot dead near Métabief. Two young men have been arrested, their weapons seized. The newspaper l’Est Républicain reminds that the common kestrel hovers in the sky, practicing the “flight of the Holy Spirit” to spot its prey and swoop down on them, and that they are useful to farmers in capturing field mice and voles.⁹⁰

May 17, 2018

Mont-de-Marsan, Landes Department, France

Sentencing of 11 ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*) poachers to fines of 1000€ including 500 to 800 suspended. They keep their hunting licenses.⁹¹



Early June 2018

Aigues-mortes, Gard Department, France

A French “explorer”, Nicolas Vanier, is preparing a film on “bird protection” under the title “Give me wings”. To get some shots, he sent a subcontractor on an overflight mission of the only colony of pink flamingos in France, even though everyone knows since Ogilvie’s work in 1986 that flamingos are very sensitive to overflights at low altitude and that on these occasions, they risk leaving the incubation sites permanently and en masse. At least 500 couples out of the 4 to 5000 of the Petite Camargue colony panicked and flew away as the ultralight approached. Be on watch ! The shooting will continue in Norway in the coming months.⁹²



June 6, 2018

Castres, Tarn Department, France

A birdlime poacher of European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and European serins (*Serinus serinus*) in private and public gardens was sentenced to three months’ suspended imprisonment. “I was doing this to get some money.”⁹³



ITALY

April 2018

Acerra, Campania Region, Italy

A 50-year-old man is unfavorably known by the police for several misdemeanours. This time is for the poaching of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). Tipped of by the National Animal Protection Agency, officers of the Forestry Station of Marigliano raided onto a plot by the side of a small road. There they found a cage containing 8 European goldfinches, a net trap hanging from wooden poles, an electronic musical lure machine and a goldfinch attached to a string by its legs to serve as decoy.⁹⁴

End of April 2018

Quindici, Campania Region, Italy

The riflemen put a stop to the activities in the mountains of a 35-year old guy well up in poaching with nets and decoys of singing passerine birds like European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*).⁹⁵



Early May 2018

Boscotrecase, Naples Metropolitan City, Campania Region, Italy

Raid of the carabinieri in the house of a passerines wholesaler. Seizure of nets, traps, trap cages, live European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), European serins (*Serinus serinus*), linnets (*Carduelis spp.*), Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*). The man was charged with illegal possession of means of capture, trapping of protected species.⁹⁶

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 2018

Oria, Apulia Region, Italy

A 57-year-old poacher from Naples (about 375 km away) designated by his initials P.M. was charged with "capture of protected animal species" and "aggravated theft". He was left at large. He was stopped by a patrol of carabinieri at "Comende" locality while he was holding four European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and the whole bag (electronic callers, net, ...) to trap others. The birds have been released. The record of the man is not clean: he has already been prosecuted for the same acts in the Regions of Calabria, Molise, Abruzzo and Basilicata.⁹⁷

May 4, 2018

Torre del Greco, Vesuvius National Park, Campania Region, Italy

He held prisoner hundreds of birds in an aviary. The man was arrested on his property during a raid of carabinieri accompanied by members of the WWF. Several protected species were identified among the birds: three hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), one European serin (*Serinus serinus*), 10 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), three European greenfinches (*Carduelis chloris*), one linnet (*Linaria cannabina*) and Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*). The man was brought before the prosecutor's office of Torre Annunziata. All the birds were released in a pine forest in the presence of children.⁹⁸

May 2018

Provinces of Naples and Salerno, Region of Campania, Italy

Carabinieri and sworn WWF agents guard the Sorrento Peninsula and Ischia Island where poachers abound. 65 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), three Eurasian collared doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*), nine chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), four Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*), two mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), four hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), five European serins (*Serinus serinus*), five European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and three linnets (*Linaria cannabina*) were seized and immediately released. Six people were arrested. In the Sorrento peninsula, poachers do not hesitate to fix acoustic lures in cement and surround them with anti-burglary shielding. On the island of Ischia it is the widespread use of home-made weapons that worries the friends of birds.⁹⁹

OPERATION ADORNO 2018

April to May 2018

Province of Reggio Calabria, Calabria Region, and Province of Messina, Sicily Region, Italy

The coasts of the Strait of Messina are frequented by numerous migratory species and furrowed by poachers who catch or shot tens of thousands of birds every year. In an attempt to curb the scourge, the Carabinieri organise an annual operation to monitor natural areas in the two regions. This year seven poachers were arrested. The seized equipment includes a rifle, 174 rounds, bird nets and binoculars. A honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II) was found shot by firearm. Ten live European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and two live serins (*Serinus serinus*) were released on the spot, while four barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) pulled out too early from their nests were taken to the wildlife rehabilitation centre in Messina.¹⁰¹

ZOOMAFIA GANG

End May 2018

Reggio di Calabria, Calabria Region, Italy

Dismantling of a passerine trappers' network. The birds legally protected by the Bern Convention were killed, plucked and sold on skewers in Italian and Maltese restaurants. Eight arrests.

The thorough investigation under the direction of the local Attorney General demonstrated the organization of this venture. Catch meadows were chosen according to their altitude, their proximity to crops or groves and their crossing by streams and rivers. They were regularly "fertilized" by food seeds and adorned with electronic decoys. When the birds were numerous enough to be profitable, nets were stretched for collective capture at the rate for each station of 200 to 300 specimens per day sold by the unit 50 € for a European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), 25 to 50 € for a greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*), 25 to 50 € for a European serin (*Serinus serinus*), 60 to 100 € for a hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*). Some members of the company travelled 400 to 500 km a day to monitor, feed, net, collect and market.¹⁰⁰



That band made a fortune off the goldfinches!

Early June 2018

Lizzanello and Cavallino, Lecce Province, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure in a pet shop of a monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II) native of South America. After escaping from an unknown farming, the species is spotted around Cavallino and threatens to become invasive.¹⁰²

June 25, 2018

Terzigno, Naples Metropolitan City, Campania Region, Italy

Seizure of nine European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), one linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), three Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*) and one chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*).¹⁰³

End June 2018

Marsala, Sicily Region, Italy

Seizure of 11 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). Charged with cruelty to animals.¹⁰⁴

End June 2018

Aradeo, Apulia Region, Italy

Six European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) are put under sequestration in a house built without a permit.¹⁰⁵

MALTA

June 21, 2018

Malta

Conviction of the Republic of Malta by the European Court of Justice for failing to comply with the 2009 directive on the protection of wild birds and in particular Articles 5 and 8 by granting authorisation for the capture of seven species of Fringillidae under the derogation scheme. The procedure was initiated by the European Commission. Malta authorises an annual catch of 12.000 linnets (*Linaria cannabina*), 5000 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), 4500 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 2350 European siskins (*Spinus spinus*), 2350 serins (*Serinus serinus*), 800 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 500 hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) without deploying on the ground the human means sufficient to control the 4000 declared trappers and the 6400 catching nets places.

Laissez-faire leads to abuses such as mass captures through oversized nets and electronic callers banned in Natura 2000 areas or suspected abuses such as underreporting of catches, given that hunters are called upon to spontaneously transmit the number of trapped birds by species to a central number by SMS. On the other hand, Malta has somehow "inflated" its inventories of migratory birds stationed on the island in autumn by "trapping" the 5 to 10 million chaffinches that fly from Poland to spend the winter in the south. All recent studies show that passerines leaving Poland aim to reach south-western France and western Spain. The same studies also show that the populations are in a violent or gradual decline, and Poland is no exception to this trend. .../...



This manipulation of trajectories and censuses has enabled Malta to cover up its reference populations and to use false figures to set catch quotas that are incompatible with reality and with the possibility offered to Member States to allow by derogation the trapping of certain species "in small numbers". However, the conditions, quantities, places, methods and periods must be strictly controlled and reported. The other complaint in the arguments of the European Commission, Bird Life Malta and in the Court's conclusions is that the nets set up by hunter-trappers catch birds of non-derogatory species, number and detail are not known for those since they are not declared. See "On the Trail" n°6 p. 32, n°9 p. 28, n°11 p. 27, n°15 p. 39.¹⁰⁶

UNITED KINGDOM

May 3, 2018

Plymouth, Devon County, England, United Kingdom

Six months suspended prison sentence and 665 £ in fines (\$915 US) for having stolen from protected natural habitats eggs of ospreys (*Pandion cristatus*, Appendix II), peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), and little ringed plovers (*Charadrius dubius*). Jason North, unknown to the police and the ornithologists, had been uncovered by consistent testimonies unveiling his frequent visits to the sites and cliffs inhabited by birds of prey in Devon County and in Scotland, then by the analysis of stock photos on his computer and by the seizure of several logbooks at his house.¹⁰⁷



June 26, 2018

London Heathrow International Airport, England, United Kingdom

Seizure on an Irish national coming from South Africa, 19 vulture-, eagle-, hawk- and kite-eggs and two newborn vultures. The chicks and the incubating eggs were handed over to the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre. The trafficker was released on bail until the investigation is complete and information is revealed to explain the hows and whys of this international raptor trade.¹⁰⁸



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Early June 2018

Tubbut, State of Victoria, Australia

Australian livestock breeders eradicated the Tasmanian wolf (see "On the Trail" n°1 p. 37). But they have identified a new enemy of their sheep. Over one hundred wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax*, Appendix II) were poisoned at the edge of the Snowy River National Park. The eagles feed on carcasses – as can be attested by the fact that they were poisoned by one of their own – or on animals that have lost their mobility. They contribute to herd selection, as well as to the hygiene of prairies and natural habitats.¹⁰⁹



Pangolins

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

“On the Trail” n°21

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	Indonesia	200	18
	Malaysia	200	19

“On the Trail” n°21

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

Continent	Country	US\$/animal	Ref.
Asia	China	600	10
	China	1,589	13
	Thailand	480	24
	Viet Nam	307	25

AFRICA

BENIN

May 7, 2018

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

Sentencing of a Chinese national to 36 months prison, 2 million Fr. CFA fine (\$3600 US) and 40 million in damages (\$71,000 US) for having tried to illegally export more than 500 kg of scales (cf. “On the Trail” n°20, p.51). Conviction of an accomplice to six months suspended prison sentence, 500,000 Fr. CFA in fines (\$890 US) and damages of the same amount.¹



CAMEROON

End of May 2018

Doumé, East Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 35 kg of scales. Two arrests, then three when a man on the run presented himself to the police brigade to “negotiate” the release of his motorcycle.²

Mid-June 2018

Cameroon

Rescue of a mother and a newborn from a bushmeat market (picture). The good action is to the credit of the Cameroon branch of the Tikki Hywood Foundation.³

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

May 2018

Republic of the Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo

Following the seizure of 3.8 tons of scales in April (see p. 48), four arrests in the Democratic Republic of Congo and four arrests in Congo Brazzaville. Bail was denied. Five suspects have already been sentenced to prison terms and heavy fines. Three of them are government officers in charge of the control of exported goods who in this case were declared “logs” or “seafood”. An internationally renowned trafficker of Guinean nationality, Djani Ousmane, is part of the gang that is also involved in attempts to smuggle raw ivory into Thailand. The Lusaka Agreement Task Force, with the support of Freeland, the African Wildlife Foundation and IBM Citizenship, developed the Analytical Center of Excellence digital traceability system. ACE has enabled the entire chain of complicity between the two Central African States and the links in international maritime logistics to be traced. One of the stakeholders at the end of the smuggling line is the Beijing-based China National Township.⁴



NIGERIA

May 19, 2018

Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos State, Nigeria

Seizure of several bags of pangolin scales in the luggage of a Chinese subject returning home via Qatar Airways.⁵



ZIMBABWE

April 1, 2018

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Joshua Kashiri (30 years old), Darlington Chiriya (23 years old), Jeremiah Nyamutowera (28 years old) and Noah Itai Kufuma (48 years old) had 2 pangolins for sale. The police were informed and set a trap with the help of Henry MacIlwaine from the Matusadona Anti-Poaching Project, who agreed to play the fake buyer. After the telephone transaction, a meeting was scheduled in the Harare Gardens Park. The police officers met up with the traffickers. They were carrying the two pangolins in a bag. One of the two was already dead. The quartet was presented to the Harare Magistrates' Court on April 7.⁶

Early April 2018

Masvingo, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe the minimum penalty of 9 years in prison applies for any illegal possession of a protected animal. Brighton Ngwenyama, who teaches at Mushandike High School, and his accomplices Tatenda Mhango and Kudzai Shava, residents of the Mushandike resettlement area, learned it the hard way. They had been arrested April 11th, 2016 in the Bhuka Business Centre near Mushandike while trying to sell a live pangolin to undercover police agents. They had been told on. At the time of their arrest Kudzai Shava had tried to flee, in vain: a police officer had shot him in the leg. Today, Judge Peter Madhibha denies them any attenuating circumstances.⁷



May 26, 2018

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

The trafficking is always teeming around Hwange. A notable from ZANU-PF (The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front), John Robert Khumalo, 65 years old, accompanied by a certain Tshuma, traditional healer, were caught in the act of trying to sell scales in the parking lot of a hotel.⁸



Early June 2018

Zimbabwe

THT130 alias Ruvimbo was starving and weighed 3 kg on arrival at Tikki Hywood Foundation in March. He was just released to a safe place. The live insects he enjoyed at Tikki's allowed him to reach a respectable weight of 7.3kg.⁹

ASIA

CHINA

GANG

April 10, 2018

Yueqing, Zhejiang Province, China

Arrest of eight pangolin maniacs, traffickers and buyers. Seizure of two living, well-force-fed specimens (6 kg each) and 8 kg of frozen pangolin meat. The living were sold for around \$100 US per kilo. One 39 year-old man, a relentless buyer, consumes pangolin to supposedly heal multiple fractures faster. The trafficking lasted at least 2 years. Frozen or living, the pangolins came from Malaysia and arrived in China via the Fujian and Guangdong Provinces.¹⁰

Early May 2018

Dianbai County, Guangdong Province, China

Conviction of two men to 10 years' jail and a 20,000 yuan fine for illegally transporting 20 live pangolins concealed in three bags in the trunk of a car (cf. "On the Trail" n°15, p. 44). On 17 December 2016, they were arrested on the highway from Guangxi, on the border with Viet Nam, bound for Guangdong. The driver had received 3500 yuan (\$ 540 US) and his assistant 500 yuan (\$ 77 US) for the delivery.¹¹



WASTE NETWORK

May 15, 2018

Tsing Yi Customs, Hong Kong, China



Seizure from a 40-foot naval container from Indonesia of 630 kg of bagged scales and 2660 kg of flasks of mercury. The container was transporting "plastic waste." The value of the wildlife lot and chemical lot is estimated at 1.4 million Hong Kong dollars, or \$178,400 US.¹²

May 17, 2018

Huangtianpu tollgate, Province of Hunan, China

Seizure inside a bus linking Beihei (Province of Guangxi) and Anxiang (Province of Hunan) - 1200 km - of 19 Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*) in five suitcases. Total value: \$ 30.200 US. Seven died within a few days.



The survivors are under water misters and antibiotics. The largest weighs 6kg. The vets are working hard to find termites to feed them and experts are scratching their heads trying to figure out what to do with them. To release them into the wild in China would be against the doctrine regarding exotic species and for now investigations have not enabled to determine the country of origin (Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Viet Nam, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos or Singapore).¹³



May 18-20, 2018

Beijing, Autonomous Municipality of Beijing, China

Love from Da Nang, Viet Nam. Shen Jianping, vice President of Yintai, shared via Weibo his pleasure from eating rice grilled in pangolin blood. He was pushed to resign. Yintai thanked the subscribers of Weibo for their vigilance, who had given Shen's poor taste a national and even international echo. "We hope that "strict oversight" of the company would continue." Yintai, based in Beijing, distributes luxury products across the country.¹⁴

INDIA

April 12, 2018

Thoubal District, Manipur State, India. Border with Myanmar.

1.5 kg of "Shaphu" scales, the vernacular name for pangolin. Paokhanmang Guite is being kept in custody.¹⁵

GANG

April 22, 2018

Varanasi, Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh State, India

Arrest of 10 people in room 309 of the Priya hotel and seizure of a living pangolin. The leader of the gang said he captured him in a local forest.¹⁶



REPEATED OFFENSE

Early June 2018

Kudremukh National Park, State of Karnataka, India

Seven poachers arrested. They were in possession of a dead pangolin and a large quantity of scales. Two of them are known repeat offenders. They were released on bail. According to the vice-director of the park, 59 families of nomads live by hunting snakes, porcupines and pangolins. According to the investigator, G. Veeresh, pangolin hunting has become a full-time job for tribal communities that are hit hard by unemployment, poverty and illiteracy. They are paid peanuts to burn out the pangolins' dens and remove the scales which are then delivered to go-betweens. They are also paid in kind, since most of the time they eat the pangolin meat. Hunting pangolins, despite the risk of being sentenced to three years in prison, is rampant throughout the State of Karnataka.¹⁷

INDONESIA

May 22, 2018

Nanga Pinoh, Melawi Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Two scale-traffickers were arrested in a restaurant where they were waiting for a client. While in custody, they admitted to using dogs to hunt pangolins in the forests, selling the meat in their village and selling the scales at a base price of 3 million rupees, or \$200 US / kg for international trade. The purchaser, known by his initials BD, slipped through the dragnet. Known by their initials, PD and JN, the two young men are imprisoned in Pontianak. They risk up to five years in prison.¹⁸



MALAYSIA

April 5, 2018

Approximately 2 nautical miles from Bintulu, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

The boat lied at anchor in the waiting area. The Maritime Law Enforcement Unit got on board around 8:00 AM for a routine inspection. Good draw: the officers found 142 pangolins in poor condition, to the point where many were dead even before landing. The four members of the crew – two Malaysians, an Indian, and a Vietnamese– were arrested, the boat and pangolins seized. The inquiry was left with the Sarawak State Forestry Department. Locally, pangolin meat sells for 220 ringgits (\$57 US) per kilo, the skin for 800 ringgits (\$200 US). The value of the seizure is estimated at 150,000 ringgits (\$39,000 US).

The Vietnamese fisherman was sentenced to 3 months in prison on April 19.¹⁹



April 17, 2018

State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Miscellaneous news items:

- A truck was intercepted with 34 illegal wooden logs;
- A pick-up truck was intercepted with 31 living pangolins in the back and an equivalent of \$2500 US in the driver's pockets.²⁰



NEPAL

May 11, 2018

Makalu, Province No. 1, Nepal

1.5 kg of pangolin scales in his backpack. One arrest.²¹

May 27, 2018

Mangalbare, Municipality of Deumai, Province No. 1, Nepal

Seizure of a pangolin skin, of 4.2 kg of scales and a motorcycle. Two passengers arrested.²²

PHILIPPINES

April 22, 2018

Roxas, Palawan Province, Philippines

A fishmonger nicknamed Badong took flight carrying a dead "balintong." He was finally caught. On the island of Palawan, pangolins are called "balintongs."²³

THAILAND

June 6, 2018

Wiang Kaen District, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand

When he saw the river patrol, the man dove from his boat into the Mekong and disappeared in the night. He was trying to bring 40 live pangolins from Laos on the opposite bank of the river. The pangolins were contained in 10 bags and weighed a total of 200 kg. They are worth an estimated 615,000 bahts (\$19,180 US).²⁴



VIET NAM

April 24, 2018

Lao Bao, Quảng Trị Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

Upon the approach of a patrol against drugs and trafficking of all kinds, four people fled into the forest, throwing away four cages containing 15 pangolins weighing 61 kg in total and estimated at 105 million dong, or \$4,600 US.²⁵



April 27, 2018

Cat Lai port, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Record seizure in the container terminal: 3.8 tons of skins in 107 bags concealed in the middle of logs. The Vietnamese customs officers were informed by their Congolese colleagues that two suspicious containers were en route to Hồ Chí Minh City. After having passed through Singapore, they had been docked on April 22 around 4:00 in the morning. The scanner inspection revealed suspect spaces between the logs. The customs officers placed the two containers under surveillance but nobody came to take delivery of them. They opened them today. It is the biggest seizure of pangolin scales that ever occurred at the port. They correspond to around 12,500 poached pangolins.²⁶

CASHEW NETWORK

May 3, 2018

Port of Cat Lai, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

In cashew again! (cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p. 71) Targeted inspection of a container in transit for Cambodia succeeded in the discovery of 87 bags that did not contain cashew nuts. They contained 3.3 tons of scales.²⁷



June 14, 2018

Hoang Minh, Hoang Hoa District, Province of Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam

A truck loaded with wild animals was stopped by a well-informed mobile forest guard patrol. 74 pangolins bundled up in bags were on board. The driver named Nguyen Van Manh (29 years old) says that a certain Hung settled in the north of the Bac Ninh Province would be the order-giver. The animals joined the Cuc Phuong Wildlife Rescue Center where their physical condition will be evaluated.²⁸



Pangolins and Elephants



AFRICA

CAMEROON

April 6, 2018

Douala International Airport, Littoral Region, Cameroon

According to Voice of America, seizure of one ton of pangolin scales and several hundreds of tusks or pieces of tusks in packages known for containing "cocoa" in the airport precincts. Three people with Chinese passports were arrested.¹

Early May 2018

Santchou, West Region, Cameroon

Four arrests for trafficking in pangolin scales, turtle shells, raw ivory and other elephant parts.²

GABON

Mid-June 2018

Lambaréné, Moyen-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Two tusks and fragments of raw ivory, an elephant tail and pangolin scales.³

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

May 27, 2018

Between Makoua and Ouessou, Provinces of Sangha and Cuvette, Republic of the Congo

Arrest of a Chinese citizen at a road check. Seizure of 500 g of scales. Pictures found in his cell phone demonstrate his interest for ivory objects carved in underground workshops.⁴



May 30, 2018

Makoua, Cuvette Department, Republic of the Congo

Seizure of five elephant tails, two tusks, hippo teeth and parts of other wild animals. Christophe Ambet-on was caught with the hands in the cookie jar inside his shop.⁵

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

Mid-May 2018

Reddersburg, Free State Province, South Africa

Torture animal or pet? Release of a one-pawed vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) by the SCPA. The hypothesis of voluntary amputation is preferred. According to local superstition, possessing a monkey paw brings wealth and prosperity. The NGO has already been alerted of the presence of several monkey bones at the homes of healers in the region.¹



CAMEROON

End of April 2018

South Cameroon

With the complicity of a State agent meant to protect wild fauna, the man was keeping at his house in conditions disrespectful to the animal welfare two young mandrills (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I), a male and a female.²

GUINEA

June 7, 2018

National Park of Upper Niger, Kankan and Faranah Regions, Guinea

Two arrests for trafficking in baby chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). Blaise Camara is said to have captured him in the Boke mining region and then entrusted him to his sister Mrs Palema Honomou in Conakry. The first was placed under arrest in the Conakry central prison, the second denies any responsibility in the catching and carriage of the animal. The chimp was entrusted to the Faranah Conservation Centre.³



MADAGASCAR

Early April 2018

Matanga, Atsimo-Atsinanana Region, Madagascar

The alleged poacher of a collared brown lemur (*Eulemur collaris*, Appendix I) was arrested by guards in the Ankarabolava forest and released on bail. Local naturalists and professor Jonah Ratsimbazafy, spokesperson from the Madagascar Primate Study and Research Group, are indignant. "If drastic measures are not taken, the forests of Madagascar will soon be empty."⁴

UGANDA

April 23, 2018

Mgahinga National Park, Kisoro District, Western Region, Uganda

The circumstances of the death of Jonath Habingoma (38 years old) are uncertain. Suspected of poaching, he was shot down at around 4:00 PM in the National Park but the rangers deny being responsible for his death. According to their master, the Uganda People Defense Forces participate as well in the protection of the reserve. Whoever it was, the fact that Jonath Habingoma was shot to death while he was unarmed and considered "handicapped" made the inhabitants of his village angry. Under the direction of James Nzikatira, vice-chairperson of the local board, they took the Kisoro Central Police Station by storm, reclaiming the body of the deceased and an official inquiry. Mgahinga National Park (33.7 km²) is the smallest in the country. Sitting between 2200 and 4000 m of altitude, its forests house a population of mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei*, Appendix I) and golden monkeys (*Cercopithecus kandti*, Appendix II).⁵



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

GANG

April 9, 2018

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



New ambush attributed to Mai Mai rebels (cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 32, n°12 p. 102, n°15 p. 110, n°18 p. 96). Five rangers, guardians of several mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei*, Appendix I) - Jean de Dieu Byamungu, Barthelemie Kakule Mulewa, Théodore Kasereka Prince, Liévin Mumbere Kasumba and Kananwa Sibomana – and a driver – Ila Muranda – are dead. They were 22 to 30 years old. A sixth ranger is hurt.

Virunga covers 7800 km². The park, founded in 1925, stems from Belgian colonization. Today it is supported by the European Union, the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, and the State. The major trafficking at the moment in Virunga Park is that of charcoal. 175 guards have lost their lives during their service in "the Park's recent history".⁶



May 11, 2018

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

The fateful 11th of May. Rachel Masika Baraka, a 25-year-old ranger, escorted two British visitors on an excursion to the Park. The vehicle driven by a Park driver was attacked by rebels or bandits. Rachel died in the ambush. The two safe tourists and the injured driver were kidnapped and released a few days later. The management did not wait for their release to suspend all the receptions and guided tours. For people coming from outside, apart from poachers, other looters and deserters, the Park is now closed until at least June 4, 2018, "the time," says its spokesman "to strengthen security."⁷



June 29, 2018

Virunga National Park and Salonga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo

New drag. Already in turmoil due to poaching, civil insecurity and logging, parks will be amputated a few thousand km² and exposed to noise, pollution and road traffic from oil exploration and exploitation. The government says that UNESCO World Heritage and Oil and Co are compatible.⁸

ZAMBIA

Mid-June 2018

Copperbelt Province, Zambia

Nine monkeys rescued from captivity, including vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II). Some had been in prison for years. The operation was coordinated by the Zambia Primate Project and carried out with police assistance. Back into good form and back into the wild on the program.⁹

AMERICA

BRAZIL

Early May 2018

Cascavel, State of Paraná, Brazil

Search. Seizure of electronic equipment, stolen air-conditioners, firearms, and a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II).¹⁰



June 6, 2018

São Paulo, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 11 capuchin monkey babies (*Sapajus* spp. synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II) from a man who was taken into police custody. The monkeys are taken in charge by the Tietê ecological park.¹¹

June 18, 2018

Deodápolis, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Transfer of a black-striped tufted capuchin (*Cebus libidinosus*, Appendix II) chained by the neck under a tree to CRAS (Centro de Reabilitação de Animais Silvestres) at Campo Grande.¹²

COLOMBIA

End of June 2018

Bosa, Bogota, Colombia

Rescue of a mantled howler (*Alouatta palliata*, Appendix I) thrown in a trashcan.¹³



ECUADOR

End of June 2018

Quito, Province of Pichincha, Ecuador

Rescue of a mantled howler (*Alouatta palliata*, Appendix I) victim of pet trafficking.¹⁴



MEXICO

March 25 - April 10, 2018

Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico, Mexico

A white-faced capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II) had the PROFEPA running around the Lomas Altas neighborhood for two weeks. The sneaky little one had managed to escape on March 25 from the owner who was holding far from home forest. White-faced capuchins do not live in Mexico but in Southern and Central America, from North of Ecuador to Honduras. A search notice had been released to the population. He was finally spotted and a tranquilizing dart put an end to his escapade. He was taken to the Chapultepec zoo where he should sadly remain for the rest his days.¹⁵

April 18, 2018

Ensenada, State of Baja California, Mexico

Another Geoffroy's Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II) locked in a cage thousands of kilometers from his natal forest. During the inspection of the "Palomar" marine park, inspectors from the PROFEPA found the animal behind bars. The site owner was not able to prove his legal origin. The primate was seized and proceedings taken. Geoffroy's Spider monkeys live only in central American forests, from the far South of Mexico to North Colombia.¹⁶

May 23, 2018

Mérida, State of Yucatán, Mexico

New seizure of a Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II). This one is a female. She was taken to the " Parque Zoológico del Bicentenario Animaya ".¹⁷



Gorilla beringei

CHINA

GANG

June 5, 2018

Hunan Province, China

The Hunan High People's Court announced today that a network of 27 monkey-traffickers has been dismantled and that at least 114 primates, mostly crab-eating macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and stump-tailed macaques (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) have gone through their hands. At the head of the traffic was a certain Wu, who ran a pet store that sold birds and other animals in Changsha, the capital of the province. He got his supplies in Viet Nam, where the primates were purchased from an accomplice who was compensated 2500 yuan (\$390 US) per primate. Villagers were paid to cross the frontier between Viet Nam and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region with bamboo baskets containing the monkeys. Wu and his accomplices took the deliveries and drove them by car to Hunan, by way of a little-used mountain road. When they arrived in Changsha, they were handed over to other middlemen who sold them throughout the country. One animal trader named Li supplied false quarantine certificates that he bought from the Ruijin Animal Health Inspection Institute, in the province of Jiangxi. He also took care of embarking the monkeys on China Southern Airlines flights. The final buyers paid up to 20,000 yuan (\$3115 US) per animal. One of the macaques was found in Xi'an (Shaanxi province) where it was used to amuse tourists in a folk village. At least three others died at their final destination. Survivors were found in Nankin (Jiangsu province) and as far as Harbin (Heilongjiang province, 2600 km away). They were all taken in by zoos.¹⁸



INDIA

April 1, 2018

Dabarasi, Amroha District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Two monkeys of an undisclosed species (Appendix I or II) were once again found dead in the village this Sunday. A team from the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) who examined the bodies concluded that they were poisoned by an insecticide. The vets had already rushed around Dabarasi a week before to investigate a monkey massacre. A few survivors had received medical care. According to some villagers the monkeys had eaten "chowmein chutney", a spicy sauce served with noodle dishes. The forest administration has opened an investigation. The possibility of intentional poisoning is not excluded. Samples from a local noodle factory and drain water are being tested.¹⁹



INDONESIA - ORANGUTANS

April 2, 2018

Indotani, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Little Anggun let herself go, her eyes dazed. The call center BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) Kalbar was informed that she was being held by a villager named Komang and sent a Wildlife Rescue Unit. Komang fed her like a human and seemed to be attached to her. He refuses to let her go. The Malay River Sector Police must lecture him on the penalties he faces. Anggun will finally join the orangutan rehabilitation center managed by the International Animal Rescue Foundation. She must stay there several years before being able to be released.²⁰



April 4, 2018

East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

This one is named Raju. He is about 4 years old and spent nearly all of his young life in a wooden cage without contact with peers. His mother disappeared, most likely shot 4 years ago in the palm oil plantation of M. Ibrahim, the "owner" of Raju. M. Ibrahim has a surprising version: in his plantation, another orangutan had fatally bitten Raju's mother.

While investigating the case of an orangutan who this time had bitten a man, some members from the Center for Orangutan Protection (COP) could free Raju and bring him to the NGO's rehabilitation center. Their work is not finished: while they were working on freeing Raju they were informed that local inhabitants had detained 2 other orangutans.²¹

April 12, 2018

Sangatta, Kutai Kartanegara Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Five arrests, four men aged 36 to 54 years old and one minor. The criminal, an orangutan, had ventured into a garden. In retaliation, it had been taken as a target like at a fun fair. 130 bullets and 3 palm oil seeds were found in its body (cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p. 58).²²

April 12, 2018
Tempurukan, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

A mother and her baby are searching for food near the village and face reprisals. Alerted, IAR's veterinarians and caretakers were able to locate them, anaesthetize the mother and transport her with the baby by tractor to the protected forest of Sentap Kancang. They will find there many other congeners - perhaps too many - extracted from the oppressive labyrinth of plantations. The Sentap Kancang forest is joined by plantations belonging to a subsidiary of IOI, a palm oil giant. For Sadtata Noor, local head of the BKSDA, "Massive damage has been done to wildlife habitats. It is time we tackle the root of the problem, rather than solve each conflict as it arises."²³



April 13, 2018
Oboh, Aceh Province, Indonesia

Evacuation of a male straying in the surroundings of a palm oil plantation exploited by inhabitants of the village. Agents of BKSDA, police officers of the Rudeng station, villagers, and a team from the Orangutan Information Center (OIC) succeeded in anesthetizing him and moving him. In the end, he was considered to be in good shape and was freed in the Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve.²⁴

End of April 2018
Meratak, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

This ghost would be a 5-year old male locked for four years in a cage 1m high, 50 cm wide. The COP pulled him from there.²⁵



Bukit Lawang and Pir Adb, Langkat Kabupaten, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia
May 19, 2018

The female was roaming in the rubber and palm oil plantations, between Charybde and Sylla, and within short time would have lost her life there. She has been taken out of this mess by a joint team made of the BKSDA and the HOCRU (Human Orangutan Conflict Response Unit) and transplanted 100 km away in the Leuser National Park.



May 20, 2018

Another female expropriated by industrial agriculture was carried on man's back over rivers and glades, also to Leuser Park.²⁶

May 28, 2018
Sekadau Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Release of the one named Joy.²⁷



June 25, 2018
Gampong Baru, East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia

Release of a two and a half year old female suffering from skin diseases and food deficiencies. She was driven to the shelter in Sibolangit, Medan province.²⁸



INDONESIA - FOLLOWED

April 2018

Larompong, Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia

Did the 32 Sulawesi macaques (*Macaca nigra*, Appendix II) like lychee, cocoa seeds, and cloves too much? They were trapped by farmers and sheltered in a specially constructed wooden cell, awaiting an unknown verdict or fate. The custody was severe, especially for the mothers and their babies. Like in all overpopulated prisons, there were fights. After several weeks, the police, alerted by a well-wisher, intervened with the help of the NGO Wallacea Nature. After consideration, the Sulawesi macaques were freed in Faruhumpenai reserve more than 200km away.²⁹

May 2018

Gunung Tarak Forest, Ketapang Regency, Indonesia

Release of three lorises (*Nycticebus* spp.) after 14, 24 and 35 months of rehabilitation to the instinct of self preservation in the jungle.³⁰

LEBANON

May 2018

Rafic Hariri International Airport of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon

Attempt to enter onto Lebanese soil of two white-throated guenons (*Cercopithecus erythrogaster*, Appendix II) by a passenger coming from Ghana. Since, they would have been taken to the Monkey World zoological park covering 26 ha in the Dorset County, South-western England. The center, open to the public just as a zoo, is home to about 250 primates who had been exploited as pets, in laboratories, in circuses and for souvenir pictures for tourists or seized by custom services around the world.

White-throated guenons are threatened by industrial deforestation, firewood gathering, bush meet rings and international trafficking. The last wild specimens are in Nigeria, Benin and maybe Togo.³¹

THAILAND

April 25, 2018

Thailand

Normally, white-cheeked Gibbons (*Nomascus leucogenys*, Appendix I) live in the canopy, feed on fruit and maintain close social ties through their vocalizations. The young are often taken from their mothers to serve as pets. This one was bought about 10 years ago at the Chatuchak market in Bangkok and ate biscuits and sandwiches. Its owner did not find it necessary to remove the plastic packaging. They were used as litter for the excrement of the one called Thong from now on by the WFFT refuge (Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand).³²

VIET NAM

Beginning of May 2018

Province of Bến Tre, Viet Nam

A man was detaining a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) and had been noticed by Education for Nature – Vietnam. He tried to beat about the bush by hiding the animal and declaring he was dead. But the Ben Tre Forest Protection Department had hacked him down. The macaque has joined the rescue center of the Bu Gia Map National Park.³³



June 26, 2018

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Release of a gibbon (*Hylobatidae*, Appendix I) chained in a garage. He was handed over to the Cat Tien refuge.³⁴

EUROPE

FRANCE

April 2018

Villepinte, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, France

Transfer of a Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) to a Spanish sanctuary. It was seized from the home of a man suspected of theft. It is the 4th since the beginning of the year North of Paris.³⁵



April 24, 2018

Béziers, Hérault Department, France

Seizure of a female Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) more than ten years old, from an individual's home.³⁶



Vicuñas

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

April 2, 2018

La Ciénaga Redonda, Catamarca Province, Argentina

A member of the indigenous community of La Angostura had alerted police officers. A vicuña poacher (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) was operating in the area. Indeed, a vicuña skin with its head attached was hidden in the undergrowth. The officers have then orientated themselves onto the Vargas family property. They arrested a young 18-year-old man who detained 4 other vicuña skins, a 22-caliber gun, and 13 rounds of ammunition. He had been brought to the station and left at the Belén prosecutor's disposition.¹

PERU

Early June 2018

Surihuire, Lari District, Caylloma Province, Arequipa Region, Peru

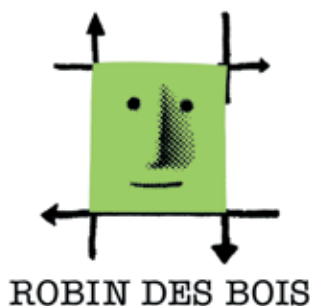
34 vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) pursued by off-road vehicles, killed, sheared, skinned and scattered. In the high plateaus of the region, 1861 families live from the breeding, surveillance and shearing of 20,000 vicuñas. Vicuña wool, renowned for its finesse, sells for \$400 US per kg and more on the international market.²

June 16-17, 2018

San Pedro District, Lucanas Province, Ayacucho Region, Peru

Poaching of about 100 vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). They were sheared and skinned. "The slaughter was fierce, they even killed the young ones," complain the villagers who were about to clip the wool.

The livestock would also be 20,000 vicuñas in the province and would support more than 300 families.³



Felines



"On the Trail" n°21

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

Continent	Country	Animal/part	Prix US\$	Ref.
Africa	Somalia	Living baby leopard	2,500	4
Asia	India (Maharashtra)	Leopard claws and skin	15,350	8
	India (Maharashtra)	Leopard skin	15,000	10
	India (Odisha)		7,500	17
	India (Maharashtra)		12,000	18

"On the Trail" notes a multiplication of leopard lynching. The plans of prevention and management of conflicts between men and leopards written by naturalists, forestry services and administration are not convincing the younger generations. The crisis is exacerbated by the expansion of agricultural activities, the drought that is pushing leopards towards village water supplies and the drop of their natural preys that are commonly poached. The sum of cruelties contrasts with the reputation of non-violence and tolerance towards animals that contribute to India's prestige.

It was a foregone conclusion. The decision of the South African Ministry of the Environment, a decision endorsed at the CITES plenary meeting in Johannesburg in October 2016, to export 800 lion skeletons (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 54) has whetted the appetites of traffickers and created a sinister suction effect. The killing of wild and especially farmed lions is increasing.

LEOPARDS

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

AFRICA

GABON

June 15, 2018
Koulamoutou,
Province of
Ogooué-Lolo,
Gabon

Seizure of two
skins and a rifle.
Arrest of Noufou
Oumsaoré.¹



GUINEA

April 10, 2018

Dabola, Faranah Region, Guinea

The Donzos rule the roost. At 200, they freed during a transfer of justice the named Kallo and Sadigou, prosecuted for having poached a leopard. The Donzos are traditional hunters. One could consider them as lumbering and sparse recluses. Actually, they form a united and well-coordinated syndicate.²

April 21 and May 15, 2018

Labé, Labé Region, Guinea

Mamadou Ciré Barry is a Koranic schoolteacher. He is also a trafficker of wild endangered species. He was arrested today. The man of faith was in possession of a poached leopard skin on Tougué prefecture jurisdiction. He was brought to the court and put under committal and then sentenced to 1 month in prison and a fine of 90,000 Guinean francs (\$10 US).³



SOMALIA

Early May 2018

Kismayo, Lower Juba Region, Somalia

According to the Elephant Action League, poachers sold two leopard cubs for \$5,000 US to the Administration who wants thanks to this acquisition to decorate the guesthouse of its headquarters and to develop a little zoo showing the beauty of the biodiversity of the region.⁴

BANGLADESH**June 14, 2018****Narayanganj, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh**

Seizure by the RAB – Rapid Action Battalion – of two leopards that was allegedly fraudulently imported from Africa six days ago and who, according to two arrested people, were to be exported “to a neighbouring country.”⁵

**INDIA****April 8, 2018****Neelka, Jaipur District, Rajasthan State, India**

Manesh Kumar Bunkar was drawing water from a village reservoir when the leopard attacked him. Neighbours intervened to separate them. But the cat continued to ramble in the village and someone from a terrace threw a big piece of metal at his head. The 18-month-old female was stunned and stoned. The police and park rangers who arrived on the scene were only able to note his death and open an investigation for violation of the Wildlife Conservation Act against a group of unidentified men.⁶

April 10, 2018**Shahpur, Hoshiarpur District, Punjab State, India**

An extensive investigation was opened by the police, assisted by hunting and ballistic experts, in order to find those who shot to death a female leopard in the early morning 100 m from the village. Some leopards were already found dead in the district in clutch-wire traps or from mobs of enraged villagers, but this is the first time a rifle was used. The autopsy performed by three veterinarians was able to establish that the fatal shot was fired around 4:00 in the morning. A .30 caliber weapon was used according to Ashish Dasgupta, a veteran hunter of leopard “man-eaters” and expert in “sport” hunting ballistics. For Kanwar Chaudhary, an honorary wildlife warden in the area, poachers frequent the village and surrounding fields and forests. The police are trying to identify the killers thanks to cell phones used in the area.⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS**April 16 and 23, 2018****Thane, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India**

The assistant police inspector Sandeep Bagul directed an important affair this past Monday. Acting on a tip-off, he swept down on Kismatlala Marabi (30 years old) and Korcha Marabi (25 years old). They were keeping a leopard skin and claws and in a bag. The loot was estimated at one million rupees (\$15,350 US). The identity of the eventual buyer is unknown. The police estimate that the feline had been poached in the Satara or Raigad districts, southeast of Thane. The two suspects are daily wage workers originally from Katni, in the neighbor State of Madhya Pradesh. A week after their arrest the criminal police announced that they also detained one skin and 3 deer antlers.⁸

April 21, 2018**Savdara, Bhilwara District, State of Rajasthan, India**

This 2-and-a-half-year old male had a narrow escape. The feline was about to die and unconscious after having been beaten by villagers with sticks and stones. The leopard quenched his thirst in a water tank for cattle. Two villagers surprised him. Chotu and Gopal Das would have been attacked. Their



cries alerted neighbors already angry at leopards accused of eating goats and sheep. The lynching of the leopard had been avoided, thanks to the intervention of a wise man who calmed the mob by advising to bind his paws and inform the authorities. The park rangers could bring him away. According to veterinarians, his chances of surviving are good. The two men were driven to the hospital; they were released the same day.⁹

April 21, 2018**Thane, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India**

Veer kills a leopard with his home-made rifle. He will later claim that the leopard was harassing his flock. According to him, the death toll amounts to 30 goats and a cow. In fact, Veer is said to be a long-standing poacher and an astute and cunning trafficker. He then used connections with two friends, security guards, to sell the skin. These last ones, Dhanraj and Mhatre, 30 and 33 years old, were intercepted on the way to Kalyan with, in their saddlebags, the leopard skin equal to \$15,000 US and a fake tiger skin. They too would be implicated long-standing in the business.

They were released on bail worth \$ 230 US and must notify their presence at the police station every Saturday.¹⁰

LEOPARDS - FOLLOWED

May 2018

Bazpur, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

One arrest. The man is accused of having lynched a leopard cub with a wooden stick on April 27. The animal had been accused of attacking an old man working in the fields. During his 14 day custody he provided some useful information. Accomplices are now being searched for.¹¹



May 4, 2018

Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bhutan.

A skin 2.43m long seized. Two Bhutanese in custody.¹²

May 10, 2018

Kannimangalam, Ernakulam District, State of Kerala, India

Death of a leopard caught in a trap. The victim, around 5 years old, was not dead yet when she was taken into the hands of veterinarians alerted by rubber collectors. The police interrogated a farmer.¹³



May 15, 2018

Gairatpur Bas, Gurgaon District, State of Haryana, India

Suspicious death of a female leopard cub around a year and a half old, near a watering hole.¹⁴

May 21, 2018

Lakhnadon, Seoni District, Province of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of a leopard paw and black magic emblems. Arrest of one minor.¹⁵

May 21, 2018

Salumbar, Udaipur District, State of Rajasthan, India

Since the beginning of the year, 18 leopards have died in the State of Rajasthan. For the most part, they were electrocuted by fences, crushed by trains or cars, lynched, poached, or drowned in wells while searching for water. The last miscellaneous "leopard" fact is a poaching in the middle of the forest. Gala Ram was arrested. Three accomplices are wanted, the sleeping partner too.¹⁶

The situation is getting worse, despite the launch in Rajasthan of a plan to protect the leopards based on the avoidance of conflicts with human activities, the protection of their dietary resources and the strengthening of surveillance patrols. An expert, Joy Gardener, accuses animal photographers of aggravating things by sharing their photos on social networks. "Poachers are active on the Internet and it is easier for them to track the animals."

May 23, 2018

Kisinda, District of Sambalpur, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of a skin, arrest of Akei Sahu, 70 years old, and an accomplice. They wanted to sell the skin at 500,000 rupees, or \$7,500 US.¹⁷

May 24, 2018

Thane, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a skin for sale at 800,000 rupees, or \$12,000 US. Two arrests – Sakaate is a driver of public works machinery, Pote works in a plant nursery. A manufacturer whose identity is not revealed was the potential buyer. Pote tells that his father was a "sage" and used to "meditate" on leopard skin. One month after the father's death, Pote would have decided to sell the skin.¹⁸

May 26, 2018

Doderna, Nirmal District, State of Telangana, India

It's the sixth violent death of a leopard since the beginning of the year in the State of Telangana. It's a male around 2 and a half years old. He was found near a watering hole. Post-mortem in progress.¹⁹

May 27, 2018

District of Bahraich, State of Uttar Pradesh, India. Border with Nepal.

Lynching. The 3-year-old female was accused of having, under undisclosed circumstances, is said to have attacked a dozen people in three hamlets inside a forest. Stuck in a thicket to which the besiegers set fire, the victim ran away. Surrounded and burned, she was beaten to death with sticks.²⁰

June 2, 2018

Valparai, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Anti-leopard demonstration. Hundreds of Tan Tea tea plantation workers and their families protested about leopard forays into their workplaces and homes. In February, a little 4-year-old girl was bitten to death.

Cameras were set up by wildlife services to determine if it's a question of one or more leopards. Concurrently, anti-poaching patrols were called to double the watch.

Tan Tea cultivates 4500 ha of black tea plantation in Nilgiris and Coimbatore districts in Tamil Nadu.²¹

June 2018
India



In two to three years, the lynching of leopards has multiplied. From exceptional, it became banal. Lightning acceleration. The excited and uncontrollable crowd usually prevents rescuers, forest guards, NGO volunteers from accessing the animal, capturing it or anaesthetizing it to keep it away. The National Board of Wildlife believes that section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code should be applied during emergency situations where wildlife is at risk. Section 144 prohibits the gathering of more than four to five persons.

The district justice has the power to trigger the application of section 144 if necessary. The idea is gaining ground. The Union ministry is responsible for making recommendations on this subject to the governments of the States concerned.²²

June 8, 2018

Pithoragarh District, State of Uttarakhand, India
Seizure of leopard skin and bones. Two arrests. They were poaching in the forest near the village of Katiyani.²³

June 10, 2018

Banbasa, Champawat District, State of Uttarakhand, India. Border with Nepal.

Seizure of four adult leopard skins and one cub skin. A man escaped when the car was searched. However, Puskar Singh and Kamal Singh are in the hands of the police. The latter would be an agent of the ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police). He is suspected of poisoning the felines in the ill-famed forest near Katiyani. The car was blocked on the road by the police. The three men were on their way to Banbasa to deliver the loot. Banbasa is at the crossroads of bone and skin migration. In January, one skin and 8.3 kg of tiger bones were seized from two traffickers from Nepal. They were from Uttar Pradesh.²⁴

June 17, 2018

District de Bageshwar, State of Uttarakhand, India

A leopard suspected of being a man-eater – he reportedly killed a 7-year old in a forest – was fatally shot by a professional hunter appointed by the State forest services. To attract the attention of public authorities, the villagers had deliberately set fire to a small-sized pine wood. To the question from the local press regarding whether the leopard was for sure the one who had attacked the child, the divisional forest officer responded thusly: "Leopards usually do not change their territory. The leopard was killed in the same forest where the half eaten body was recovered. So, it seems it is the same leopard." To the question of why the leopard became a man-eater, the officers pointed out the disappearance of natural prey in the forests. Uttarakhand is one of the Indian states where man/leopard conflicts are the most frequent.²⁵

June 25, 2018

Jeolikot, Nainital District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Freeing of a trapped leopard. He is 4/5 years old. He was taken to the wounded leopard care centre in Haldwani. The Chief Forest Curator says, "He will be released soon and criminals will be arrested shortly."²⁶



End of June 2018

India

The toll is heavy, it is published by the WPSI (Wildlife Protection Society of India).

In the first six months of the year, India lost 260 leopards, 90 by poaching, 22 by lynching, four by collisions with trains, three by electrocution and three by defensive shots from forest services. Anish Andheria, member of the Maharashtra Wildlife Council, believes that the death toll of 90 leopards from poaching is probably underestimated. "Electric current and traps are discreet killers, usually their victims are not detected."²⁷

IRAN

April 12, 2018

Shirvan, North Khorasan Province, Iran

Discovered by a patrol of friends of animals on the border of a protected area, of a leopard carcass, partly devoured by scavengers. The causes of death are indeterminate.²⁸

LEOPARDS - FOLLOWED

April 21, 2018

Behshahr County, Mazandaran Province, Iran

It fell in a wild boar trap set out by farmers to protect the crops and orchards.²⁹



April 30, 2018

Izeh, Khuzestan Province, Iran

Seizure of the skin and organs from an adult female during a search. The poaching goes back approximately two months. According to a postmortem exam, the victim was awaiting the birth of three cubs.³⁰

Early May 2018

Savadkuh County, Mazandaran Province, Iran

Attracted by a cow's carcass, a pregnant leopard female was caught in a trap and struggled so hard to get out that one of her legs was cut in half. To be sure of his trick, the farmer shot her and left the body in place. Volunteers alerted by the gunshot ambushed. Twelve hours later, the farmer's wife came to extirpate the victim to do who knows what, probably business. The couple was arrested by the rangers called to the rescue.³¹



May 10, 2018

Near Abbasabad, Kurdistan Province, Iran

For several years, prints, marks on trees and some domestic animal attacks gave the impression that at least one leopard was knocking about the Kosallan protected area and its vicinity. The proof of his existence unfortunately was his death. The decomposing carcass dating 4 to 5 months does not allow knowledge of his sex nor age. The post-mortem exam may tell us more. No traces of traps or bullets on site.³²

SRI LANKA

June 21 and 24, 2018

North of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Lucky island where the lynching of a leopard is still a scandal, while in neighboring India the practice has in a few years settled as almost a banality. The leopard was accused by rumor of attacking a dozen people in a village 300 km from Colombo. Two arrests. 10 other actors are sought. Sri Lanka houses 22 million inhabitants and less than 1000 leopards.³³

EUROPE

NETHERLANDS

Beginning of June 2018

Netherlands

Seizure on a traveler coming from Kenya of a leopard skin.³⁴



CHEETAHS

Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 2018

South Africa

In South Africa, there are around 1500 cheetahs in the wild.

Farming is taking on worrying proportions. It is estimated that around 600 cheetahs are locked up in 80 establishments. The reasons for this craze are monetary and have nothing to do with the conservation of a species at risk that has lost 90% of its primary range in 50 years. Some adults of good size would be shot in pens even though the only canned hunting allowed in the country is the lion one. Other adults are smuggled or legally sold to public or private zoos in the Middle East in particular. Baby cheetahs separated from their mothers are exploited in the rage of bottle-feeding which allows tourists, for money in exchange, to "breastfeed" big cats and to share selfies attesting to their brotherhood with them. After a few weeks, the cheetah babies are returned to the pens, soaked to the bone by the smell of the men and later ready to be easily shot to death by hunters. To reduce the risk of inbreeding and debility, breeders tap wild cheetahs into the small stock by having pre-selected specimens caught by trappers. Finally, pastoralists when they are connected with Asian communities or witch doctor unions can draw profile from the death of their cheetahs by selling bones, claws, skin or other parts.³⁵

LIONS

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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 24 and 25 and end of April 2018

Near Bloemfontein, Province of Free State, South Africa

- 19 were "euthanized" with rifles at a farm near Bloemfontein operated by André Steyn.

- An additional killing of 80 lions brought by truck from Gauteng and North West Provinces were suspended following procedural conflicts between administrations. The NGO Blood Lions fears that legal trafficking and the illegal traffic of lion bones are somewhat by-products and supplementary revenue for the "canned" hunting of breeding lions. There are 6 to 8000 breeding lions in South Africa and less than 20,000 wild lions in all of Africa.³⁶

April 26, 2018

Free State Province, South Africa

Three poisoned lions, their jawbones and paws were cut off and taken away. The breeder Gert Claasen suspects use of the organs for the purposes of black magic. "Some people believe lion body parts will bring extremely good luck like winning the lottery." Two lionesses, victims of "muthi," were in gestation. To facilitate the attack, farm dogs had been poisoned several days before. Three other lions are missing. "It is not yet known if they are dead, loaded or on the loose" the spokesperson for the Bethlehem police worries. The neighborhood is on the lookout.³⁷

June 8, 2018

Umbabat National Reserve, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Regrouping contiguously to the Kruger Park the Timbavati, Klaserie, Umbabat and Balule game reserves, the APNR (Associated Private Nature Reserves) holds a hunting license for the current year for 4467 wild animals. Among them, 53 elephants and a male aged over 50 - the Holy Grail for "big five" hunters, a tusker with 45 kg for each tusk, five giraffes and seven hippos. The biggest of the herds to shoot down, the loss leader of this shooting supermarket, is made up of 4171 impala antelopes.

The deadly list also counts a lion. That's done now, he's down. According to first information, the victim would be Sky, the dominant male of the Western pride well known to the rangers and Kruger park visitors. He would have been intentionally lured into the reserve by useful spreading of elephant and buffalo giblets hunted only hours earlier on the Umbabat grounds, one of the ANPR partners. The glorious hunter would be from the United-States. This is not the first time the ANPR causes debate (cf "On the Trail" n°18 p.92).

Eight days later, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) denied that the victim was Sky, it would be an old male roaming in Kruger Park on the Umbabat side.³⁸

LIONS - FOLLOWED

June 11, 2018

Near the Nyamundwa dam, Kruger National Park, Pretoriuskop Section, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Care for a lioness caught in a trap and spotted on a surveillance camera. The prognosis is uncertain. The trap's wire compressed her chest. She was followed by two nursing cubs.³⁹



June 30, 2018

North of Pretoria, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

Poisoning during the night between Friday and Saturday of six lions. The heads and paws were cut off. The police and the canine brigade from the Hi-Risk Unit are attempting to follow the trail of the killers. A reward of 250,000 rand (\$20,000 US) is promised to anyone who will help to find them.⁴⁰



© Pretoria North Rekord

CAMEROON

May 8, 2018

Yaoundé Nsimalen International Airport, Centre Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 19 lion teeth from the suitcase of a Chinese traveller.⁴¹

MOZAMBIQUE

June 2018

Limpopo National Park, Gaza Province, Mozambique

Launch of the Limpopo Lion Protection Team. It is made up of graduates from the South African Wildlife College.

In the first four days of the park inspection, 33 traps were neutralized. The team is also in charge of getting closer to the villagers to better understand what pushes some of them to set traps and poison lions, and to propose preventive measures.⁴²



NAMIBIA

June 15, 2018

De Rust, Ugabriver, Kunene Region, Namibia

Gretsky, alias XPL 99, the male lion was wiped out by order from the Ministry for the Environment and Tourism. He would have killed 25 goats and sheep. Hence, the only surviving male lion in the region is Nkosi, alias XPL 110, four and a half years old. Gretsky was the dominant male in a group with three females. See notably "On the Trail" n°17, p.63.⁴³

UGANDA

Beginning April 2018

Near Hamukungu, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Western Region, Uganda

Out of the 42 lions counted in the National Park, eleven have just been poisoned: three lionesses and eight cubs found dead near the Hamukungu fishing village. The locals call out the responsibility of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) who would have not answered to their warnings following the death over the last two weeks of around twenty cows and many goats devoured by the felines. Conflicts between wildlife and breeders and farmers are recurrent in the national Park. They have intensified since 2007 when refugee populations from neighboring Congo settled down there. That year 13 lions were poisoned, and 8 in 2010. "Problem animals"- as the farmers call them- are not limited to felines. Intrusions of elephants, buffalos, bush pigs, monkeys, hippos and crocodiles are also reported. The UWA devotes 20% of the park's income from tourism to reducing men-animals conflicts appliances in the way of digging trenches, planting thorny trees... But the lack of compensation for occasional loss to herds and crops doesn't make things better. According to the Tourism minister Ephraim Kamuntu "Government made a mistake to allow pastoralists in this sanctuary because the domestic animals compete with wild animals for pastures". A new law currently in Parliament plans compensation for the shepherds.

Four men from Hamukungu village were arrested. The Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Historic Heritage spoke to the inhabitants of the village and asked them to stand up and keep a moment of silence in tribute to the sacrificed lions.⁴⁴



LIONS - FOLLOWED

TANZANIA

May 31, 2018

Serengeti National Park, Simiyu Region, Tanzania

Poisoning of 9 lions with blocks of highly toxic meat. The bait was found next to the carcasses. Other lions could be dead from the ambush and rotting further away. Three men were arrested in the village of Nyichoka. Agriculture comes into contact with the park.⁴⁵



ZIMBABWE

End of May 2018

Near Makuti, Province of Mashonaland West, Zimbabwe

Rescue of a young lioness caught in a trap set up by rural communities.⁴⁶



© Matusadona Lion Project

EUROPE

SPAIN

May 4, 2018

Madrid, Spain

The 65th International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation is suspending the Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa (PHASA) and the Confederation of Hunting Associations of South Africa (CHASA). These two organizations very influential in Austral Africa have recently done a U-turn and officially declared their support or even their involvement in canned hunting of "wild" bred game, lions in particular.⁴⁷

BENGAL LEOPARD CATS, SWAMP CATS AND ASIAN GOLDEN CATS

ASIA

INDONESIA

May 31, 2018

Medan, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia

Release by the BKSDA and the NGO Scorpion of a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) given for care to the dedicated center of Sibolangit where his ability to survive in the forest will be evaluated.⁴⁸



© Scorpion

IRAN

End of May 2018

Gilan Province, Iran

Four dead swamp cats (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II), lined up like plushes on the sand. The poacher could not resist posting photos on Instagram with a caption like "I bought myself little scarves." He was arrested. He faces 3 years in prison. What became of the parents? Swamp cats live in families, the mother, father, and cubs up until the four-to-six offspring become self-sufficient.



© Tim Ellis

Adults, they measure 70 to 120 cm long from head to tail and 35 to 40 cm tall. They eat rodents, amphibians, fish, insects, and fruit in the winter. Farmers do not like them. For a lack of

birds, they would fall back on chickens.⁴⁹

VIET NAM

April 2, 2018

Ba Ria Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

facebook

For sale on Facebook. ENV (Education for Nature – Vietnam) and the police succeeded in removing from the global market and from the chicken wire two young female leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) whose fate isn't yet clear. It could not be worse than that of yesterday.⁵⁰

June 6, 2018

Tam Điệp, Province of Ninh Bình, Viet Nam

The guy was shady-looking. The patrol intervened. Inside two spoilt cardboard boxes they found three leopard cats kittens (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) still alive and their dead mother.⁵¹

June 13, 2018

Province of Hoa Binh, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Bùi Văn Miên to four year prison for detention and transport of three Asian golden cats (*Catopuma temminckii*, Appendix I), cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p. 67. They were dead. Văn Miên had been recruited for the convoy. Arrested four days after entry into force of the new penal code, he faced up to 10 years in jail.⁵²



TIGERS

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



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of April 2018

Near Brownsville, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Finding of a 2-month old male tiger in a trash bag, in a good state but clearly under sedatives. Three men had succeeded in crossing the Mexico-USA border. Then, they had been informed of a police barrier a bit further away. They retraced their path and left the cub on the roadside. It's the ninth tiger in ten years to be the subject of an attempted smuggling to the United States of America coming from Mexico.



A quarter of 5000 animals and plants seized between 2005 and 2014 at the 328 points of entry to the United States of America came from Latin America. In the lead, queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II), marine turtles and their eggs, caimans and crocodiles living or as skins to be converted into belts or boots.⁵³



MEXICO

Mid-May 2018

San Martín Texmelucan de Labastida, State of Puebla, Mexico

Raid of the army and police in the estate of a gang leader specialized in fuel theft. Pemex refineries are siphoned. Seizure of a tiger used as a guard-dog, weapons, drugs and communication equipment. France Press agency specifies that authorities also took away blankets with the Jalisco NE Generation Cartel logo. They are used to cover the bodies of the cartel victims.⁵⁴

INDIA

April 2018

Sariska Tiger Reserve, State of Rajasthan, India

More than 250 families divided into 36 hamlets remain living inside the reserve. The State offered each adult 1 million rupees, or \$14,800 US, or 6 bighas of agricultural land (around 1 ha), plus \$3,700 US in compensation to each family for their departure. But the squatters refuse to leave. With each day that passes and the increasing population, the plan becomes more and more difficult and costly to implement, and the risks of conflict between the tigers and the encroachers increase.⁵⁵

April 2, 2018

Nagpur, Nagpur District, Maharashtra State, India

New arrest of a "tiger fisherman" from Pench. Vijay Gedam set his nets with his accomplices in the Totladoh dam reserve in the Pench reserve and he also set tiger traps in the forest. Vijay had returned to his original profession. He was arrested near the fish market. A dozen accomplices are still on the run. Cf. "On the Trail" n°20, p.70.⁵⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 5, 2018

Ulhasnagar, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

The dispute heated up between the Vitthalwadi police station on one side, and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) on the other. A controversy sparked about a seizure carried out by the police officers: Haresh Hansrajani and his son Deepak were storing illegal wild animal parts in their store. The police arrested the two men in possession of a so-called "tiger skin," and without informing the experts on wild fauna were hasty to spread around photos where they posed proudly behind the suspects and a small-sized skin. The WCCB was cut to the quick. In seeing the photos their experts estimated that the "tiger skin" was fake. One of them reminds that "there are several cases where black stripes are painted and a mixture of yellow and brown colour is sprayed on a skin belonging to some different animal to give it an appearance of tiger skin and people are duped." The WCCB estimated that it should have been consulted in advance by the police officers. But the police officers stood by their word. One of them affirmed, "We have no doubt that it's a tiger skin as the duo has accepted their crime [...]. As of now both the father and son have been given police custody and we are investigating on how did procure it and what were they planning to do with it." Dr. Jitendra Ramgaonkar, Deputy Conservator of Forests in Thane, is expecting that the police hand over him the skin to release indisputable expert assessment.⁵⁷

GANG

April 2018

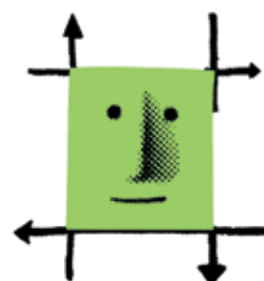
State of Uttarakhand, India

Who wishes harm on Jim Corbett tigers, the reserve of yellow and black stripes in Northern India? 215 tigers according to the most recent census from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and WWF. In 2016, a quintal of bones and five skins – total value more than \$100,000 US – had been seized from the pack of a gang of Bawaria (cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p. 57). Only one, Ram Chandra alias Chandar had been arrested. At least four others had escaped in the night. Since, three inquiries directed by big shots from the forest ranger administration had been launched. They were all unsuccessful. At the request of Uttarakhand's government, a fourth one led by Jai Raj, the newest director of the Head of the Forest Force (HOFF) has just started. 25 tigers had been killed in the reserve and most of the remains – skin, bones, skull – would be still awaiting a delivery in pits only known by a few.⁵⁸

April 13, 2018

Sahatepurva, Lakhimpur Kheri District, Uttar Pradesh State, India

Right next to the Dudhwa tiger reserve, the accidental encounter in the wee hours between a tigress and a man going to satisfy his natural needs in the field at the edge of a forest ended tragically for the latter. He was fatally attacked. The encounter also almost became fatal for the assailant. More than 2000 people quickly surrounded her. About one hundred police officers and park rangers, assisted by the Tiger brigade of WTI (Wildlife Trust of India) hurried over to the area. They found her sitting in a field surrounded on all sides by cries and sticks. A lynching was narrowly avoided; the tigress was captured in nets. An anesthetic on site would have unleashed the crowd and the exfiltration would have been impossible. Today she is at Lucknow zoo and recovering after having been hit on the head by clubs thrown by the angry crowd. Since 2009, eight tigers have been saved in these same circumstances and four were freed in the wild.⁵⁹



ROBIN DES BOIS

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

April 13, 2018

Bagghora Forest, Paschim Medinipur District, West Bengal State, India

Tiger tracks had been identified for the first time at the end of January. A hidden camera had taken the first images at the beginning of March. Specialists first thought it was a male. Presence of the tiger in the Lalgah forest was a first and the feline had been under the threat of the riff-raff. Experts tried in vain to capture it with the help of baits and nets. In several weeks, rumors spread on alleged attacks from the lone tiger.

In the beginning of April, it was found dead. During the "Hunting festival", it was taken as a target. The tiger was a tigress. Her migratory route is mysterious. Without doubt she came from southern Sunderbans about a hundred kilometers away.⁶⁰



April 17, 2018

Ranthambore National Park, State of Rajasthan, India

The mystery thickens and a controversy opens up around the bodies of two 18-month-old brother tiger cubs found at dawn in the Sawai Man Singh Tiger Sanctuary, inside the National Park. First attributed to a male wanting to mate with their mother – the attractive T-79, according to human nomenclature – the death is now suspected to have been caused by poisoning. No external injuries are visible. Samples of the viscera were sent for analysis to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology.⁶¹

April 19, 2018

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, Uttar Pradesh State, India

The poaching took the worst way for the adult tiger that succumbed to his injuries and for the three poachers who were hurt by the tiger. Four others took flight. The guards found seven bikes on the border of the reserve. Two persons responsible for the safety inside the reserve were suspended. An investigation is being launched. They are suspected of negligence.⁶²

April 30, 2018

Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, State of Maharashtra, India

12 hikers in the forbidden area of the reserve, middle classes of Pune wandering around a campfire, all in their forties and busy preparing their bivouac. In custody, they were released on bail of 15,000 rupees each, or \$2,250 US. They were surprised by a team of naturalists who came to make an annual count of nocturnal animals on the occasion of Buddha Purnima (Buddha's Birthday).⁶³



Beginning of May 2018

Nagina, Bijnor District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

One skin (3.05 m long, 1.83 m wide, 8kg), 20 kg of bone, two arrests. The chase lasted all night. Joint operation Wildlife SOS and the STF (Special Task Force). Pictures from the national database for living tigers proves the victim lived in the Jim Corbett reserve. Nagina is 50 km away from Jim Corbett. The bag of the Bawaria clan in the Bijnor district is impressive. Poaching of five tigers in 2016 inside the reserve is blamed on them. The skin and bones belong perhaps to a sixth victim. See "On the Trail" n°18 p.55.⁶⁴

May 13-14, 2018

Almora District, State of Uttarakhand, India

This is the 6th dead tiger in the State since the beginning of the year. The carcass, discovered during the night between Saturday and Sunday in Almora forest, was "stored" in the local forestry service office latrine while awaiting an autopsy at the beginning of the week. Local NGOs and naturalists entered the fray, denouncing indiscriminately the casualness, disrespect for the body or the risks of theft by traffickers on the lookout, and the inefficiency of millions of rupees spent by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). The wildlife guards had to grin and bear it in proof of humility. "We have limited resources and the staff kept it in the best possible manner. The terrain is tough and inviting two veterinarians for the post-mortem was difficult then."⁶⁵

End of May 2018

New Delhi, District of Delhi, India

It came to the ears of the cops that so-called Lama, a Nepalese national, had an appointment to sell tiger bones to a stranger in an Indian Oil gas station, Libaspur neighborhood. Seizure of 7kg of bones.⁶⁶

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

June 24, 2018

Mainakot, Pilibhit District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Ram Kishan alias Ram Kushan had been on the run for three years. He was mixed up in a bad story about a tiger skin and 20 pounds of bone. Eight accomplices had been arrested and himself had managed to escape and take refuge in Nepal. A few weeks ago, he returned home to work for a while in a rice field in Khatima, Uttarakhand. He got caught near Pilibhit's tiger reserve, ready to do it again maybe.⁶⁷

June 29, 2018

Sundarbans National Park, West Bengal State, India

Bamboo harassment of a tiger swimming to Kendo Island. A video was taken from the ground by a witness. The tiger made it out. The twelve fishermen who pursued the tiger were arrested. They are in turn prosecuted for cruelty to animals. The forestry minister is outraged. "Disturbing or torturing animals without reason is becoming a menace these days. I will not tolerate it at any cost. Nobody found guilty will be spared."⁶⁸

INDONESIA

May 23, 2018

Medan, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia

Conviction of a certain Ilyas to two years prison. The general attorney had requested three. Ilyas sold on Facebook tigers and bears in parts (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 71).⁶⁹



NEPAL

May 6, 2018

Bagmati, Makwanpur District, Province No. 3, Nepal

Seizure of 9 kg of bone, an adult tiger skin 2.9 m long from head to tail and 90 cm wide. One 29-year old man arrested.⁷⁰



May 28, 2018

Katmandu, Province No. 3, Nepal

Seizure of a tiger skin. Four arrests.⁷¹

VIET NAM

April 2018

Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Mau Chien was condemned to 13 months in prison for a diverse trafficking (rhinoceros' horns, frozen tigers), his spouse 6 months suspended prison sentence (cf. "On the Trail" n°18 p. 57 and n°20 p. 127). ENV called for the closure of the tigers' farm exploited by the couple. At this stage, the administration refuses, for lack of precise information on the implications of this in the Chien's trafficking. Moreover, the seizure of eleven tigers was faced with a big problem. No establishment was capable of accommodating them in decent conditions.⁷²

April 19, 2018

Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Two bodies of tigers weighing 20kg each soaked in glass bowls in a yellowish liquid were seized from the baggage compartment of a coach linking Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (1700 km).⁷³

June 5, 2018

Province of Nghe An, Viet Nam

Police laid hands on five tiger cub cadavers, 2 kg each, inside the car of Bui Van Hieu and Hoang Van Thien, 26 and 27 years old. A third guy, Nguyen Van Chinh, who was escorting the convoy in a different car is also brought in. Had they arrived to their unknown destination, the cubs would have been cooked over and over to the bone to make tiger wine deemed to cure rheumatisms and to be good for sex.⁷⁴

EUROPE

SPAIN

June 20, 2018

Alicante, Province of Alicante, Spain

Five Circus Wonderland tigers have been removed from the road trip thanks to APP (Animal Advocacy and Protection). They will join the Isle of Wight Zoo, UK, by truck and Eurostar from Calais, France.⁷⁵



AMERICA

COLOMBIA

May 12, 2018

Bogotá, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia

Rescue on the public streets in a suburb of Bogotá of a 2 to 3 month old oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I) in very poor sanitary conditions. The Bogotá environmental police released the following message: "The whole community is not to purchase wild animals, not to keep them as pets, which causes grave damage to the ecosystem and its animals who should never be pulled from their place of origin."⁷⁶



ECUADOR

June 24, 2018

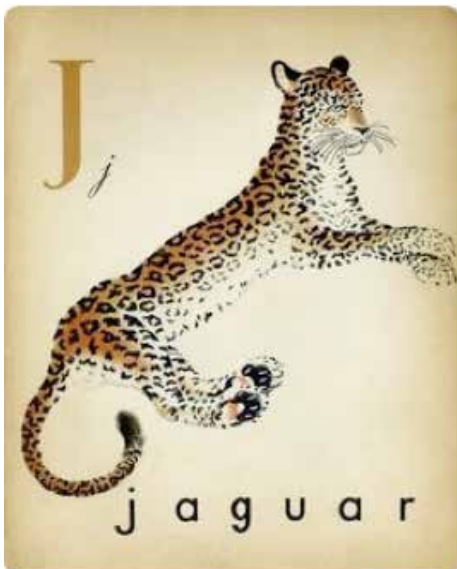
Durán, Province of Guayas, Ecuador

An injured margay (*Leopardus wiedii*, Appendix I) is collected from the side of the road. Its state of health was not detailed. It is at a vet's.⁷⁷



JAGUARS

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



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 2018

State of Arizona, United States of America

An anonymous photo taken in Mexico of a jaguar skin sows dismay among naturalists from the Northern Jaguar Project that, 150 km north of Tucson in the Huachuca Mountains, surveys the ultimate habitat of jaguars in the United States. The comparison between the photos of living Yo'oko taken in 2016 and 2017 in Arizona, and the photo of the jaguar skin taken in Mexico, is overwhelming. The fur is similar. Jaguars are the third largest felines after lions and tigers. Until the beginning of the 20th century, they were common in Colorado, Southern California, and even Louisiana. Today they are only a handful, not to say extinct. Several specimens, however, may continue to migrate from Mexico to Arizona. Donald Trump's plan to build a wall at the Mexico-United States border would ruin the last hopes of seeing a future with a viable core of jaguars in the US part of the Sonoran desert.⁷⁸



MEXICO

April 1, 2018

El Cuyo, State of Yucatan, Mexico

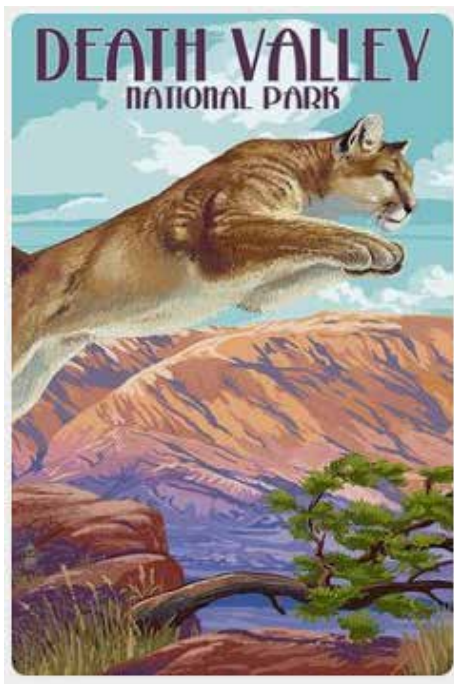
The National Commission for Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) had received a tip-off. The PROFEPA agents had conducted a search in a suspect's household and found there a jaguar skin recently tanned and without documentation of origin. The expert assessment in the premises of PROFEPA was able to determine that it corresponded to the corpse of a male jaguar. He had been riddled with 12 bullets and wore perforation marks on his head and neck.⁷⁹

June 7, 2018

State of Nayarit, Mexico

The PROFEPA has filed a complaint after the death of a jaguar on the Tepic-Crucero de San Blas tollgate road. Nayarit police will try to determine cause of death and if the potential collision is due to an accident of a disguised act of poaching. The individual aged eight to 10 years and 1.63 m long was set in a cold room in waiting autopsy. His skeleton will be used for educational purposes and the board of Nayarit national reserve hopes the autopsy will provide useful information on feeding habits of jaguars in this corridor extending between San Blas and the Escuintla protected natural area.⁸⁰

PUMAS



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

End of June 2018

La Plata, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

Sentencing of a puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) poacher in the Magdalena El Destino Reserve to three years suspended prison sentence, a 5-year ban on carrying a firearm, and a fine equal to \$120 US. Remorini had reported himself by publishing the gloomy photo of his exploit.⁸¹



MEXICO

April 4, 2018

Garame de Abajo, Durango State, Mexico

Suffering from several bullets in the lower limbs, he was dead when the rescue workers arrived. The civil protection had notified PROFEPA of the presence of an injured puma near the village. Federal agents came, accompanied by members of the Sahuatoba Zoo personnel, and could only note its death. They took in evidence and opened an investigation, but the killers are still being searched.⁸²

LYNX

ASIA

CHINA

End of May 2018

Qingdao, Province of Shandong, China

Seizure of eight lynx skins (*Lynx* spp., Appendix I or II) inside postal packages. The largest measures 1.4 m long.⁸³

EUROPE

GERMANY

April 27, 2018

International Airport of Düsseldorf, State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Seizure of a Eurasian lynx skin (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II) with the head that the businessman called a "skin rug." The lynx "rug" was accompanied by a zebra "rug." The package came from Kazakhstan.⁸⁴

SPAIN

April 5, 2018

Celanova, Province of Ourense, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

David R. was selling a Spanish lynx coat (*Lynx pardinus*, Appendix I) on the site milanuncios.com. He wanted 3000 € for it. Unfortunately for him, a site user warned the Guardia Civil. Their Service for the protection of nature set up a meeting passing for a buyer. David R. didn't have any documentation proving the skin's origin. Proceedings have been opened against him and the coat was seized.⁸⁵

VARIOUS SPECIES FELINES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 25, 2018

Jugomaro Park, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

Poisoning of three lions and a tiger in an amusement park. Temik, the striking poison, would be what was used.⁸⁶



AMERICA

BRAZIL

OPERATION PUMA

End of May 2018

Curionópolis and Parauapebas, State of Pará and Nobres, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

The expert report from the Institute Renato Chaves said that inside the taxidermist's freezer were heads, paws, or skins of several felines, including jaguars (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) and pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II).⁸⁷

ASIA

INDIA

REPEATED OFFENCE

April 25, 2018

Rajaji Tiger Reserve, State of Uttarakhand, India

Special Investigation Team – who is behind the bones and skin of a leopard buried by a river in the Rajaji Tiger Reserve near Motichur (see “On the Trail” n°20 p.65) ? The honesty of several guards and other agents of the reserve is in doubt. Genetic tests have revealed that the remains come from leopards but also from tigers. Sonu, alias Omprakash, already in prison, gave the names of three accomplices. Two have turned themselves in to the police, a third, Yogesh, is on the run.⁸⁸

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

April 19, 2018

Jedburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

Conviction of dark Richard Wales who, from his manor at the border with Scotland, sold on his website “theexplorerstudy” tiger and leopard heads and claws. The inquiry lasted three years and ended at the bar by a fine inferior than the speeding fine: 1000 £ or \$1415 US.⁸⁹



Felines and Elephants



AFRICA

BENIN

May 4, 2018

W National Park, Alibori Department, Benin

Three men and two tusks. They had fought an elephant near Kerou. The Nouvelle Tribune reports that in the same sector, three lionesses have just been poisoned in retaliation – they had attacked local livestock.⁹⁰

GABON

May 6, 2018

Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon

Late in school at Edouard Mossot high school where he would be in his third form class, the so-called Moses is a precocious trafficker. At 20 years old, he was arrested with two tusks, four panther teeth and a tuft of elephant hair in his backpack.⁹¹

Wolves

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

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 24, 2018

Albuquerque, State of New Mexico, United States of America

Sentencing of Craig Thiessen to 10 years on parole and \$ 2300 US in damages to be paid to the Mexican gray wolf protection program (*Canis lupus baileyi*, Appendix II) for having trapped a specimen in the Gila national forest and killed him with a shovel.¹



ASIA

IRAN

May 18, 2018

Garmeh County, North Khorasan Province, Iran

Two sentences to six months in prison and 80 million rials (\$1,900 US) in fines and damages for the two veteran poachers who carried two grey wolf heads on their motorbike (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). See “On the Trail” n°20 p. 74.²



EUROPE

DENMARK

April 16, 2018

Ulfborg, Central Denmark Region, Denmark

New evidence of the movement of wolves in Europe and the immobility of hunters. For centuries, the wolf has been a mythical symbol of those who have a rifle under their bed. A 66-year old sniper killed a female wolf that was crossing a field. Last year, she had crossed more than 500km from Germany to rejoin four male forerunners arriving in the region in 2012. Hopes to see a viable pack living in Denmark are postponed for later.³

FRANCE

Mid-April 2018

Department of Haute Savoie, France

The wolf killer is a 65-year old retiree. He was arrested after six months of investigation lead by the police and the ONCFS. According to relatives of the hunter, among whom are farmers, the male canine killed in the middle of the hunting season early October 2017 was not a wolf but one hybrid produced from a cross with a wild dog, a version of the facts that would spare the perpetrator a maximum penalty of two years in prison for destruction of protected species.⁴

Mid-May 2018

Nancy, Department of Meurthe-et-Moselle, France

The administrative court declared illegal the orders of the prefects of Meurthe-et-Moselle and the Vosges authorising reinforced defensive gunshots. The judgment emphasises that the means of protecting domestic herds have not been implemented beforehand and that to resort to fatal shots is unjustified. See "On the Trail" n°19 p. 79.⁵



May 24, 2018

Grenoble, Isère Department, France

Repeal by the administrative court of the prefectoral decree of August 2016 authorising the slaughter of three wolves in the department of Isère, Alps mountain range. Wolves died illegally. The NGOs, FERUS, ASPAS and One Voice, will demand compensation for the ecological damage.⁶

End of June 2018

Toulouse, Haute-Garonne Department, France

The administrative Court repeals the prefectoral order authorizing reinforced defensive gunshots to protect a herd of sheep in the commune of Sainte-Eulalie-de-Cernon. The order dates from 20 April 2018. The French NGO Aspas attacked in summary order procedure and the Court ruled in his favour. He considered in substance that the urgent procedure was legitimate and that it was likely to prevent the illegal death of a wolf. It is true that the annulments in court of the repeal of orders allowing the shooting at sight on one or more wolves arrived until then after their death.⁷



SWITZERLAND

June 29, 2018

Brig-Glis, Brig District, Canton of Valais, Switzerland

M63 had been found by a fisherman on the banks of the Rhône river, her head decomposed and her teeth shining. The suspect, a German pensioner, was acquitted. The prosecutor had demanded a month's suspended prison sentence and a ban on hunting in the Valais for ten years. He's going to appeal. See "On the Trail" n°16 p. 63 and n°17 p. 69.⁸



Bears

AMERICA

CANADA

May 30, 2018

North of Prince George, British Columbia Province, Canada

The Service in charge of wildlife protection in the north of the province suspects trafficking. The carcass of the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was found in a ditch on Highway 93. All four legs were amputated. He was shot with a rifle. In the current state of the investigation, it is not known if he was killed where he was found or if he was thrown into the side from a truck. The worst would be if there were other dead and amputated grizzly bears on the highway or in adjacent forests. Bear paws sell for a lot of money to the Chinese community in the North-West American continent. The shadow of a serial killer haunts Highway 93.¹

ASIA

ARMENIA

April 2018

Armenia

This is the 12th saving of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). She was living there with concrete irons for all horizons since she was a baby. She acted as an attraction in the behind-the-scenes of a restaurant.

Armenia has a long history of bear exhibitor. Experts from the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) estimate that there are still several dozens to save and care for. 150 wild brown bears are supposed to remain in the country.²



Early June 2018

Echmiadzin, Armavir Province, Armenia

Rescue of five brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) from the private zoo of a retired general. They have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. See "On the Trail" no. 7 p. 57.³

CHINA

April 11, 2018

Huanggang Port of Entry, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure from the middle of a package of togs of 13 bear gallbladders.⁴

May 2018

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

What a surprise for the customs agents at the Luohu port (between Hong Kong and Shenzhen), and they were not new to surprises. When the bag belonging to a citizen of continental China went through the x-ray scanner, an animal appeared. When the customs officers opened the bag, they found a black bear cub (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I in China). At first, they thought it was alive, but it turned out to be stuffed.⁵

INDIA

May 2018

State of Odisha, India

A man wanted to take a selfie beside an Indian sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I). The bear bit him. A pack of avengers swarmed in with sticks and stones. The bear was stuck and stoned to death.⁶

IRAN

May 14, 2018

Bavanat County, Fars Province, Iran

A brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) is pursued in the mountains by two predators. Reconnaissance patrols stop them and seize a rifle. A blood trail leads the rescuers to the half-dead bear. They try to bring him down into the valley with the help of a donkey to treat him. Unfortunately, the bear dies halfway. He was a male, six or seven years old.⁷

VIET NAM

June 12, 2018

Viet Nam

Rescue of a female Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). Her exact age is not known. The only certainty is that she was behind bars for 18 years. This is the third one in three weeks by the NGO Free the Bears Fund supported by the NGO Welttierschutzgesellschaft e.V.⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

Beginning April 2018

Chartered Community of Navarre, Spain

Seizure in the trunk of a car of a stuffed American black bear cub (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II).⁹

Hippopotamuses

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

AFRICA

TANZANIA

Early May 2018

District of Namtumbo, Region of Ruvuma, Tanzania

Arrest of two poachers in the act of transporting hippopotamus meat.¹

ZAMBIA

End of May 2018

Zambia

Tom-tom on hippopotamuses. Born Free says that the government is preparing to revive the plan to slaughter 2000 hippos in the Luangwa Valley, a plan that was suspended in summer 2016 and that was spread over five years (cf. "On the Trail" n°13, p. 67). The government answers that the slaughter plan only concerns 1000 hippos over five years. It is, he continues, essential to apply it to avoid an overpopulation of hippopotamuses which for lack of predators multiply without hindrance and threaten the banks of the Luangwa and its ecosystem.

Born Free replies that the overpopulation of hippos is not scientifically proven and that the slaughter of healthy animals is not a good response to the anthrax epidemic. Indeed, the eradication of the viral disease affecting wild and domestic animals is also put forward by the Zambian authorities to justify the slaughter of hippos. "The "operation" is attributed to a South African company, Umlilo Safari. The fate of the ivory teeth of the 1000 hippos is not yet evoked by the government. Born Free appeals to the wisdom of President Edgar Lungu. The Minister of Tourism and Arts Charles Banda says he is ready to answer on the national media all questions relating to the slaughter plan.²

Hippos and Elephants

AFRICA

CAMEROON

End of May 2018

Bertoua, Eastern Region, Cameroon

Seizure of seven hippopotamus tusks or sections of tusk and teeth. One arrest. He calls himself "marabout," or diviner and salesman of goats on the Ngong market. That's where he would have gotten his raw ivory, 40 km from Bertoua.¹

Rhinoceroses

Poaching statistics in Kruger Park are under embargo by order of the South African Ministry of Environment. The trials of the poaching bosses are postponed from year to year. Collusion between poachers, rangers and other law enforcement agencies persists. Chinese and Vietnamese nationals play a major role in horn conveying. After a break, poaching resumes in Kaziranga Park, India. In Viet Nam, two leading specialists in Asiatic traditional medicine knocked out the alleged healing properties of the horns.



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°21
The value of horn on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	China	25,500	46

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

May 2 and 12, 2018
Meru National Park, County of Meru, Kenya

- Poaching of three rhinos, two adults and one youth. The three carcasses discovered early in the morning were dehorned. A search undertaken the night before after gunshots rang out in the park was unsuccessful. Neither the attacked rhinoceroses nor the poachers had been found.
- Four KWS agents are permanently removed from their job. Two of them are subject to prosecution. On the occasion of the edition of a memory stamp with white rhinos from northern Africa, the Ministry of Tourism Najib Balala said that the corrupt KWS agents are from now on crossed out and not just suspended or transferred to other services.¹

MOZAMBIQUE

April 15, 2018

Maputo International Airport, Mozambique

Classic scheme: Qatar Airways flight bound for Doha with Hong Kong as final destination. Four horns in the suitcase of a Chinese passenger. Less classic: the horns were pre-cut and no longer re-assembled horns.²



May 4, 2018

Sabie Game Reserve, Province of Maputo, Mozambique

Poaching of a rhinoceros Saturday April 28, discovery of the body Friday May 4.³



SOUTH SUDAN

Mid-April 2018

Rumbek, Lakes State, South Sudan

The Ministry of Fauna, Flora, and Tourism is accusing the population and NGOs of poaching and trafficking. Ms. Kumba cites as an example one foreign NGO member who had hid a horn cut into slices in a walking pole to escape customs control. President Kiir forbade last year all selling of ivory or rhinoceros horns on the domestic market.⁴

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 2, 2018

Between Malelane and Komatipoort, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Border with Mozambique.

Seizure of a horn on the N4 in the back of a Mazda. Arrest of four Mozambicans aged 22 to 35 years old.⁵



April 11, 2018

Mahamba Port of Entry, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Border with Swaziland.

The Mercedes gang did not say its last word. At a routine inspection, the limousine was stopped. The driver springs the well-known verse of "hood that doesn't open." Four large horns were found next to the carburetor. The driver took flight into the bush. He was caught again. Four arrests. They are between 24 and 32 years old.⁶



Mid-April 2018

Tala Manzi Game Farm, North West Province, South Africa

Three bullets in the body. Horns and tail cut off.⁷

April 16, 2018

Weenen Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Poaching of two white rhinoceroses. However, as a precaution, their horns had been shortened. The bandits took possession of the fresh growth.⁸

April 20, 2018

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The trial of Dawie Groenewald released on bail and his 7 co-accused is planned ... in 2021. In South Africa, the bigger one is in the horns' trafficking, the more one saves time. The lawyer of a sidekick who waits in prison for his sentence cries foul (cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p. 80).⁹

Weekend of 20-22 April 2018

Skukuza Section, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- Friday, April 20, arrest of three suspects including a man wearing a commander of Frelimo (Frente de Libertação Moçambique)'s uniform. They are in possession of a large calibre, ammunition, poaching kit and a pair of horns.

- Saturday, April 21, arrest by the rangers with the help of the canine unit of three poachers. On the same day, fighting between rangers and poachers; two arrests and one death among poachers.

- Sunday April 22, clash. One dead and one injured among the poachers. Two horns found at the spot. The same day, another clash between the rangers and a group of three poachers. One of them is fatally wounded, the other two manage to escape. A firearm, ammunition and a poaching kit were found on site. Also on Sunday, arrest of a police officer stationed in Skukuza for his alleged involvement in poaching rhinos in the park.¹⁰



April 23, 2018

Somkhanda Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Poaching of an adult female. The horns were removed. Her calf, a male, survived the massacre. He was preemptively dehorned and placed in an orphanage.¹¹

End of April 2018

Montagu Mountain Local Nature Reserve, Western Cape Province, South Africa

As the full moon approaches, it's the second poaching. "The fuckers must still be on reserve because they didn't even have time to remove horns."¹²



May 2018

Mahikeng, North West Province, South Africa

Sentencing of three poachers, Ndlovu, Khoza, Maseve, to penalties of 15 to 28 years in prison. After a high-speed chase, the three men fled the VW polo. Inside, two fresh horns and a little further down in the fugitives' wake, a .375 rifle, a silencer, 20 ammunitions and three knives. An accomplice, Mothopa, owner of the car, got 5 years jail.¹³



May 7, 2018

Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa

At the home of Tony Freitas, in February 2017, the police discovered in a cold bedroom six legs, seven carcasses, two rhinoceros heads, two buried skins and bones, and a carcass in the process of decomposition. The horns were nowhere to be found. Freitas was sentenced to 10 years in prison or to a fine of 1 million rand, or \$81,000 US.¹⁴ Cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.67.



May 13, 2018

Mokopong, North West Province, South Africa. Border with Botswana.

Six people suspected of attempted poaching in an organized gang are in custody, five men and one woman. In one of their vehicles, a two-cabin bakkie, a high-caliber rifle, a silencer, and knives were seized. The woman was released on bail for medical reasons.¹⁵

Mid-May 2018

Zeerust, North West Province, South Africa

Conviction of four men to a collective sentence of 90 years prison term for killing and dehorning a rhino in the Madikwe reserve. See "On the Trail" n°17, p.74.¹⁶



May 17, 2018

Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Dumisami Gwala trial for horn trafficking and attempted murder of a police officer is postponed one more time. The accused took the stand alone and requested an additional two months to collect the money needed to secure a new attorney's collaboration. The prosecutor stands up by pointing out that Gwala had used the same scheme on several occasions before the Ngwelezane court. The judges "to guarantee him a fair trial" granted him a period of one month. If Gwala appears without assistance on June 18, he will have to defend himself by his own means throughout the trial, the date of which has not yet been set. The new lawyer will request a further delay of several weeks or months to review the voluminous file. See "On the Trail" n°20 p. 81, n°19 p. 86, n°18 p. 75, n°14 p. 63 and 66, n°12 p. 71.¹⁷

May 20, 2018

National Kruger Park, Skukuza Section, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Gun shots fire. A poached and dehorned female is found. By her side, a one-month-old baby with serious machete wounds on his back and front paws. The spinal cord could be damaged. The vet doctor Nolene du Plessis called by Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary rushed to provide the first aid. Despite the gravity of his wounds, the little survivor proving to have an unfailing energy is making daily progress and enjoys his milk bottles. Prognosis is optimistic.¹⁸



May 21, 2018

Kruger National Park, South Africa

On Monday, four men in possession of an A.303 rifle, appropriate ammunition and an axe were surprised by park rangers near the entry point to Lebombo. They claimed to be waiting for someone to go further into the park. A little while later, a vehicle arrived at the meeting point: behind the wheel, a police officer in charge of entry control. The police officer with his crew were arrested for conspiracy to commit a crime. This new collusion between the SAPS (South African Police Service) and poachers comes just after General Mondli Zuma promised that all corrupt agents would be excluded from SAPS.¹⁹

OPERATION FIELA II

May 18 and 28, 2018

Phalaborwa, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Release on bail denied on May 28 for three men, Khosa, Baloyi, and Nkuna. Two of the individuals were already on bail after attempted murder, burglary and a rhinoceros poaching in Kruger Park. A roadblock intercepted the three individuals on Friday, May 18. In their vehicle, there were 200,000 rand, or \$16,000 US, in cash, one of the ears, the nose and the tail of a white rhinoceros.²⁰



May 22 and 30, 2018
Port Alfred, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Poaching of a 4 year old rhino in Fort D'Acres Reserve and poaching and dehorning of a female and her young in the private reserve Oceana Beach and Wildlife. A third rhinoceros is missing. Nine confirmed poaches in the province since the beginning of the year.²¹



May 30 and June 5, 2018
Benoni, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

Arrest by HAWKS of two men known for being trafficking experts after 2 years of investigation and almost immediate release on bail of \$4,000 US for each of them. The 2 suspects based in Johannesburg had bought 4 horns from poaching in Kruger Park and organized their exfiltration to the central province of Gauteng. SANParks management expressed its satisfaction and determination. "Come 2019, we want to see the number of rhino killed annually reduced to under 400." It has surpassed one thousand since 2013. Mandla Mashele and Kelvin Malapane were released on bail of 50,000 rand each (\$ 3600 US). The value of the four horns is estimated at 1.5 million rand (\$108,000 US).²²

May 30, 2018
Hekpoort, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

Poaching of an adult male in the Askari game Lodge. He was found lying on his side, mortally hit by bullet. The shooters did not have the time to take the horn.²³



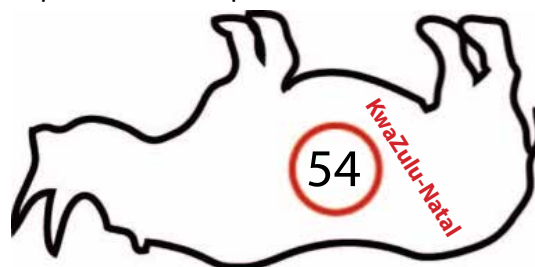
GANG
May 31, 2018
Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Alexandre Dias Shintlangu to 5 years in prison. End of August of last year, he had broken into the Karoo National Park before tracking down rhino footprints. After discovering the hole in the fence, a ranger in turn followed the intruder's trail before even being joined by his colleagues. Shintlangu was arrested, his two companions vanished. On site, all the equipment necessary for rhino poaching was seized. The offense is all the more serious that Shintlangu was prepared to attack black rhinos in conspiracy, the only ones harbored in Karoo park. More so, he already was on parole for poaching at the time of his relapse. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 5 years for break and entry and unauthorized hunting activities, 5 years for unlawful possession of weapons, 3 years for unlawful possession of ammunition. The sentences are concurrent.²⁴



End of May 2018
Saint Lucia, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

An investigation from rural communities ended in the arrest of four suspected poachers in the wetlands of Isimangaliso Park bordering the Indian Ocean. Since the beginning of the year, 54 rhinoceroses were poached in the province.²⁵



Early June 2018
Mkuze Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Five armed men, equipped for a rhino raid, are arrested. They were getting near the reserve.²⁶



Beginning of June 2018
Near Lephalale, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

The mother is dead, a black rhino. Rescue of the baby after a two-day search. He is exhausted and thirsty. He has a machete wound. He was taken to an orphanage.²⁷



Beginning of June, 2018
Pilanesberg National Park, North-West Province, South Africa

Rescue of a young female. Her bullet wound was not critical. She will come through. She was not dehorned.²⁸

June 5, 2018
Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The Ndlovu trio with the unforgettable Forget pleads not guilty (cf "On the Trail" n°13, p.72). According to the investigation file, they were in possession of Etorfine (M99) and Thiafentanil, a syringe gun, about 10 kg of horns but they deny it all.²⁹

14 June 2018
Hazyview, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The big fish does everything to get out of the trap. At the first bail hearing, the over crowded room was evacuated after someone threatened to fire shots. At the second, a procession of ladies and other supporters came to greet Mr Big and thank him with handshakes and effusivenesses.



Mr. Big is a local businessman whose benefits inspire gratitude and loyalty from the rural communities. His lawyer did not fail to point out that Mr Big was "a job creator". Jobs that are not always very clean and honest. Petrus Sydney Mabuza, 49, has been involved in trafficking for at least 13 years, according to the investigation file. The thread of several cases including that of the six horns found in a cooler in Hazyview goes back to him (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 66). Two undercover Hawks agents finally caught him in the act by selling him two horns for 280,000 rand (\$22,300 US). The horns had been deposited in the white BMW of one of his subordinates, Moshe Thobela, and had been recovered from the spare wheel compartment by an emergency road police roadblock. Mr. Big's bail battle goes from hearing to hearing. The public prosecutor's office is openly opposed to it despite the intimidation of which he is the victim. "He [Mr. Big] does not get his hands dirty, but pays others to do the work for him" says senior state advocate Nemaroani. Mr. Coetzee tries to coax the judges by saying that his client may pay bail of 50,000 rand (\$3600 US) or more, going so far as to suggest that Mr. Big be placed under house arrest pending trial. The prosecutor replies that this measure would not be sufficient to ensure that Mabuza does not continue his criminal activities. Note from the editor of On the Trail: Mr Big and Big Joe should not be confused (cf. "On the Trail" n°12, p.69), Big Joe is another trafficker whose trial is long overdue. Both men reside in or near Hazyview.³⁰

Mid-June 2018
Kruger National Park, Provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, South Africa

Three arrests. Seizure of a large caliber rifle, ammunition and a fresh pair of horns. The executive director of SANParks, Fundisile Mketeni, an ex-ranger, took part in the tracking. The helicopter in which he had embarked to observe the interface between "village communities/western edge of the park" was summoned to follow the poachers' progression in the bush and lead the rangers and canine brigade on ground.³¹

June 18, 2018
Kruger National Park, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

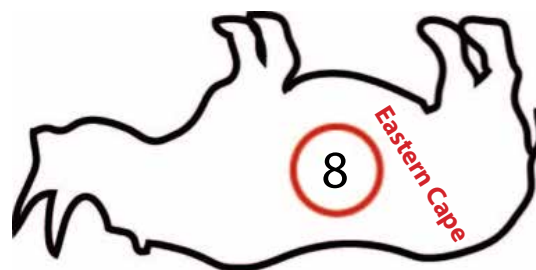
Two rangers affected to the Houtboschrand section are suspected of poaching and amputating the horns of a white rhino.³²

June 21, 2018
Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

You should have thought of that. The Chinese cover for rhino trafficking was... a blanket factory. Acting on intelligence, the police landed in the workshop and found in the nooks and crannies a good stock of skins and other parts of rhinos valued at 3 million rand, or \$240,000 US. Interpellation of two Chinese bosses and 12 workers from Malawi.³⁴

June 21, 2018
Kirkwood, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa

Eight rhinos less in the province since the beginning of the year.³⁵



June 27, 2018
Kruger National Park, Crocodile Bridge Section, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Clash between a patrol of rangers and a gang of suspected poachers. One dead among the latter. He threatened the patrol with a .375 caliber, exactly what it takes to kill a rhino.³⁶



End of June 2018

SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary, Leydsdorp, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Three poachings, including that of a baby whose horn was cut off. The director is at his wits end. The 32 km of fencing is constantly being reinforced. At same time, the poachers are relentlessly searching for the least breach. An underground optic fiber for seismic monitoring capable of distinguishing human intrusions from animal intrusions was presented as a flawless defense mechanism. The problem is that it costs \$40,000 US/km.³⁷

End June 2018

Kragga Kamma Game Park, Nelson Mandela Bay, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



2008. Bella in good company.



2018. Bella after a bad encounter.³⁸

BOTSWANA

End June 2018

Francistown, North East District, Botswana

All that fuss for this. An Interpol search warrant, an arrest in Zimbabwe, extradition to Botswana and bail of \$100 US with a requirement to return "his" passport (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 83). The problem is that he has two, one from Zimbabwe, one from Zambia. In the wildlife mafia, Dumisani Moyo's popularity will increase even more. Since the beginning of the decade, he has been wanted for horn trafficking in several southern African countries, including Botswana.³⁹

NAMIBIA

April 1, 2018

Near Steinhausen, Omaheke Region, Namibia

Three suspects said they got lost in the savannah Easter Sunday. Their behavior had alerted agricultural workers on a neighboring farm. Near the place where they were stopped, an old gun of Soviet manufacturing, ammunition, a hatchet, and a swab were hidden in the undergrowth. According to the first official reports, they had set an appointment with an employee of a neighboring reserve to poach a rhinoceros. This accomplice was also questioned. The public authorities worry about the movement of the poaching towards the East of the country.⁴⁰

April 2018

Fransfontein, Kunene Region, Namibia

Alert. Three to five Chinese walk the land to open a mine near a rhino territory. Their Namibian partners have already installed huts. The Chinese have promised to give 10% of the profits to the Swartbooi Traditional Authority and 5% to the Huab Conservancy dedicated to the protection of rhinos. The metal and the expected profits are unknown.⁴¹

Mid-May 2018

Namibia

Attempted rescue of a young male. One knee was cracked by a bullet. The prognosis is uncertain. He is limping and weighs 1.8 tons.⁴²



CENTRAL AFRICA

CHAD

May 2018

Zakouma National Park, Guerat and Salamat Regions, Chad

Six black rhinos were transported from South Africa to Chad in a 4800 km long airborne convoy. This species vanished 50 years ago from Chad and Central Africa. The six were welcomed to the Zakouma National Park, 3000 km², a prized target for wildlife rings. Within 10 years – 2000/2010 – the elephant population went from 4000 to 450! Now Zakouma is under supervision of the Chad government and African Parks, a partnership that would gain in efficiency if it had the support of local communities.⁴³

CHINA

April 2, 2018

Shenzhen Bay Port, Guangdong Province, China

Two boxes of chocolates containing 5.32 kg of rhinoceros horns cut into slices and stained with blood.⁴⁴



© China Customs

May 7, 2018

Tengchong, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure of a 757-grams horn.⁴⁵

June 17, 2018

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure in a bag belonging to a 21-year-old man, 3.1 kg of rhinoceros horn cut into various shapes. The estimated value: \$79,000 US, or nearly \$25,500 US/kg. The Vietnamese individual was coming from Beira, Mozambique, via Johannesburg, South Africa and Doha, Qatar.⁴⁶



© Hong Kong customs

INDIA

April 2, 2018

West Bengal State, India

Arrest at 6:10pm while he tried to smuggle into India from Nepal a 100g horn – or 300g depending on sources -, Abhijeet Devdas – or Abhijit Debdas - had delivered to the Forest office in Gorumara North. A Jaipalguri wildlife warden had received the tip and had transmitted it to officers in the 17th battalion of SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal).⁴⁷

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 2, 2018

Pisalamukh, Assam State, India

Arrest of Lakhya Pegu, a regular in Kaziranga Park. During an interrogation considered a "marathon" by the local press, he admitted a poaching and a horn theft in February.⁴⁸

April 5-6, 2018

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Death of a poacher Friday during the night. At the scene of the incident, investigators collected evidence: 1 AK-56, ammunition, and magazines. Two or three accomplices vanished in the jungle.⁴⁹



REPEATED OFFENSE

May 3, 2018

Natun Danga, Nagaon District, Assam State, India

Parci Ronfar, 45 years old, was in possession of a high-caliber rifle and ammunition. He is said to be at the head of the poaching in the Karbi Anglong sector on the north boarder of Kaziranga Park. He had already been arrested twice and released on bail.⁵⁰



© The Telegraph

May 11, 2018

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

The truce in the park is over. The poachers have adapted to the new surveillance system.

1 down in January, 1 down in February, 1 down in March, 1 down at the beginning of May, 1 down on May 11.

5 killed since the beginning of the year, compared to 6 for all of last year.⁵¹



May 19, 2018

Nagaon, State of Assam, India

Late Saturday night, three men arrested in a bus bound for Churachandpur, Manipur State. A fourth man was arrested in a suburb of the city. He claims to be a retired soldier.

The gang of four confesses to having buried weapons and ammunition in a forest in Karbi Anglong district next to Kaziranga Park and its rhinos.

On Sunday, the police take them to the scene and dig in the right place. Exhumation of two AK47s and 200 rounds of ammunition. Police Commissioner Shankar Barata Raimedhi said poachers were returning home as the monsoon approached and were planning to return in winter. They admit having killed a rhinoceros and stolen the horn at the beginning of May in a place difficult to reach.⁵²

May 26, 2018

Jakhalabandha, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

Ram Nath Tanti and Badhna Mura have been arrested. They have been charged with supplying information, supplies and camouflage uniforms to poachers from Manipur who came to hunt rhinoceroses in the Kaziranga Park.⁵³

REPEATED OFFENSE / GANG

May 30, 2018

Furkating Railway Station, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

N. Thangbai and Sarat Saikia have been arrested. They admitted to planning a poaching campaign in the Kaziranga Park. A .303 caliber rifle and accompanying ammunition were seized at Saikia's house. He apparently already has several rhinoceroses on his poaching record.⁵⁴



June 7, 2018

Biswanath District, State of Assam, India

Two days in police custody for two men entering the park clearly inspired by motives other than wildlife contemplation. They carried a rhinoceros-calibre rifle, ammunition and other poaching gear.⁵⁵

May 29 and June 8, 2018

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Discovery of a dead rhinoceros on the way to putrefaction. According to the guards, he was killed on the night of May 29. They had heard six shots without being able to locate the crime scene. The body has bullet holes in the forehead. This is the sixth since the beginning of the year. The horn was stolen.⁵⁶



June 11, 2018

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

A poacher killed in a gunfight with the guards on Monday night.

On the scene, a rhino horn, a rifle, cartridges.

At least four accomplices are still hiding in the Park. Already seven rhinos less since the beginning of the year to seven for the whole last year.⁵⁷



June 27, 2018

Golaghat, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

Manik Das was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined 10,000 rupees (\$150 US) for gang poaching and maiming a rhino in Kaziranga Park in January 2015. He'd play a double game, informant to the rangers by day, informant to the poachers by night. His accomplice, Sukdev Das, died during the trial.⁵⁸



June 29, 2018

State of Assam, India

Kasim Ali arrested. Seizure at his home of a .303 caliber, 31 rounds, the equivalent of \$3,000 US in cash and a dinghy. Kasim wanted to use it, when monsoon comes, to cross the Brahmaputra and target the rhinos isolated by the floods. Poachers use rubber dinghies. Once on the scene, they can deflate and hide them.⁵⁹

NEPAL

End of April 2018

Chitwan National Park, Province No. 3, Nepal

The first of four "diplomatic" rhinoceroses – two males and two females – that the Chinese government kindly called upon to certify the good relations between the two countries – have been caught in the Park. 70 guards, specialists, veterinarians, and four elephants participated in the detection and capture. The unlucky chosen one is a male; he is around 2 years old. He will remain several months in a boma awaiting the capture of the other specimen.

At the same time, the park is strengthening surveillance. He wants to keep his reputation as an almost inviolable fortress. Patrols criss-cross it by bike, motorbike, off-road vehicles, boat and elephant with occasional reinforcements from February to June, the poachers' favourite season. Cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p. 107.⁶⁰

May 1, 2018

Kathmandu, Province No. 3, Nepal

Arrests. Four men attempting to sell a rhinoceros horn for \$140,700 US to an undercover police officer.⁶¹

THAILAND

GANG

Early May 2018

Samut Prakan, Samut Prakan Province, Thailand

Sentencing of Boonchai Bach, 41 years old, to 2-and-a-half years in prison for horn trafficking. The Bach clan used Bangkok International Airport as their hub. The person responsible for quarantine at the airport was manipulated by the Bachs. Boonchai Bach would be the treasurer of the gang.⁶² Cf. "On the Trail" n° 20 p. 87



VIET NAM

April 2018

Viet Nam

Three medical authorities demystify the power of rhinoceros horn.

- Dr Nguyen Chan Hung, chair of the Viet Nam Cancer Association stated that, "Patients should follow modern remedies prescribed by physicians instead of relying on rhino horns. If you blindly use rhino horns to treat cancer, you will miss the best opportunities to treat cancer effectively with modern methods,"

- Truong Thi Ngoc Lan from the Ho Chi Minh City Traditional Medicine Institute said that in "Oriental Medicine rhino horn is listed in the group of medicines with detoxification effects. However, the effect can also be found in other simple medicines which have lower costs and better results."

- Le Hung, chair of the HCM City Oriental Medicine Association, has recommended "taking rhino horn off the list of drugs in order to prevent misconceptions about the alleged effects."⁶³

May 24, 2018

Lao Cai, Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam

Over 20 kg of presumed-rhinoceros horns found in four wooden vases in the back seat of a car near the Chinese border. Three arrests.⁶⁴



June 2018

Hanoi, Viet Nam



One good point for the Hanoi police. Seizure of a horn weighing 1.1 kg. Four arrests.⁶⁵

EUROPE

NETHERLANDS

April 6, 2018

Amsterdam, North Holland Province, Netherlands

One year in prison for the Chinese traveller. He was transporting five horns (cf. "On the Trail" n°19 p. 89).⁶⁶



Rhinos and Elephants

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 2018

Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa

Less poached rhinos, more elephants. Kruger National Park head ranger Ken Maggs says no more, he has no right to be specific.¹

ASIA

CHINA

June 6, 2018

Hong-Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 5.9 kg of horns and 410 g presumed-ivory in three food wrappers inside a suitcase belonging to a 40-year-old coming from Johannesburg.²



Elephants

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA



The rumour of the quarter once again demonstrates the nose for business of the wildlife mafias. They spread the news that elephants' molars can make hair grow back! Baldness, rheumatism, sexual impotence, menopausal disorders, AIDS, cancer, crooks are casting the net far and wide. They are not interested in rare diseases. In this sense, wildlife mafias have the same strategy as pharmaceutical laboratories. In Asia, the trend is to exploit by-products other than ivory. The skin is sold by the kg or the cm². This new outlet puts at risk the females who have no tusk.

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°21
Black market raw ivory quotation
from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	1,000	3
		260	12
	Zimbabwe	100	28
		170	29
	Gabon	180	55

- April 12, Daphne Sheldrick, 83 years old, died from breast cancer. She founded the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) named after her late husband David in 1977. With David, she had been a part of the implementation of Tsavo Park. She is the first to have raised orphaned elephants on the bottle. "It's an irreplaceable loss for elephants around the world," says Vivek Menon, president of the Wildlife Trust of India. "On the Trail" regularly recognizes the achievements of DSWT (see for example "On the Trail" n°7 p. 80, n°8 p. 77, n°18 p. 83, n°19 p. 66).



- April 12 – 15, 2018. Olarro Conservancy, County of Narok, Kenya

Rescue of a young male and an adult male injured by pole weapons. Anesthetized by Etorphine, treatment of injuries with hydrogen peroxide, iodine tincture, antibiotic spray, and woken up with Diprenorphine. The prognoses are favorable. The DSWT, the KWS, and its famous doctor Limo participated in both operations.¹



April 19, 2018

Malindi, Kilifi County, Kenya

Meanwhile, Mohamed Feisal is still in prison. Convicted to 20 years' jail by the county court, he said that the case in court of appeal is delayed because of the deliberate scrapping of documents in the case. A commission is tasked with shedding light on Feisal's accusations. His lawyer would be victim of intimidations. Feisal was convicted for trafficking three tons of raw ivory (cf. "On the Trail" n°15, p. 88).²

April 22, 2018

Migori, Migori County, Kenya

Arrested today at a gas station while they tried to sell 8 pieces of elephant tusk weighing 15 kg to an undercover officer. Mary Owino Likowa and George Ochieng are not abashed. Several days later, they pleaded not guilty in front of judge Edwin Nyagah. Their lawyer asked for their release on bail and got it. The value of the ivory is estimated at 1.5 million shillings (\$15,000 US or \$1000 US/kg).³

April 25, 2018

Msambweni, Kwale County, Kenya

An investigation is underway to identify the seller and the buyer of two elephant tusk tips discovered thanks to a source. They weigh a total of 8 kg and they appear to be very old. The police remain discrete regarding where the seizure took place, but the press is talking about a building at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (Icipe). The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) investigation department is on the case.⁴



Mid-May 2018

Maua, Meru County, and Voi, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

- Joseph Kimanzi Musyoki, Samwel Githonga and Peter Kimathi have been sentenced to a fine equivalent to \$9900 US, or 5 years in prison if they fail to pay, for having illegally transported four tusks or tusk sections.

- Another man was sentenced to a fine equivalent to \$400 US, or six months in prison if he fails to pay, for illegally transporting dik-dik antelopes (*Madoqua kirkii*) meat.⁵



Mid-May 2018

Emali, Makueni County, Kenya

Arrest of two men transporting two large tusks with a value equal to \$33,000 US.⁶

Mid-May 2018

Voi, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

One arrest. 12 kg.⁷



Mid-May and 26-27 May, 2018

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

- Docteur Limo intervened to treat an abscess caused by a arrow wound.



- Limo, the well-known DSWT veterinarian, treated Limo, a majestic tusker with bullet wounds in the front right leg and the chest. The prognosis is positive.



The DSWT team remained in the area to monitor Limo's convalescence, with support from the KWS. As they observed the herd, they identified another male elephant with a spear injury, as well as a female elephant with a calf who had a spear wound. The two new victims were also treated.⁸

May 31, 2018

Mount Elgon National Park, Trans Nzoia County, Kenya

Death of three poachers presumed to have been in a shootout with rangers. They were of Ugandan origin. Two accomplices fled. AK-47s were found at the spot with several black magic talismans supposed to bring luck during the poaching campaign.⁹



Early June 2018

Chyulu Hills National Park, Makueni County, Kenya

Wounded, five times wounded. The origin of the five injuries is a mystery. The most urgent problem for the team from the DSWT and the KWS was to get the 3-ton male back on his feet. Lying on his side is as deadly as bullets for an elephant.¹⁰

**June 9, 2018
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Seizure from a car thanks to the canine unit's nose of eight tusks or sections hidden here and there.¹¹



REPEATED OFFENSE

**June 9, 2018
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Interception of Abdikheir Ibrahim and Abdullahi Adan on the Malindi-Mombasa road. Seizure of 137 kg of raw ivory estimated at \$36,000 US, or \$260 US per kilo. Ibrahim is unfavourably known to the law. He dipped at the end of October 2016 in an ivory trade (Narok County, 4.5 kg). His bail is currently denied.¹²

**Mid-June 2018
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Morris Mulimu sentenced to eight years in prison for illegally detaining and transporting 28 kg of raw ivory to Mombasa in April 2017.¹³



**June 25, 2018
Thigaa, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya**

The feast. An elephant accused of wounding two men aged 61 and 95 is shot dead by the KWS. The inhabitants converge on the spot by hundreds with machetes, knives and firm intention to cut up the beast to the bone. "It was a unique blessing for the village and that the poor and the rich will feed on the meat." The fate of the elephant's precious parts, tusks, tail, ears and other organs tied up with superstitions, is not known. KWS cars whose agents tried to save the "problem" elephant before they decided to kill him received stones.¹⁴



MALAWI

**Mid-April 2018
Blantyre, Southern Region, Malawi**

Justice strikes harder and harder on traffickers of wild species. But those who have the means can still escape prison. Sanjay Vashan, citizen of Malawi, Indian origin, was convicted today to 10 years of hard labor or to pay 10 million kwachas (\$13,800 US). He had been arrested on denunciation April 11, 2017. The investigators had seized from his house 14.8 kg of ivory and \$14,000 US. The value of the ivory is estimated at 22.8 million kwachas (\$31,000 US, or \$2,115 US/kg). A second punishment had been made against the trafficker for illegal possession of currency: 2 and a half years of prison or 150,000 kwachas in amends (\$206 US). The money and the ivory seized were allocated to the State.¹⁵



**April 16, 2018
Kaombe Police Checkpoint, Mchinji, Central Region, Malawi**

Two men, Phiri and Daka, were arrested thanks to the cooperation of the wild fauna protection Services of Mozambique, Zambia, and Malawi. They had entered Malawi by unmarked trails. Seizure of 16.5 kg of raw ivory. The two men are originally from the Chipata and Katete districts in Zambia.¹⁶



**May 9, 2018
Mkanda, Central Region, Malawi**

Arrest of a DRC national, seizure of eight tusks or sections with a total weight of 23.6 kg.¹⁷



MOZAMBIQUE

RECYCLING CHANNEL

April 12, 2018

Port Maputo, Mozambique



The Mozambique-Cambodia channel again (cf. "On the Trail" n°19, p. 19). This time the container had 867 tusks – or 3.5 t of ivory – camouflaged in the middle of empty plastic bottles. Always the so-called "recycling." The port transporters' association was indignant at the arrest of the truck driver in charge of the container, arguing that he was not supposed to know its contents. The newspaper O Pais sought to know more about the Chinese society Newlite, cited as the owner of the shipment. The reporter who went to the indicated address in the industrial zone of Beluluane, 20 km from the port, found only a closed gate surrounded by high walls, no person present nor a distinctive marker. The developers of the industrial zone praise its strategical location in the Maputo Development Corridor, linking Mozambique to South Africa and Swaziland via the N4 national road. In Mozambique, most of the tusks came from thefts from ivory stocks seized in Niassa province and elephants poached in the Niassa reserve. Environment Minister Celso Correia regrets the slowness of justice. According to him, ivory trafficking and smuggling can only be controlled in the country through working with Tanzania. Correia also complains about the slowness of the law in the repression of illegal logging. "Operation Trunk was a success, the logs were seized but no one is being prosecuted."¹⁸



April 15-30, 2018

Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique

Seizures in two stages of 21 tusks, eleven in the port of Pemba, ten in the district of Montepuez. As exhibits, they are in the custody of the public prosecutor's office.¹⁹

May 14, 2018

Beira, Sofala Province, Mozambique



These three teachers and wildlife guards had been arrested in flag in the buffer zone of Gorongosa Park with ivory, precious stones and mercury bottles useful for gold mining (cf. "On the Trail" n°18, p.85). At the time of the arrest, they had tried to corrupt the guards. The six had been bailed (40 to 50,000 Meticaís or \$670 US to \$840 US). Their trial begins in Beira in their absence. No doubt they are too busy with some wildlife or chemical traffic to respond to court summonses.²⁰

GANG

Mid May 2018

Gorongosa National Park, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Three men were cruising in the park. One man fled when the rangers and the police surrounded them. A suitcase was found at the site with two AKM-type automatic rifles, four traditional firearms, magazines and 92 ammunitions.

One of the suspects said to be a healer. He was looking in the forest for medicinal herbs to care for his two associates. He claims to be unaware that the suitcase contained weapons. In fact the threesome is suspected of carrying out poaching campaigns in Niassa, Zambezia and Sofala provinces.²¹



May 15, 2018

Niassa National Reserve, Niassa Province, Mozambique

He had escaped through the toilets of the Mecula police station (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p.81). He's just been arrested, heavily armed by a Luwirre Safaris Camp patrol.²²



May 20, 2018

Maputo Reserve, Province of Maputo, Mozambique

Critical rescue of an elephant whose left hind leg was hampered by a metal trap. During the operation the veterinary team had to keep its 2-week old elephant baby and other members of the herd at a distance. Aerial and ground intervention was facilitated by the financial support of Moz Parks Foundation and Travel Channel.²³



© Peace Parks Foundation

End of May 2018

Niassa Province, Mozambique

A forest and wildlife administration officer and three officers of the National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) are charged. According to the investigation file, they are guilty of the theft from the province's vault that they were supposed to guard of 105 tusks during 2016 and 2017. Part of this tusks were found and identified in Cambodia after the opening of a doubtful container thanks to the official and indelible marks of the Mozambican administration (see for example "On the Trail" n°15, p.98). Thefts of raw ivory from seized ivory stocks are not exceptional in the country.

In 2015, four high-ranking police officers and an officer from the Environment and Rural Development Department of Maputo Province, were arrested for the same reasons (see "On the Trail" n°9, p. 70). For 3 years, the government has remained very discreet about the progress of the inquiry and the opening of a trial.²⁴

UGANDA

June 24, 2018

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Abel Immanuel was sentenced to 2 years in prison for having attempted to sell four tusks or tusk sections on the parking lot of the Uganda Manufacturers' Association, with the help of an accomplice. Immanuel was a member of the Flying Squad Unit, a police service that has been disbanded. The FSU reputation was sullied by numerous accusations of corruption and torture of suspects. Immanuel pleaded guilty, but requested a lenient sentence, arguing that he had family responsibilities.²⁵



TANZANIA

June 21, 2018

Kyela District, Mbeya Region, Tanzania

Police ambush. Two suspects escaped and discarded nine sections of raw ivory.²⁶

ZAMBIA

April 18 – May 30, 2018

Chipata District, Eastern Province, Zambia

Arrest of a 27-year-old police officer in the act of unauthorized transport of 12 kg of raw ivory. Released on bail, Owen Hakalima should be tried this summer. A person who was with him at the time of the incident fled.²⁷

ZIMBABWE

Early April 2018

Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

The punishment is now common: 9 years of prison for illegal business in ivory. Cuthbert Sibanda pleaded guilty. He had been arrested on March 23 by police and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) agents with whom he tried to trade the ivory for around \$100 US/kg. The quantity at play is not specified. After an agreement on the price, Sibanda drove the agents to his hiding place where they only passed him the handcuffs.²⁸



April 2, 2018

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Benhilda Chidumo (34 years old) and Hubbly Mahau (47 years old) were arrested Monday for trying to sell to an infiltrated police officer a pair of tusks weighing an estimated total of 6.9 kg at \$1,173 US (or \$170 US/kg). They went before the Harare Magistrates Court for the first time on April 6.²⁹

April 12, 2018

Near Gonarezhou National Park, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

New killing by a super-tusker hunter in the buffer zone of the Park. The hunters are poachers who can pay a \$30 to \$50,000 US permit to kill. The tusks were seized and a ranger suspended during the administrative inquiry. The victim was classified as outstanding and was wearing an identification collar.³⁰

Early May 2018

Guruve, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

Sentencing of a 43-year old man to 9 years and 1 month in prison for illegal possession of a pair of tusks weighing 31 kg and carrying of prohibited ammunition.³¹



May 2, 2018

Bumi Hills Area, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Scouting of four sites spread with cyanide mixed with salt. A lactating elephant was poisoned. The carcass was guarded during the night to avoid the theft of tusks, then the next morning after salvaging the tusks, burned and buried at the spot. As much as possible, the contaminated soil was cleaned and burned to avoid a cascade of deaths of wild fauna. A reward of at least \$2,000 US is promised to whoever can give conclusive information on the identity of the poisoners. The young elephant has vanished.³²



May 14, 2018

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Adrian Steirn is an excellent Australian photographer, author of magnificent photo-reports on the wild animals of Africa (cf. n°15 p. 42). As he was photographing the wildlife of the lower Zambezi, he met a certain Leonard Makunine, an agent for elephant poachers. Adrian Steirn led him to believe that he was interested in purchasing ivory. Makunine introduced him to Faricken Madzinga, who confirmed that he could sell him tusks. Once the rendezvous was set for the transaction, Steirn went to the police and revealed the case.

Last February 15, Steirn went to the meeting place at the Harare Holiday Inn, as planned. Police inspectors were discretely following him. Faricken Madzinga arrived, accompanied by his chauffeur. The three men left in a car for the Highfield neighborhood where 6 tusks, worth \$23,000 US, were hidden in the trunk of a parked car. The police moved in.

Madzinga and his driver appeared in court. Through dilatory maneuvering, which demanded that the visa and work permit authorizing Adrian Steirn to work as a photojournalist in the country be presented in court, the lawyers succeeded in postponing the trial until May 31.

The case smells of rotten eggs: the court record has revealed that Faricken Madzinga has been in touch with Tsitsi, the daughter of the new president, Emmerson Mnangagwa.³³

May 25, 2018

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

New dispute between poachers and rangers. The first succeeded in fleeing. The second collected on-site evidence: a firearm, tusks, survival rations, and personal belongings.³⁴

End of May 2018

Panda Masuie Forest, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Transfer and possible release of six baby elephants all direct or indirect victims of poaching, and collected by the orphanage Zimbabwe Elephant Nursery (ZEN) near Harare. After being sedated and transported 900 km by truck for 16 hours, they were set in a boma for several weeks before rejoining the other elephants in a 34,000 ha forest part of Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area – KAZA (see “On the “Trail” n°12 p. 82, n°13 p.67 and 89, n°14 p. 83), Angola transfrontier park, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project is co-managed by NGOs Wild is Life, IFAW, and ZimParks.³⁵

Early June 2018
Hwange District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Five men arrested in a car. They live in the villages around the Hwange Park and were transporting 10 tusks sections.³⁶

GANG

June 11, 2018

Phundundu Wildlife Reserve, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of raw ivory. Two arrests. The names have not been released. One of them is a former ranger, converted to poaching. In 2009, he escaped an encounter with his former colleagues. The other also escaped an exchange of gunfire with rangers in 2016, in the Matusadona National Park. The ivory came from a cyanide poisoning.³⁷

June 16, 2018

Nyanga National Park, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

A man suspected of poaching is dead. The man who was with him fled into the bush after an exchange of gunfire with rangers. On the site, next to their weapons, bags of oranges were found. They are considered evidence and have been sent to a laboratory. Investigators are convinced that they are full of poison.³⁸



June 16, 2018

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

A fresh and tuskless carcass has been found.³⁹

June 29, 2018

Matetsi, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

The gang was back to Zambia after a poaching campaign in Chobe Park in Botswana. It was skirmished by police and rangers. A man is dead. Five porters have fled. Fifteen tusks were found at the scene.⁴⁰



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Early May 2018

South Africa

Denunciation by the NGO PETA of the use of domestic elephants in the television series *Westworld* produced by the American television channel HBO. The episode stages British colonization in India and hunters on the backs of elephants leaving to track down tigers. Tai, one of the elephants, takes part in the company *Have Trunk Will Travel*. Videos show him subjected to brutality during his training. The elephants of *Have Trunk Will Travel* are chained up 12 hours per day. Three elephants out of four born in the company's enclosures die before the age of 4. *Have Trunk Will Travel* also exploits bears in TV shows, feature films, or commercials.

By contrast, PETA congratulates HBO for having, in the same controversial episode "*Virtu e Fortuna*", entrusted a major and remarkable role to a CGI tiger.⁴¹

May 20, 2018

Motswedi, North West Province, South Africa

Arrest at a frontier post with Zimbabwe and court appearance of Life Ndhlovu, 23 years old. He was carrying in a backpack three tusks, the local value of which is estimated at 15,000 rand (\$1,200 US).⁴²

June 11, 2018

Itsoseng, North West Province, South Africa

A very confidential tip. A search warrant. Seizure of six tusks and 91 boxes of anti-retrovirals, the drug used to treat AIDS. Six people arrested.⁴³

BOTSWANA

June 3, 2018

Near Nata, Central District, Botswana

A Mercedes registered in Zambia is in line at the veterinary gate in Ngwasha. It is chosen to be searched. The driver gets out to supposedly help the police open the trunk and runs off into the wilderness where lions and leopards roam in search for food. Inside the trunk, 13 tusks and sections of tusks.⁴⁴

NAMIBIA

GANG

April 14, 2018

Bwabwata National Park, Zambezi Region, Namibia

One poacher and four elephants are dead. This Saturday, a police patrol was circulating on the B8 road which crosses the national park from side to side. On Mashambo's side, the agents spotted an individual with suspicious behavior. In its pursuit, the police fell on six tusks and the traces of a camp: pots, blankets, knives... The anti-poaching Unit was called in reinforcement and the tracking ended fatally for a poacher at the end of a shooting between the two camps. His identity is currently unknown.⁴⁵



June 15, 2018

Zambezi Region, Namibia

Night roadblock. Search of the car. Snatching of severed tusks, two saws and other poaching equipment. Flight of the four passengers. The driver under arrest.⁴⁶

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

May 22, 2018

Djougou, Donga Department, Benin

Sentencing of 5 to 12 months in prison and 100,000 CFA francs in fines for each one, or \$180 US. No damages. Not expensive for the death of a baby elephant.⁴⁷ Cf. "On the Trail" n°19, p.100



June 11, 2018

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

Seizure of four elephant calf tusks, 6 kg total weight. Six arrests. The transaction was underway near police headquarters.⁴⁸

June 13, 2018

Parakou, Borgou Department, Benin

Law enforcement agencies are combing the country to find raw ivory. Five suspects were arrested in a motel in possession of two tusks and a piece of ivory.⁴⁹



GHANA

April 26, 2018

Larbanga, Mole National Park, Northern Region, Ghana

A serious incident on the edge of the national park. Four elephants went out to graze in the farmlands around the village of Larbanga. As they were going back to the park at the end of the day, four young men ambushed them and killed two of them. Four forest rangers on motorcycles intervened, but in the meantime, villagers who had arrived with machetes and knives to cut up the meat, became furious. They attacked and wounded the rangers, then took them hostage for several hours. They stole an AK47. The police arrived on the scene and were finally able to free the rangers, but did not find the machine gun. Powerless, the law enforcement officers watched as the meat was cut up. However, the tusks and skulls of the two elephants were seized.⁵⁰

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

April 19, 2018

Cambache, Cuanza Norte Province, Angola

An elephant that had been near the Cambambe dam for 3 or 4 days was considered a hazard for the hydroelectric equipment that supplies the capital city of Luanda. After consultation and an on-site visit from the provincial governor, the intruder was shot to death by security agents with authorization from the Ministry of the Environment. The killers then divided up the meat, the hide, the bones and the elephant's two tusks. Angolan students involved in research on biodiversity and sponsored by the National Geographic, anonymously spoke to Vpnews, outraged that a country that spends 300 million dollars to send a satellite into space was incapable of buying anesthetics to put an elephant to sleep and move it to safety. They wondered what will happen to other elephants that could come near the Cambambe dam.⁵¹



June 4, 2018

Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport, Luanda, Luanda Province, Angola

Seizure of a ton of ivory. Seven interpellations. The traffickers intended to sell it off in the United Arab Emirates.⁵²

CAMEROON

May 3, 2018

Near the city of Djoum, South Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 106 tusks for a total weight of 200 kg. Many elephant calves among them. The two suspects have allegedly been released on bail, even though one of them was already involved in a similar case.⁵³



GABON

April 11, 2018

Mitzic, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Police officers had, for some time, caught wind that an ivory transaction had taken place in the town. According to the informant, the deal was supposed to be concluded the same day. A team of police officers and Water and Forest agents accompanied by members of the Conservation Justice thus set out on patrol in the town. They noticed vehicle car poorly parked in front of a building with three men inside. The trio is international: Sissoko Birame is Malian, Cissé Momadou is Ivorian and Seidou Aba is Gabonese. They were preparing to unload 4 tusks. Driven to the post office they brought the police officers to their supplier. Serge Nzamba, of Gabonese nationality, was arrested with 2 new tusks. The four traffickers were presented in front of the prosecutor of the Republic. They are liable for no more than six months jail.⁵⁴



GANG

May 3 and 7, 2018

Tchibanga, Nyanga Province, Gabon

- Seizure of 27 kg of raw ivory for sale at 100,000 CFA francs per kg, or \$180 US.

Arrest of Vincent Chinédou, Sunday Pama, Nick Dibia and Ogou Bertrand, all Nigeria nationals according to Gabonese press.

- Breaking news. Jerry Barcelo Retouano, officer of the river brigade in Gamba, is suspected of having supplied hardened ammunition, 458 high-caliber, to local poacher Donatien Malonda, who is also a civil servant. Malonda, with an accomplice, delivered the ivory to the Nigerian gang in charge of commercialization.⁵⁵

May 8, 2018

Gamba, Ogooué-Maritime Province, Gabon

The poacher was supplied with ammunition by two local gendarmes. Three arrests. Ivory poachers do not necessarily need to go far into the hostile forest to hunt.⁵⁶



Round of an elephant in the Shell storage of Gamba

May 17, 2018

Lastoursville, Ogooué-Lolo Province, Gabon

Arrest of Prince Ongotho. This employee of the Société des Bois de Lastourville (SBL) returned from work with a pair of tusks in his bag.⁵⁷

May 25, 2018

Franceville and Okondja, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Arrest of Kokari Adamou of Nigerian nationality. He was in possession of two tusks cut into four pieces and was trying to sell them in a hotel for the price of 120,000 CFA francs/ kg, or \$215 US. Adamou immediately gave the name and address of a Gabonese who would be the "owner" of the ivory. Nkono Hugues was arrested immediately after in Okondja. A 3rd man is in the hot seat. Called Ismaël Mohamed, he took Adamou at 5:00 in the morning to the home of Nkono in Okondja to drive him to Franceville. Mohamed said he did not know that his friend Adamou was transporting ivory in his bag.⁵⁸

May 29, 2018

Makokou, Ogooué – Ivindo Province, Gabon

Four arrests. They are named Kombé, Maganga, Vata and Akinboboye. This last one would be from Nigeria. Seizure of three small tusks.⁵⁹

June 5, 2018

Mitzic, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Jean-François Ekazama has been arrested. He was taken by surprise as he laid his ivory odds-and-ends out on the ground for inventory: four tusks and two segments. Ekazama was coming from Mbomao, 70 km away. The press was surprised that he made it through so many control posts without difficulty.⁶⁰



June 12, 2018

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

He admitted to having killed an elephant near the village of Akana, 75 km from Makokou, but did not have the courage to specify that it was a calf. In his home, a rifle and some ammunition were seized.⁶¹

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

April 7, 2018

Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Arrest of a woman carrying 4 tusks concealed in a mattress wrapped in a sheet. She arrived at a locality situated in the Pokola sub-prefecture and was about to deliver to a client in town. The tusks are said to come from a trafficker well-known in the area. The client remains unknown. The woman will appear before the Ouesso court.⁶²

**FUFU NETWORK
GANG**

April 9, 2018

Oyo, Cuvette Department, Republic of the Congo

Dunel Germain Okiele Doke, Droxy Koumou and Guyvenchy Paya – all three Congolese nationals – were part of a gang in which the job was well shared: poacher, ivory carrier, door-to-door sales rep ... these three were the conveyors, in charge of bringing 8 young elephant tusks from Mossaka to Oyo with a pirogue. They were not on their first try. Their technique is to hide the ivory in sacs of fufu, a pasta with a starchy base (plantains, manioc, taro, igname ...) commonly consumed in central Africa. Their last trip was interrupted by agents from the Water and Forests departmental headquarters and police officers tipped off by the PALF (Projet d'Appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage). At the end of April, the three traffickers were sentenced to 2 to 3 years in prison with fines of 250,000 to 500,000 CFA francs (460 to \$ 920 US) and damages of 1 to 2 million CFA francs (1840 to \$ 3480 US)⁶³



GANG

May 17, 2018

Ouesso, Department of Sangha, Republic of the Congo

Sentencing of Josué Louhakou Tsimba, Fils Biambi and Asco Elenga to 3 years jail time, a fine equal to \$900 US, and damages of \$8,900 US for having transported and attempted to sell 15 tusks.⁶⁴ Cf. "On the Trail" n°20, p. 98.



May 17, 2018

Ouesso, Department of Sangha, Republic of the Congo

Sentencing of Tonga and Mougabio to 1-year jail time, a fine equal to \$540 US and damages equal to \$8,900 US, for the illegal detention of two pairs of tusks, those of a mother and her young.⁶⁵ Cf. "On the Trail" n°20, p.99.



May 31, 2018

Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Lack Delphin was sentenced to 5 years in prison, and a fine of 500,000 FCFA (\$300 US) and 1 million FCFA in damages, for having killed an elephant. Delphin had already been sentenced to two years in prison in January 2016, for having killed a gorilla.

The WWF and the forest administration have been called upon to reinforce their cooperation and their effectiveness in the protection of endangered species in Espace Tridom Interzone Congo (ETIC).⁶⁶ Tridom, see "On the Trail" n°20 p.98, n°18 p.95, n°16 p.80 and n°13 p.102.



REPEATED OFFENSE

May 31, 2018

Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Two poaching die-hards sentenced (see "On the Trail" n°13 p.91).

– Fulgence Mboka, multiple repeat offender, to three years in prison and a fine of 300,000 FCFA (\$185 US) and 1 million FCFA (\$600 US) in damages for illegal possession of a firearm.

– Francis Zokaba, multiple repeat offender, to identical penalties for illegal possession of a firearm and poaching an elephant near the village of Egniabi.⁶⁷



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

June 2, 2018

N'Djili International Airport, Province of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Seizure of 62 kg of ivory bound for Malaysia and sent by Tanzanians.⁶⁸

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 3, 2018

Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

Oleg N. Chakov (48 years old) sentenced to serve 10 days in the county prison or pay a \$5000 US fine, 3 years on probation and 30 days of community service. In March 2017, agents from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife spotted his ad on Craigslist. He was selling nine ivory statuettes (see "On the Trail" n°18, p.96). Contacted by the agents, he sold two of the statuettes to them for \$800 US. The entire batch was seized.⁶⁹



April 23, 2018

New York State, United States of America

The Art and Antique Dealers League of America and the National Art and Antique Dealers Association of America, filed a plea against New York State. They are contesting the State law from 2014, more restrictive than the federal law.

The federal law forbids the selling of ivory with the exception of antiques more than 100 years old, while New York State forbids putting on the market all worked ivories without age limit. "This lawsuit is about preserving the trade of antique ivory crafted more than 100 years ago when the species was not threatened and the craft had historical, social, and artistic value."⁷⁰

May 2018

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, State of Washington, United States of America

Seattle, a haven for smugglers?

Seizure in a beat-up cardboard box of nearly three dozen carved tusks, daggers made of ivory presumed to be from elephants, hippopotamuses and warthogs. This is the first major ivory seizure at the Seattle-Tacoma airport in years.

The couple were passengers on a flight from the Philippines and claimed to be bringing back mango preserves. Strangely, the local prosecutor did not pursue them immediately, but let them go. They received a simple \$500 US fine. A spokesperson for the customs authority stated that they would remain on the radar for a long time.⁷¹



GANG

Denver, State of Colorado, United States of America

24 April 2018 - Paul Ross Jackson (63), former vice chairman of the Dallas Safari Club, has done everything to import into the United States the tusks of the elephant he shot down during an illegal safari in spring 2015 inside Gonarezhou National Park, Zimbabwe. Jackson has surrounded himself with the advice and skills of hunting safari organizers, a New York freight forwarder and "mediators" in Zimbabwe. In particular, he invented a false address in South Africa. At the end, he also managed to attract the wrath of the US Fish and Wildlife and the justice system which suspects him of having intended to sell ivory (27 kg) on the black market. He was fined \$ 25,000 US. He pledged under oath not to hunt any more endangered or threatened with extinction species for the next four years.

April 26, 2018 - His name has disappeared from all Dallas Safari Club records.⁷²

May 21, 2018 - Hanno Van Rensburg, accomplice of Paul Ross Jackson and a professional South African hunter, living in the United States, was caught by the justice after taking advantage of the liberalities of the ancient Zimbabwe regime. He is under two main charges:

- Poaching of several elephants inside and on the border of Gonarezhou National Park thanks to active bribery of Zimbabwe authorities up to \$8000 US.

- Falsification of documents in preparation of facilitating, in support of his American clients, the export of trophies.

An undercover agent from the US Fish and Wildlife Service caught Van Rensburg. He confided that "corruption is the rule in Africa," adding that with \$8000 - \$9000 US more, it is possible to hunt elephants trouble-free inside the Park, and was going so far as to tell the details of his last illegal campaign.⁷³

June 26, 2018

Hudson, New York State, United States of America

Four antique dealers aged 65 to 77 were charged. In their stores and warehouses, 100 elephant ivory objects, a crocodile head, a sawfish rostrum, a sea turtle shell were seized. Since 2014, the sale of elephant and mammoth ivory in New York State is prohibited with the exception of antiques over 100 years old if they contain less than 20% ivory.⁷⁴

ASIA

CHINA

Early April 2018

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, China

Searching of a Chinese passenger returning to the country. Seizure of six worked ivories: two tusks, one statuette and three seals.⁷⁵

Early April 2018

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure from the baggage of a Chinese passenger returning home of worked ivories ingeniously concealed in a box of Nestle Nido milk powder or covered in melted chocolate in the paper wrapping of a bottle of sweet wine. 1.4 kg ivory in all.⁷⁶



April 15, 16, and 25, 2018

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan Province, China

The thefts came from Vientiane, Laos.

- Seizure of two bracelets, 79.3 g.
- Seizure of a pendant, 19 g.
- Seizure of a bracelet, 68.1 g.

These three seizures corresponding "to personal souvenirs" or to a smuggling in conspiracy hold by a ring confirm the fear of NGOs about Laos becoming the ivory supermarket of Chinese bourgeoisie.⁷⁷

April 24, 2018

Jiangsu Province, China

Customs gave back to the Province forest administration 33 worked ivories with an added weight of 12 kg originating from recent seizures from postal packages and the bags of air passengers and crewmembers. These seizures prove one more time the importance of small carriers in the diffuse bringing in of illegal ivory to continental China.⁷⁸

End of April 2018

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure from the baggage of a passenger of three worked ivories (120 g total) hidden under the lid of a tin of ground coffee.⁷⁹



May 4, 2018

Dongxing Port of Entry, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam.

A 13-year-old girl was caught by customs while trying to enter China with a batch of ivory jewellery. It was the lack of naturalness of her gait and her schoolgirl outfit with long sleeves under the heat that attracted the attention of customs officers. She wore 30 necklaces and 19 rings tied around her waist. She said that "someone" should reward her once she crossed the border. Given his young age, he is not sure whether the Chinese authorities will take legal action.⁸⁰



May 14, 2018

Canton (Guangzhou), Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of 740 worked ivories in express packages sent from Dongxing.⁸¹

End May 2018

Gongbei Port of Entry, Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.

Seizure of five bracelets, several necklaces and other trinkets, presumed to be made of ivory, in a female passenger's suitcase.⁸²

End May 2018

Xiaoshan District, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of three bracelets, presumably made of ivory (126 g).⁸³

Early June 2018

Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, China

Two individuals were intercepted when they arrived at the port passenger terminal. One was carrying a pearl necklace with an ivory pendant, the other had a horned helmet (*Cassis cornuta*) shell.⁸⁴

June 9, 2018

Nanning Customs, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure on a Vietnamese traveler of 33 balls, 20 chopsticks and six bracelets presumably made of ivory, 1.56 kg in all.⁸⁵

June 13, 2018

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

32 ivory chips, 240 g in all, seized from the cigarette box of the Chinese passenger coming from Ethiopia. As the Dragon Boat Festival and a spike in travel to China are going closer, Customs remind that it is forbidden to transport endangered animal parts, including ivory, rhino horns and pangolin scales.⁸⁶

INDIA

2015 - State of Kerala

2018 - West Bengal State

After the Shikar operation (cf. "On the Trail" n°12, p. 93) and the seizure of nearly 500kg of raw and worked ivory and the kick in the network of clandestine craftsmen specialized in the transformation of wood, camel bones and ivory into statuettes, kitchen accessories and decorative objects in Thiruvananthapuram, it turns out that the network was reconstituted under the leadership of a woman known as "Kolkata Thankachi" and her associate from Mumbai known as "Pi Mundi". The craftsmen and their tools have been transferred and are back at work in Kolkata. Pending the launch of Shikar 2, West Bengal elephants likely to become the ivory reservoir of the ring are under enhanced protection.⁸⁷

April 1, 2018

State of Jharkhand, India

Hamar Haathi, Hamar Saathi (My Elephant, My Friend)



Radio Dhoom FM issues a 3-minute information bulletin twice every day, at 8:30 a.m. and at 4:30 p.m. giving details on elephant displacements. Examples:

"People, be aware. A herd of 18 elephants is moving around Tundi, in the Dhanbad district, and could stay in the area for a few more days."

"Another herd of 12 elephants was spotted in Kutingya village, in the Simdega district."

The joint initiative by Radio Dhoom and the forest authority is meant to reduce conflict between human activities and elephant activities. Radio Dhoom has a large audience in Jharkhand, particularly in isolated villages.⁸⁸

Lone elephants are accused of seriously damaging coffee production in Karnataka.

Early April 2018

State of Karnataka, India

Elephants are to coffee plantations in India what orangutans are to palm oil plantations in Indonesia: pests.

- On its knees in the middle of coffee trees, a male in its thirties received bursts of bullets. A small group of troublemakers would be responsible, very riled up about elephant incursions and demanding the increase of financial compensation. They are identified. The police are protecting their anonymity.

- The baby elephant, 3 years old, was also victim of coffee planters. Another group fired at him. Transported to Dubare in a care center for injured elephants, he has just been released into a forest.⁸⁹



April 3, 2018

Kochi, District of Ernakulam, State of Kerala, India

The Kerala High Court suspended the investigation into the torture of Aji Bright, suspected of poaching, by Divisional Forestry Officer T. Uma, in charge of Thiruvananthapuram headquarters. The plaintiff accuses T. Uma and two of his colleagues for having deliberately injured him during his interrogation (cf. "On the Trail" n°19, p.110). He was arrested during Operation Shikar against a network of elephant poachers, ivory traffickers and carvers in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi and Kolkata (cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p.93). According to the Indian Forest Service, industrialists and "high-ranking" people are suspected of belonging to the network. Aji Bright is suspected of trying to derail the investigation.⁹⁰

April 9, 2018

Jiapota, Haridwar District, Uttarakhand State, India

A farmer is being searched after a 15-year old male died from an illegal electric fence. Haridwar divisional forest officer, Akash Verma, said, "We have collected several evidence from the spot but we are awaiting post mortem report to initiate action against the land owner who is absconding after the incident."

Monday proved macabre for the pachyderms in the region. A patrol of park rangers came upon the body of another 15-year-old male near Jhilmil lake reserve in the early hours of the day. He was caught in a pit. He had died from his injuries following an alleged fight with another elephant. After the autopsy, they buried it on the spot.⁹¹

April 16, 2018

Odisha State, India

Four elephants dead: one male elephant, two females, a baby. The train was going at 100 km/hr through a forest frequented by elephants. After the collision, the train did not stop. Between 2010 and 2017, 120 elephants have been killed on the railway tracks. 140 Indian NGOs wrote to the Railway Ministry and to the Indian Federation of Railway Companies. The signatories formulated 10 recommendations. We cite two: "Educate passengers about not throwing food from train windows onto the tracks as it tends to attract animals onto the tracks."

"New railway lines must not be constructed or existing ones widened on crucial elephant corridors."⁹²

April 16, 2018

Chennai, Tamil Nadu State, India

The High Court answered yes to the request of the Indian Centre for Animal Rights and Education NGO. Rajeswari, the elephant suffering from cuts in the left forefoot followed by widespread complications, can be put down for ethical reasons. For several weeks, he's been lying down on the ground. The NGO estimates that life support for Rajeswari would be in violation of the law on the prevention of cruelty towards animals in place for nearly 60 years.⁹³

April 22, 2018

Sheikh ul-Alam International Airport, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir State, India

The cook of the regular army is involved in ivory trafficking. He was arrested with two tusks. His destination was not revealed.⁹⁴



April 24, 2018

Sathyamangalam, Erode District, Tamil Nadu State, India

The affair goes back to the year 2000. Some stooges of the famous wood bandit Veerappan have been arrested in possession of 12 tusks, a home-made gun, and hand-made grenades. After being put in prison for 2 months, they were released on bail. The tribunal of first instance has just acquitted them. "The file is not convincing."⁹⁵



May 5, 2018

Sathyamangalam, Erode District, Tamil Nadu State, India

New electrocution of an elephant, a 10-year-old male, on the edge of a corn field which is next to the forest. He was buried there. The farmer is heard by the police. After the first electrocution in the district, the forestry services had demanded the removal of all the illegal fences.⁹⁶



Mid-May 2018

District of Chikmagalur, State of Karnataka, India

Electrocution of a 20-year-old male by an illegal fence designed to protect a plot of ginger growing in the protected forest of Kamenahalli.⁹⁷



OPERATION JUMBO

May 26, 2018

Near Guwahati Railway Station, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

A railway worker, Kumar Das, inspector in the Kolkata-Guwahati express, is involved in trafficking. Das received nearly 6 kg of raw ivory from the hands of Badrul Hussain at the train station exit in Guwahati. Das was about to send the goods to a trafficker who would export them to Nepal via the city of Siliguri. According to experts, the ivory came from 5 adults and youth poached in Kaziranga Park. The Kaziranga-Nepal channel is confirmed. Das was arrested thanks to leaks after the seizure of nearly 13 kg of raw ivory on February 13, 2018 (cf. "On the Trail" n°20, p.104). After verification, it turned out that this batch of ivory also came from Kaziranga Park.⁹⁸



May 26, 2018

Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala State, India

A new rumour is coming over the elephants. Their crushed teeth would be good for growing hair back. The market of bald is casting the net wide like that of rheumatics disorders, to be treated with bear's gallbladders. An undercover agent posing as an Ayurvedic medical practitioner approached a band of active trappers in the protected forest of Idukki. They are reputed to have teeth to sell. After a few weeks of talks, 13kg of elephant teeth were seized, bloody teeth smelling like fresh disaster. Just over a year ago 10 kg of elephant teeth were seized in the Anchal forest, 140 km from the Idukki forest. The rumor and the traffic have been swelling for two years.⁹⁹

May 28, 2018

Ajmer, Ajmer District, Rajasthan State, India

The elephant Suman had been bought from a liquidating circus in Maharashtra and tossed from owner to owner until it failed under sway of a certain Rajendra Kumar Sharma. Suman has been subjected to the "grinding" of domestication whose main stages are physical abuse, food shortage and chaining, a quasi penitentiary regime that continues throughout the exploitation with minimal or no veterinary care.



Suman's ordeal was discovered in May in Ajmer and denounced by the NGOs Humane Society International (HSI) and People For Animals (PFA) to the authorities.

Shortly afterwards, Sharma and his entourage drove Suman to Jaipur, 150 km, to operate him during the day as a tourist transporter - two to three per walk and bareback - and lodge him at night in the Hathi Gaon camp, the "elephant village". Suman's transfer had not been permitted by the competent services. On May 23, HSI and PFA lodged a complaint with the Ajmer court.

On May 25, pursuant to the judgement, the forestry services removed Suman from Sharma's control and placed him under protection in the Mathura rehabilitation centre, Uttar Pradesh.

HSI and PFA welcome the court decision and its immediate implementation by the forestry services. "Elephants like Suman have been illegally brought into the State and in almost every case the person holding them captive has no ownership certificate." All elephants' friends hope that the Ajmer court's decision will set an important precedent for the thousands of domesticated and abused elephants throughout the country.¹⁰⁰

REPEATED OFFENCE

May 30, 2018

State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of two tusks, one arrest. The affair would have played out in the following manner. A male elephant approaches a watering hole. He gets a paw stuck between rocks and cannot get free. After an unspecified amount of time, he dies. Sannaputta, 50 years old, passes by while looking for a medicinal plant. He saws off the tusks and brings them home. The same day a little while later, a patrol discovers the elephant carcass and sends out a search for the missing tusks. Sannaputta had already been interrogated in the past about possession of weapons and illegal activities in local forests.¹⁰¹

End may 2018

Meshangpen, Sanis Whoka District, State of Nagaland, India

One arrest. The man is a poacher. At his home, a .303 caliber rifle, five cartridges, but no ivory.¹⁰²

GANG

June 2, 2018

Ajmer, District of Ajmer, State of Rajasthan, India

Seizure of an alleged ivory antique that belonged to the royal family of Singapore that a gang of six, betrayed by eavesdropping and secrets, tried to sell for close to \$200,000 US. Analyses are ongoing to verify the age of the object. The gang also traded feline skins. A turtle was found in one of the homes of these experts in antique ivory or counterfeits.¹⁰³

June 4, 2018

Similipatna, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

One female dead. She was undoubtedly pregnant. The electrocution killed two.¹⁰⁴



June 13, 2018

Kotagiri, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seven years after the crime, three poachers were sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of Rs. 10,500 (\$153 US). K. Annadurai, M. Premkumar and B. Sankar, living in the Erode district, had hidden the elephant's tusks in a cave.¹⁰⁵



June 13, 2018

Cherambadi forest range, Tamil Nadu State, India

The elephant, about twelve years old, died from a mysterious fracture of the lower jaw. The whole mouth was out of order. He died of hunger and oral cavity infection. Services attribute his death to a fight with a congener, NGOs to the explosion of a grenade or an improvised explosive device.¹⁰⁶

June 21, 2018

Madras, Tamil Nadu State, India

The Madras High Court orders the removal of electric fences powered by solar panels that block elephants and other wildlife access to the Bhavanisagar Dam water reservoir. The fences were laid without permission by a thousand farmers who, according to the court, have no right to restrict wildlife movements in this protected forest and officially designated as an elephant corridor.

The PWD (Public Work Department) and forestry services are accused to do nothing facing with this "environmental and ecological disaster."

The High Court had been approached by Mr. Murugavel, an English teacher opposed to the encroachment of the reserve by human activities.¹⁰⁷



June 24, 2018

Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal State, India

Two poachers were arrested in an attempt to sell 3.6 kg of raw ivory.¹⁰⁸

26 June 2018

Hemgiri Forest Range, Odisha State, India

Suspicious death of an elephant in a controversial context. A herd of elephants has been roaming the rice fields for several weeks and the villagers are protesting against the degradation and destruction of two housings. Forest rangers try to keep the herd away with firecrackers during the day and flashlights at night.¹⁰⁹

GANG

June 27, 2018

Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri Districts, Tamil Nadu State, India

Dismantling of a gang of poachers and traffickers led by Basha, member of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party. Seizure of twelve tusks cut into six sections. Basha's arrest was eventful. His supporters were protecting his house and threatening to attack the police. Back-ups have been called in urgently. The gang raked the forests in Krishnagiri and Hosur districts. The police are looking for a place or a hole in the forests where the other loots of the gang would be hidden.¹¹⁰

April 30, 2018

India

- Some trains between Siliguri, West Bengal and East Assam will be delayed from 30 minutes to two hours.

- Limit speed to 30 or 50 km/h on 207 km of tracks crossed by 62 elephant corridors

- WhatsApp sharing between forestry services and train drivers.

- Special signposts to warn of the corridors. Indian Railways is taking further steps to reduce the risk of locomotive/elephant collisions.

Cf. plan "bee" in "On the Trail" n°19 p. 109.¹¹¹



INDONESIA

April 30, 2018

Pidie District, Aceh Province, Indonesia

The three-month-old elephant calf seriously injured its paw trying to get out of a nylon trap net. The little victim was treated at the specialized veterinary center in Saree, 150 km from the site.

In 2017, the BKS-DA documented the deaths of 11 elephants in traps, shot or poisoned. The regional BKSDA director has stated that conflicts between elephants and humans often occurred because human settlements were too close to the elephants' routes. The spokesperson for the NGO Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi) says that the law is weak, especially in regards to companies that become perpetrators of the destruction of wildlife habitats and human living spaces.¹¹²



June 10, 2018

Bunin, East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia

Poisoning a male domestic elephant. He ate mangoes and bananas coated with pesticides. A tusk is missing. Bunta, 27, was a member with two fellow members of the Conservation Response Unit. CRU's mission is to keep wild elephants out of cultivated plots. At the end of the month, two suspects were arrested. In their home, a tusk 1.2 m long was found.¹¹³



June 30, 2018

Mukomuko Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia

Veterinarians and BKSDA officers examine the decomposing remains of an elephant about 20 years old inside an oil palm plantation. Elephants in the province are threatened with extinction. The victim allegedly destroyed two huts in the plantation a few days ago.¹¹⁴

JAPAN

June 1, 2018

Japan

Japan is strengthening its ivory corpus. The new obligations on ivory transactions and movements within the country (see "On the Trail" n°17, p. 102) are applicable as from today. Vigilance on export controls is strengthened. Sellers are obliged to inform foreign buyers of all legal procedures. Cooperation with Chinese customs and the Chinese CITES office is also being strengthened. The staff of the Ministry of the Environment dedicated to monitoring transactions of endangered fauna and flora species including ivory will increase from 22 to 26.¹¹⁵

JORDAN

9-11 avril 2018

April 9-11, 2018

Amman, Amman Governorate, Jordan

- Seizure of three tusks introduced illegally into the country.
- Seizure in the showroom of a hotel of 23 worked ivories.¹¹⁶

MALAYSIA

May 2018

Sabah State, Malaysia

In one month, six pygmy elephants died here and there in Sabah State inside oil palm plantations or on the edge. The latest event has left its mark. The body of a one-year-old elephant was found adrift in a river. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal orders an investigation into the series of disasters. He wants to know the exact causes and preventive measures to be taken. "Perhaps, the previous government did not have the political will to push through more drastic actions that would affect big logging companies and plantations."¹¹⁷

MYANMAR

April 2, 2018

Rakhine Yoma Elephant Sanctuary, Rakhine State, Myanmar

Up until now, the 40,000 km² park, which is difficult to access, was considered a paradise for around one hundred wild elephants, disturbed only very rarely by a few poachers from hell. But things tend to be getting worse and the incursions are becoming more frequent. Over 100 kg of smoked meat, a trunk and a hide – that is all that is left of an elephant carcass that was discovered recently. The police are interrogating four people, including one member of a rural community that coexisted peacefully with the elephants up until now.¹¹⁸

April 22, 2018

Chaungtha Forest Reserve, Irrawaddy Region, Myanmar

Two poachers arrested, two others wanted. Seizure of two firearms, arrows, bottles of poison, skin and elephant meat. Between 2011 and 2017, 40 wild elephants were poached around Patheingyi, Ngapudaw and Thabaung.¹¹⁹

Early May 2018

Thabeikkyin, Pyin Oo Lwin District, Mandalay Region, Myanmar

Discovery after a villager report of an elephant skinned on the right flank and amputated of its tail and a few teeth.¹²⁰

May 27, 2018

Mindon, Magwe Region, Myanmar

Two arrests. One poached elephant. The context is very unfavourable to elephants. The forests are encroached by the farmers' front. Poachers are well organized. They most often come from the cities. They ride motorcycles to dribble the police. They say they are local people when, in the jungle, patrols ask them for papers. The guards have trouble distinguishing between poachers and hunters.

A police officer from Ngapudaw, a good connoisseur of the case, tells how poachers shoot with rifles handmade from pipes, which they load with powder, chemical and vegetable poisons, after having made the mixture in the jungle.¹²¹

End of May 2018

Daik-U, Bago Region, Myanmar

Three arrests. The price of poachers for a customer in Rangoon is 30,000 Kyat per skin viss (unit weight corresponding to 1.6 kg) or \$13 US per kg.¹²²

May 28, 2018

Regions of Ayeyarwady and Yangon, Myanmar

They raked the forests around Okkan. Three arrests. They have to their credit at least three elephants including one female between January 2017 and March 2018. They sold the skins by viss at Aung. They and others have a code of conduct to kill, cut the trunk and skin.¹²³



SRI LANKA

May 2, 2018

Palagala, District of Anuradhapura, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

A new victim of hakka patas, these fruits-lures containing house-made explosives (cf. "On the Trail" n°18 p.105). On top of that, her body would be riddled with bullets.¹²⁴

11 June 2018

Kala Wewa National Park, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

The venerable Deega Danthu I, who disappeared 3 weeks ago after being shot in the left front paw and treated by vets, has been located in a remote area of Kala Wewa National Park. He looks fine and doesn't limp.¹²⁵



THAILAND

April 15, 2018

Pluang Thong, Province of Chonburi, Thailand

A 30-year old male, well-known, well-liked in the sector and recognizable for his unique tusks and his short tail was found dead, his trunk burned from contact with electric barbed wire installed there to protect a pineapple field. A high-intensity voltage had struck down the 4 t elephant 100 m away from where a female had fallen not too long ago. The pineapple plantation is adjacent to the forest. The guardian had been put in custody then released on bail after the first electrocution. The police are searching him again.¹²⁶



VIET NAM

Early May 2018

Ho-Chi Minh, Viet Nam

Two Internet traders were caught with their hands on the keyboard. Seizure of raw ivory, sculpt ivory and a tiger skin fragment.¹²⁷



June 2018

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 6 kg of ivory charms produced in an underground workshop.¹²⁸

EUROPE

European Union

End June 2018

An investigation by Elephant Action League and Avaaz shows once again that intra-European rules on ivory marketing are not respected.

Of the 109 ivories purchased and radiodated with carbon 14, 81 were made of ivory well after 1947 and at the time of sale should have been accompanied by an intra-EU certificate issued by the competent national authorities. Of these 81 items, 17 were made from ivory from 1990 to 2010 and were theoretically banned from sale.

1947 and 1990 are two of the key dates in European regulation. 1947 corresponds to the year below which ivories fall into the "antiques" category, the problem being that this market is free and that so-called antiques said to be ante 1947 are in fact counterfeits or trivial and recent productions. 1990 corresponds to the year of entry into force of the listing of African elephants in Appendix I of CITES. Carbon-14 dating is a nuclear technique. Thanks to the detection of the radionuclide resulting from atmospheric atomic tests (1945-1965) and taking into account its decrease, the date of formation of a vegetal or animal material such as ivory can be determined with an accuracy in the order of 2 to 3 years. France introduced a provision in the Order of August 16 2016 on the prohibition of trade in elephant ivory requiring that the age of ivory be established by any means of expertise and if necessary by radio-dating.

For the purposes of the Elephant Action League and Avaaz survey, ivories were purchased in Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom from antique dealers, flea markets or the Internet. In France, they were bought on Naturabuy, a shameful digital wildlife reserve managed by the Mondadori press group (see "On the Trail" n°5, p. 104). Despite reminders to order and reports to the authorities, Naturabuy still sells naturalized animals or parts of colonial inspiration and of a bad taste which borders on perfection. On this day, ivory statuettes representing elephants, without mention of the compulsory intra-EU certificate and without certainty on the dating of the ivory are freely on sale on Naturabuy.¹²⁹

SPAIN

April 2, 2018

Pozo Cañada, Province of Albacete, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

Road accident. One elephant dead and two wounded. The truck driver apparently wanted to pass a slow moving vehicle on the highway. The trailer heeled over. There were five chained elephants inside. "We do not stop to be called sons of bitches, and murderers," says Ronny Gottani, acrobat and spokesman for the circus. In a few days a petition gathered more than 200,000 signatures. It calls for the Gottani circus to be banned from exploiting animals and for a decent accommodation for the surviving elephants.¹³⁰



End of April 2018

Province of A Coruña, Autonomous community of Galicia, Spain

Seizure of nine worked ivories of African origin that were on sale for €10,000 on the Internet.¹³¹

FRANCE

1st April 13, 2018

Sames Toll gate, Pyrénées-Atlantiques Department, France

Seizure by customs on the A64 highway in the direction of Bayonne-Toulouse of four elephant tusks (16 kg total). The driver pretended to be moving.¹³²

Cf. for other important seizures in the southwest of France "On the Trail" n°3 p. 68 and n°4 p. 70.



April 28, 2018

Foix, Department of Ariège, Southwestern France

Seizure by the ONCFS of 28 worked ivories, a hippopotamus tooth, a bear claw, and a feline claw at a garage sale.¹³³



OPERATION JE DONNE MON IVOIRE

(I give my ivory)

April 24 and May 30, 2018

Reims, Champagne-Ardenne Department, and Nice, Alpes-Maritimes Department, France

Following the call of IFAW, destruction of 100 kg and of 600 kg of ivory under bailiff's control. The ivory dated back to the colonial heritage and had haunted drawers and attics for years. In Nice, ONCFS seizures were added to the personally owned ivories.¹³⁴



ITALY

April 2018

Casamassima and Triggiano, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure in two auction rooms, for lack of available documentation proving their age, of 200 worked ivories weighing a total of 150 kg and worth €250,000. It is possible that all objects are fake antiques.¹³⁵

April 30, 2018

Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure at the Piazza Marina market of 12 worked ivories – figurines and jewelry. Two sellers in custody. Analyses are in progress to determine the Asian or African origin of the items.¹³⁶

NETHERLANDS

April 24, 2018

Netherlands

Seizure of an elephant calf tusk in the suitcase of a passenger heading towards Turkey.¹³⁷



UNITED KINGDOM

May 23, 2018

United Kingdom

The ivory trade ban bill is progressing slowly. It enters the House of Commons. The question is how it'll get out. As it stands, exceptions are nibbling at the ban:

- furniture or other ornaments containing less than 10% ivory;
- musical instruments containing less than 20% ivory and made before 1975;
- miniature portraits made on ivory plates made more than 100 years ago;
- objects of outstanding artistic interest, cultural interest or historical interest;
- sales to museums or between museums.

Public opinion is generally in favour of the draft, but there are differences on the excessive number of derogations and the complexity of interpretations. Others believe that it would be simpler to rigorously apply the existing law and antique dealers complain. According to the government, the new law would be the most stringent and protective of elephants in Europe.¹³⁸

SWITZERLAND

End of June 2018

Chiasso border checkpoint, Canton of Ticino, Switzerland. Border with Italy

Seizure in a vehicle registered in Switzerland and driven by an Italian of eleven netsukes each of which could be worth several thousand Swiss francs, unless they are fake.¹³⁹

Mammoths

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Early June 2018

Blagoveshchensk, Amur Oblast, Russia. Border with China

A Chinese "tourist" tried to cross the border without informing customs. There are always surprises in the Amur Oblast. Seizure of 173 fragments of presumed mammoth ivory in various geometric forms and weighing a total of 8 kg. In March, 75 kg of mammoth ivory were seized from a resident of Blagoveshchensk, 500m from China. The value of the lot was estimated at 2.2 million Rubles, or \$ 34,860 US (\$ 460 US/kg).¹



Other Mammals

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid-June 2018

South Africa

This quarter's dumbest animal. Tess Thompson Talley, citizen of the United States of America, poses triumphantly in front of the giraffe she just killed.¹



June 28-July 1, 2018

Northern Cape Province, South Africa

A fine of 1500 rand (\$110 US) for the illegal detention of a stuffed gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*).²

KENYA

Mid-may 2018

Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

One arrest. He was transporting two zebra carcasses (*Equus zebra*) in the back of a bloody Toyota.³



MOZAMBIQUE

June 2018

Gorongosa National Park, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Attempt to reintroduce the African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) in Mozambique. The initiative led by an American sponsor, Gregg Carr, aims to repair the wildlife losses caused by the civil war between 1975 and 1992, which claimed nearly a million human lives. Elephants and giraffes had lost 90% of their population. The dogs had completely disappeared. The pack of eight males and six females were transported from South Africa by air. The Park comes alive again. It is said to number today 500 elephants and 60 lions.⁴



UGANDA

Early May 2018

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

A 12 months prison sentence for possession of an okapi skin (*Okapia johnstoni*). Jules Unega, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, sought the indulgence of the court. "I have learnt a lesson from this time on remand and once freed, I will go back to my village to enlighten the masses on the dangers of poaching."⁵



Early June 2018

Mbirizi, Lwengo District, Central Region, Uganda

Seizure of 500 kg of common eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) meat. The four individuals were driving toward Kampala. They ran out of luck when they broke down and, after a while, a pool of blood spread along the road at the back of their car. The antelopes were poached in the Lake Mburo Game Park, where an agent who preferred to remain anonymous said that elands, zebras, impalas, waterbucks and reedbucks are the most often poached. Ronald Naduli, Joseph Mugerwa, Abdul Nyanzi and Ben Sseremba claim that they were merely transporters.⁶

TUNISIA

April 21, 2018

Senghar-Jabess National Park, Tataouine Governorate, Tunisia

The poachers entered the reserve in a 4x4, 200 km from Tataouine. They chased and shot an Arabian oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*, Appendix I), then disappeared into the desert, carrying off the remains, and leaving behind nothing but empty cartridges and a knife. The large Tataouine region is home to 38 of these gazelles. One month ago, naturalists and reserve rangers were overjoyed by the birth of two fawns. The Arabian oryx have developed a strategy to adapt to the arid plains and deserts of the Mediterranean basin. They dig den-like hollows in the sand and the gravel under bushes and thickets, and rest there, protecting themselves from the heat. They come out and are active at dusk. They can detect distant rain episodes and travel tens of kilometers to feed on sprouting vegetation. When water becomes scarce, they survive by eating the bulbs of succulents. They are sought after for their meat, their leather, their supposed medicinal virtues and mostly their spectacular horns and trophies. Female trophies are preferred because their horns are longer and thinner.⁷



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

End of June 2018

San Jose Control Post, San Juan Province, Argentina

Seizure of eight southern three-banded armadillos (*Tolypeutes matacus*) from a vehicle on highway 40.⁸

COLOMBIA

Mid-April 2018

Between Balsillas and Neiva, Department of Huila, Colombia

Seizure of an injured armadillo in a bag on board a van.⁹

COSTA RICA

Mid April 2018

La Cruz, Province of Guanacaste, Costa Rica. Border with Nicaragua

Seizure of a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) from a car on the Interamerican highway.¹⁰



ECUADOR

April 25, 2018

Sangolquí, Province of Pichincha, Ecuador

Sentencing of two poachers of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala) in the Antisana Ecological Reserve to 4 years in prison, a fine equal to \$3,750 US, \$2,000 US in damages, and to make an apology in a national media. The events go back to April 8. Surprised by a night patrol, the two men had thrown the deer bodies over a bridge before fleeing.¹¹



May 16, 2018

Esmeraldas, Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador

Seizure from a joiner's workshop of a tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*, Appendix III in Guatemala). "It is in good health, we will release it in the Mache Chindul reserve."¹²



May 29, 2018

Tulcan, Carchi Province, Ecuador

One year in prison and a fine of \$3860 US for the seller of 10 colpeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus* or *Pseudalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II) tails. The principal threats to the colpeo fox are hunting and trapping for their fur, and killing or poisoning by sheep and poultry farmers.¹³



HONDURAS

OPERATION CYCLONE IV

May 10, 2018

Department of Comayagua, Honduras

Release from a hacienda of 19 white-tailed deers (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala). They were not declared at the Instituto de Conservación Forestal. The white-tailed deer is the iconic mammal of Honduras. In the same department of Comayagua, 37 illegal deer had been removed from multiple haciendas in February this year.¹⁴

MEXICO

Mid-April 2018

Veracruz, State of Veracruz, Mexico

Seizure of a baby coyote (*Canis latrans*) on sale for 2,000 pesos or \$180 US on Facebook.¹⁵



April 24, 2018

Jonuta, State of Tabasco, Mexico

Rescue of two long-tailed otters (*Lontra longicaudis annectens*, Appendix I) about 20 days old, taken out of the Usumacinta River by fishermen. Babies open their eyes after 40 to 50 days. The species is part of the dietary regimes of anacondas, jaguars, and caimans. The major predator of the species is man. The fur that covers the babies since birth has for a long time served as lining for the collars of jackets and hats. In the 1970s and 1980s, long-tailed otters were hunted every year by the tens of thousands in Peru, Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil... Even today, many specimens are captured in nets set up by fishermen.¹⁶

June 9, 2018

Actopan, Actopan Municipality, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

Seizure of 5 Central American red brockets trophies (*Mazama temama*, Appendix III in Guatemala) from a display of agricultural products and ornamental plants. The Central American red brocket is the smallest deer in Mexico. It is still found in 11 country states.¹⁷



ASIA

BANGLADESH

May 9, 2018

Sharsha Upazila, Jessore District, Bangladesh. Border with West Bengal, India

Rescue of nine young zebras (*Equus zebra*) who would have been exported to Africa and were awaiting export to India. The owner of the stable was not on the premises at the moment of the seizure. The police acted on information. One of the zebras died in the hours that followed.¹⁸



CHINA

April 16, 2018

Dongxing Border Post, Autonomous Region of Guangxi, China. Border with Viet Nam.

The Vietnamese tourist was wearing two deer horns wrapped in plastic, taped around her stomach. She wore a padded jacket on top of it. The ruse did not escape the vigilance of the Chinese profilers.¹⁹



May 15, 2018

Gongshan Autonomous County, Yunnan Province, China

Two peasants sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of 4,000 Yuan (\$623 US) each for shooting down a Mishmi takin (*Budorcas taxicolor taxicolor*, Appendix II) in August 2017. The two men had fled but the authorities later found meat from the animal in their makeshift accommodation.

The takin is a goat of which there are four subspecies living mainly between 2000 and 3500 m in the east of the Himalayan range. They feed on herbaceous plants, bamboo shoots, bush leaves and trees, which they savour in the early morning and late afternoon. The takins regularly visit salt marshes where they lick mineral nutrients. Poachers are often watching out for them there. In China the subspecies *Budorcas taxicolor taxicolor* occurs in Tibet and in the Gaoligongshan mountain ranges in Yunnan Province on the border with Myanmar. No serious census of its population was carried out but a study dating from 1998 estimated it at 3500 individuals. The takin is threatened by poaching for its meat and by the deforestation.²⁰



INDIA

April 3, 2018

Pench Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Poisoning of a pack of Indian wild dogs (*Cuon alpinus*, Appendix II), seven dead out of thirteen. Urgently, the guards dispersed chicken meat around the territory of the pack to keep wild dogs from eating the poisoned carcasses left here and there by the poachers.

The "red dogs" as they are called in English language have 75% disappeared from their original range. The residual populations are isolated from each other, confronted with the shortage of food and the inescapable expansion of human activities. Hunters, poachers, and trappers starve the "red dogs," by depriving them of their preferred and necessary prey: rodents, deer, wild boar, peacocks, langurs, junglefowl. In Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, the packs have shrunk dramatically, and recent observations when available are coming down to individuals who are lonesome and often immature. In the North, they disappeared from Russia, the high Asian plateaux, and south of Singapore.

Like wolves and African wild dogs, Indian wild dogs prepare their dens before giving birth, change dens in case of danger, give food to the puppies by regurgitating it from their stomachs, cooperate to take care of the pups, escort them on their first hunt.

Young Indian wild puppies leave their den at the end of three weeks like lycaon puppies and wolf cubs. Nursing for the three species and sub-species lasts around eight weeks. Mating lasts around seven minutes for Indian wild dogs, six minutes for lycaons, fifteen to twenty minutes for wolves, and gestation lasts around 60 to 63 days for the Indian wild dogs and wolves, and 69 to 72 days for lycaons. The last common point among the wild canines of Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America is that humans perceive them negatively.²¹



April 5, 2018

Jodhpur, Jodhpur District, Rajasthan State, India

During the night on October 1st and 2nd 1998, Salman Khan, Bollywood star, poached two blackbuck antelopes (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) in Kankani on the side of a filmshoot. Members of the vegetarian community in Bishnoi filed a complaint.

Khan did it again April 10th in Mathania. Khan was convicted at the end of a judicial marathon – 1998-2018 – to five years imprisonment. Cf. "On the Trail" n°18 p. 110.

Actually, Khan spent 24 hrs. in prison. He was released on bail of 5000 rupees (\$770 US). Sentence adjustments in India are the hidden face of the alleged firmness of the justice and governments around wildlife criminals. In India, a poacher can exchange five years in prison for \$770 US.

In Madhya Pradesh, the conviction of Salman Khan is, however, appreciated by the Wildlife Administration. "Sport" hunting in a Jeep is part of the hobbies of people who have dough. They follow blackbucks in the forests and the plains with their all-terrain engines equipped in the back with a net for bringing carcasses back to the town. Salman Khan inspired others.

Around the infamous town of Bhopal, five cases of blackbuck antelope poaching were recorded in less than two months.²²



Early April 2018

Halsur, Bidar District, Karnataka State, India

The armed trio haunted the district on board a camouflaged all-terrain vehicle. Among them, a doctor and the son of a soldier. Khan, Raza, and Yakoob poached blackbuck antelopes (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and in Pakistan) as well as deers. One or two local guys guided them on their tracking.

From thousands in the district 10 years ago, blackbucks have been reduced to hundreds today. They fall one after the other, electrocuted by agricultural fences powered by solar panels or under the bullets of poachers, many of whom come for entertainment from Hyderabad (7 million inhabitants in 2011...).²³

April 13, 2018

Thane, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

One arrest. Bamne is an agricultural day laborer. He had already sold the meat and skin of sambar deers (*Rusa unicolor*). Skulls and antlers remain. He was caught in a hotel on Friday night.²⁴



Value \$15,400 US

Mid-April 2018

Madhya Pradesh State, India

Interrogation and suspension of three park rangers and a wildlife guard. They were accused of having let poachers of blackbuck antelopes (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) pilfering in exchange for money. They were 50 to 53 years old. Five of their colleagues made off. The black sheep also used to allow some of the poachers to leave after an interrogation and used to take hold of their firearms for personal means.²⁵

April 16, 2018

Birpur, Supaul District, Bihar State, India. Border with Nepal.

Seizure of 4 deer horns at 3:35 in the morning by the 45th SSB battalion. No arrests, the trophies are now at the Forest Bureau in Birpur.²⁶

May 6, 2018

Mitiyala Wildlife Reserve, State of Gujarat, India

A hot chase through the night last Saturday. One hundred rangers tried to intercept three poachers who were shooting Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the Mitiyala Wildlife Sanctuary. Only one man was arrested. One gazelle was killed and the case has made waves among the rangers. One hundred of them showed up from all across the district, but the nearest outpost was not mobilized. Several attempts were made to call, but no one ever answered. The staff has been accused of negligence.²⁷

June 23, 2018

Taluk of Bangarpet, Kolar District, State of Karnataka, India

The team of poachers was wearing the military camouflage worn by forest department agents. Prarthan Gunashekar (19 years old) and Samanth Jayaram (25 years old) were accompanying Krishnappa Kadinappa (61 years old), who was teaching them his hunting techniques. They were arrested in the night by a ranger patrol as they transported a pair of deer (*Cervus* spp.) antlers. Machetes and cartridges were also seized, which did not stop the three men from claiming that they were simply responsible for transport. The investigation continues to try to identify their accomplices, if any. Ecologists and representatives of local populations are pushing the Department of Forests to make the forest zones around Kamasamudra protected forest or deer sanctuary.²⁸

IRAN

Early April 2018

Bamou National Park, Fars Province, Iran

One poacher questioned. First he says he's in the park picking medicinal plants. Then when the patrol finds a bloody knife on the scene, he admits having killed a gazelle with the help of a friend on the run, cut off the head and planned to leave with the carcass. Tracked by the rangers, the duo had abandoned her on the spot.

There are three species of gazelles in Iran: the goitered gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), the chinkara gazelle (*Gazella bennetti*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and the mountain gazelle (*Gazella gazella*).²⁹



April 21, 2018

Muteh, Isfahan Province, Iran

The poacher escaped during the night. He abandoned his motorcycle after a high-speed chase with a patrol of reserve guards. A pregnant gazelle was lying near the wreck as well as a firearm.³⁰

May 27, 2018

Nehbandan, South Khorasan Province, Iran

Coaches are zoos on the move. This time, it's the spotted dress of a red deer fawn (*Cervus elaphus*) which drew attention. One arrest. As usual, rangers bottle-feed (see "On the Trail" n°14, p. 54).³¹



May 27, 2018

Yasuj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Iran

Confirmation by the Court of Appeal of the three-year jail sentence for a poacher of wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), a fine of 100 million rials (\$ 2300 US) and publication of the sentence in a national media.³²



NEPAL

June 24, 2018

Kathmandu, Province No. 3, Nepal

Seizure of a red panda skin (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I), three arrests.³³

EUROPE

FRANCE

April 2018

Bourges, Department of Cher, France

The ONCFS was on their trail for several nights. Interception of two hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) captors. They claimed to have picked them up from the road to keep them from getting ran over. To carry out their good deeds, a dog accompanied them. Two violations are held against them: capture of undomesticated animals and transport of a protected species.³⁴

UNITED KINGDOM

April 20, 2018

Maidstone District, Kent County, England, United Kingdom

Knightspur Homes, property developer, was convicted of a total of 20,321 £ (\$28,800 US) in fines for the destruction of three colonies of common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), around \$9,600 US per colony.³⁵



April 24, 2018

Kidderminster, Worcestershire County, England, United Kingdom

Another court, another punishment. Conviction of Stephen David Yoxhall of a fine of 300 £ (\$424 US) for having destroyed in full knowledge of the cause a colony of common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) on the occasion of real estate work. The sum of the fine did not fly very high. It is considered by bat defendants as an incitement to get over regulatory prescriptions of the Bat Conservation Trust. Kent County and Worcestershire County are 150 km apart.

The bat is worth 22 times more in south London than in the north.³⁶



Multi-Species

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 4, 2018

Ladybrand, Free State Province, South Africa

Deon Cilliers pleads guilty. A professional hunter, taxidermist and director of Hunters Safari, he acknowledges that the possession of eight African caracals (*Caracal caracal*, Appendix II), the importation of nine scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*, Appendix I) and the hunting of 39 breeding lions are illegal. Hunters Safari's main clients come from the United States and Poland, boastful hunters who bring home and display trophies of "wild" animals slaughtered in an enclosure without them having the slightest chance of escaping.

He was sentenced two weeks later to a fine of 1 million rand (\$ 80,000 US) or in the event of non-payment to 5 years in prison.¹



GANG

June 23, 2018

Howick, Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa

A new kind of hunting. It is a new scourge in the province. Poachers and dogs trained to hunt without barking roam the bush and track antelopes (*Redunca* genus), cephalophus duikers and small oribi antelopes (*Ourebia ourebi*). Local populations are overwhelmed, fields are devastated. The police don't intervene. This new practice has nothing to do with "hunt to eat". This is actually a new money game. The gamblers rent dogs for the day, put money in a pot and the team - the master and the dog - who kills the most animals takes the stake and the carcasses.²



Immobilization of a pack by a group of citizens. The 27 dogs were entrusted to the SCPA for lack of space at the police station.

KENYA

April 2018

Nairobi National Park, Nairobi County, Kenya

Removal of 176 traps by DSWT (David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust) teams.³



Mid-June 2018

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

Expulsion of several poachers. Seizure of daggers, cable traps, spears, skins and bushmeat.⁴

NIGERIA

April 13, 2018

Yankari Game Reserve, Bauchi State, Nigeria

Arrest of a poacher. He was accompanied by seven dogs and carrying a baboon (Genus *Papio* Appendix II) and a warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*).⁵

GANG

Early June 2018

Cross River National Park, Cross River State, Nigeria

Is bushmeat poaching pest the incurable disease of Cross River National Park? A single patrol, with the support of WCS Nigeria, resulted in the arrest of 11 poachers, the seizure of six rifles and 15 machetes and the mass destruction of meat and dead wildlife.⁶



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

June 2018

Democratic Republic of Congo

Another disaster in the Democratic Republic of Congo. China wants to attract inhabitants of the jungle and rivers. Negotiations are underway to validate the export of six mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei*, Appendix I), eight bonobos (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I), eight chimpanzees (*Pan spp.*, Appendix I) and four African manatees (*Trichechus senegalensis*, Appendix I). A delegation from the Ministry of the Environment is expected to visit China shortly to examine accommodation conditions in the Taiyuan and Anji Zhongnan zoos. All specimens listed in CITES Appendix I are prohibited from export except for scientific purpose.⁷



TOGO

April - May 2018

Fazao-Malfakassa National Park, Togo

Recrudescence of poaching in the park. Discovery of a dead elephant in the process of advanced decomposition and a kob riddled with bullets.⁸



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

April 2, 2018

Cipolletti, General Roca Department, Rio Negro Province, Argentina

Pick-up of carnage. After a high-speed chase, the vehicle that had escaped a roadside check was immobilized. Two arrests. Seizure of 15 Darwin's rhea (*Pterocnemia pennata* Appendix II), two guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), two pichis (*Zaedyus pichiy*), a Patagonian mara (*Dolichotis patagonum*) as well as a rifle with telescopic sight.⁹

BRAZIL

April 3, 2018

Breves, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure on board an embarkation on the Tajapuru of 10 tons of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), catfish (genus *Pseudoplatystoma*), redbellied catfish (*Phractocephalus hemiliopterus*) and caiman meat (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II). The boat came from the State of Amazonas and headed for the Igarapé-Miri port.¹⁰

OPERATION ANTI-DRUG SENTINEL

April 9, 2018

Óbidos, State of Pará, Brazil

In the middle of the night, seizure on board a boat coming from the State of Amazonas and heading for Igarapé-Miri of 23 tons of arapaima meat (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 7 tons of caiman meat (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II).¹¹

April 16, 2018

Patos, State of Paraíba, Brazil

Valdivino Honório de Jesus would have accumulated thanks to the traffic nearly \$ 400,000 US. His specialties are bird and turtle. His cover is a senior position in the Paraíba State Fisheries and Agriculture Administration.

From 1996 to 2018, he was arrested 16 times for wildlife trafficking. He owes a cumulative fine of more than R\$ 9 million, or \$ 2.5 million US. "For him crime pays," says Roberto Cabral, IBAMA's national coordinator.

His favourite area is the northeast of Brazil but he does not neglect Parana or Minas Gerais. He's a big shot but he keeps in touch with the field without being able to avoid slips. Six years ago on the BR-116, not far from Curitiba, when he was carrying about forty wild birds, he went off the road and the cages fell for the most part in the Rio Bonito. Only one golden conure (*Guarouba guarouba*, Appendix I), three psittacidae (Appendix I or II), one campos oriole (*Icterus jamacaii*), one green-winged saltator (*Saltator similis*) and one ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*) survived. The others drowned. Valdivino was hospitalized for a while before starting again. In May 2017, he was checked on the road to Bahia with a thousand saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) in the back of his vehicle.

Today the future of Valdivino is darkened. He is in pre-trial detention for money laundering and several administrations are demanding the seizure of all his property, the profits of which would then be transferred to a special fund to support federal prisons. For the moment Valdivino knows only the Romero Nóbrega prison in Patos. If he stays there, the relief will be assured. In September last year turtles and birds were seized in the rural lair of Valdivino son.¹²



April 19, 2018

São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure from the baggage compartment of a coach departing from Senhor do Bonfim (2047 km) of 427 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* ou *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 87 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), 21 marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), two falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), two owls (order Strigiformes, Appendix I or II) and 23 passerine birds. After examination and care, the animals in good condition will be brought by plane back to where they came from and will be released into the wild. "Not all of them will have this chance" warned the coordinator for CRAS (Centro de Recuperação de Animais Silvestres). Indeed, many of the specimens are injured. The iguanas were in plastic bags; most of the other animals were packed in cardboard boxes. 17 had already died during the transport to CRAS. The coach was intercepted on a ramp from the Ayrton Senna highway before arriving at the final bus station. The police acted on information.¹³



OPERATION KAYAPO

May 11, 2018

Santa Luzia do Pará, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure by the police of chesnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), campo troupials (*Icterus jamacaii*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*), chachalacas (genus *Ortalis*), thrushes (family Turdidae), green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), epaulet orioles (*Icterus cayanensis*), 24 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) and a New World monkey (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II). The birds were released in the wild. The cages were destroyed.¹⁴

May 11, 2018

Tarauacá, State of Acre, Brazil

Fishing boats on the Tarauacá, Feijó and Juruá bring in all sorts of banned Amazonian “merchandise” to the urban markets. Seizure of 200 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 50 kg of caiman meat (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II), a monkey (Appendix I or II) and two white-lipped peccaries (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II).¹⁵

May 17, 2018

Pedro Alexandre, Encruzilhada and Cândido Sales, State of Bahia, Brazil

Seizure of 39 birds, ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*) and other passerines, a seven-banded armadillo (*Dasypus septemcinctus*) and three turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II). Four arrests.¹⁶

May 20, 2018

Tabatinga, State of Amazonas, Brazil. Border with Peru and Colombia.

Seizure from the city market of 220 kg of piracatinga (*Calophrys macropterus*), 187 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 19 kg of giant Armadillo (*Priodontes maximus*, Appendix I), 77 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), 51 kg of tapir meat (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II), 40 kg of red brocket meat (*Mazama americana*), 16 kg of white-lipped peccary meat (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II). The whole is rotten and has been disposed of. Tabatinga is crossed by the Rio Solimões, tributary of the Amazon. Three arrests.¹⁷

May 31, 2018

Pardinho, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Five nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) and a tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*), cleaned and skinned, were in the freezer on the balcony. The passerine, a chesnut-bellied seed finch (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), was in a cage. Fine equal to \$16,000 US.¹⁸



June 1, 2018

Santa Lucia, State of Paraná, Brazil

A poacher is arrested in the village. He had been denounced the day before. At his home the man stored 26.8 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and agouti (*Dasyprocta*) in a freezer and held two unregistered rifles. He was taken to Guarapuava police station. He was helping himself in the Reserva do Iguaçu.¹⁹

June 2, 2018

Itaperuna, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Humble seized in someone's house of two tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and two double-collared seedeater (*Sporophila caerulea*). It looks like nothing or almost nothing. But if we consider the addiction of Brazilians to the company of birds and turtles, it makes millions of turtles and passerines prisoners and seizures and releases to accomplish.²⁰

June 5, 2018

Alto Paranaíba, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil



Seizure of firearms, ammunition, marijuana, poaching gear, two pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and a dead armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family). Fines of 52,000 reais, totalling \$14,000 US.²¹

June 5, 2018

Surubim, Serra Talhada and Recife, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Local version of the national operation launched by IBAMA against animal abuse and wildlife trafficking on the Internet.

- A man was noticed by posting on a social network a photo of a capuchin monkey (*Sapajus* spp. synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II) being cooked. He was getting ready to taste it with some friends. He was fined 5,000 reais (\$ 1,350 US).

- A wild fauna crank nicknamed “the king of snakes” staged himself in videos online, showing him manipulating reptiles, spiders and scorpions. He held two snakes in illegal captivity. He was fined 2,000 reais (\$ 540 US).

- One individual offered two marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II) for sale for 100 reais (\$ 26 US). He was fined 20,000 reais (\$ 5,400 US).²²



COLOMBIA

May 20, 2018

Cartagena, Bolivar Department, Colombia

Seizure of an oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I) and a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) from the lounges of a hotel. Three staff members who opposed the removal of the animals are charged with resisting.²³



Mid-June 2018

Pereira, Risaralda Department, Colombia

Nice catch in the bus station: eight skulls, five of primates (Appendix I or II), two of caimans (*Alligatoridae*, Appendix I or II) and one of tapir (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II) and two skins including one of jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I). The parcel came from the Pacific region and was bound for the town of Pereira in the coffee region.²⁴



End June 2018

Barranquilla, Atlantico Department, Colombia

Seizure of 30 wild animals in captivity, including one night monkey (*Aotus* spp., Appendix II) and two psittacidae (Appendix I or II).²⁵



ECUADOR

May 23, 2018

Mulalo, Cotopaxi Province, Ecuador

Seizure by the environmental police as requested by the public prosecutor's office of several stuffed animals or parts of animals including a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala), a forest tortoise (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), a forest fox (*Cerdocyon thous*, Appendix II), a brown-throated sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II), a red howler (*Alouatta seniculus*, Appendix II), a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), a long-tailed otter (*Lontra longicaudis*, Appendix I), a colpeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II), a red-billed toucan (*Ramphastos tucanus*, Appendix II) and six firearms of different calibres.²⁶

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 27, 2018

Grand Rapids, State of Minnesota, United States of America

Indictment of two trappers, Brad Dumonceaux and Stephen Bemboom. The investigation lasted two years. The two men are subscribers to cruelty. In 2016, in Becker County, they harassed beavers. Seven gray wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) fell in their traps, and one American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) taken by the trap died after 19 days. The remains of her bear cub were found by her side.

The putting out of traps is authorized in public forests under strict conditions. They in particular must be tended every day.²⁷



April 26 and July 2, 2018

States of Alaska and California, United States of America

Two inconsistent ruling initiatives have just been voted by the representatives of two American states.

- In Alaska a resolution to exempt walrus, mammoth and mastodon ivory from the federal moratorium on ivory has just been addressed to the United States Congress. This bad move was led by Democrat Senator Donny Olson, who appears in the legislature's trombinoscope as a "doctor, pilot, reindeer herder and businessman" and whose interests include "polar exploration" and... "ivory carving". Pretending to act on behalf of Alaska's native communities that carve tusks from walrus shot for their meat, he manoeuvred to ensure that craftsmen of all origins living in Alaska were included in the exemption. But the boundaries are sometimes blurred between ancestral practices and illegal traffic (see "On the Trail" n°14, p.11 and "On the Trail" n°17, p.14), and mammoth ivory often covers elephant ivory trafficking. Donny Olson is not alone in this fight (see the statements of Alaska Republican Senator Dan Sullivan "On the Trail" n°20 p.19).

- In California, an amendment to the Fish and Game Code finally passed by the State Senate on July 2 has just strengthened the legal arsenal protecting endangered species. The text was carried by Democratic Senator Henry Stern. It was already prohibited to import or keep parts of protected animals for commercial purposes. It will be prohibited from 1 January 2019 to possess a new trophy or any part of animal resulting from the hunting in Africa of species qualified as "emblematic" such as elephant, lion, leopard, black rhino, white rhino, giraffe, lion, Jentink's cephalophe, plains zebra, mountain zebra, hippopotamus or striped hyena. In the absence of proof of possession of the trophy before January 1, 2019, a California resident will incur penalties of \$ 5,000 US to \$ 40,000 US per infraction. And to encourage their neighbours or friends to denounce the holders of trophies acquired after January 1, 2019, a reward of \$ 500 US is planned.²⁸

MEXICO

March 29, 30, and 31, and April 1, 2018

Nacajuca, Jalpa de Méndez, Cárdenas, Comalcalco, Cunduacán, Centla and Huimanguillo, State of Tabasco, Mexico

From control to control over roads and markets, the PROFEPA seized a white-fronted Amazon (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), a red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 14 Meso-American sliders (*Trachemys venusta*) and three Mexican giant musk turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*). These last few had just been fished. They still had hooks in their mouths.²⁹

April 1, 2018

Puebla, State of Puebla, Mexico



Seizure from Terra Exotica pet store of 19 lizards, reptiles, and spiders: 10 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), a leopard gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*), a Guichenot's giant gecko (*Correlophus ciliatus*), a central bearded dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), a matamata (*Chelus fimbriatus*), a Bahia grey bird eating tarantula (*Lasiodora striatipes*), a Goliath birdeater (*Theraphosa blondi*), a Hispaniolan giant tarantula (*Phormictopus cancerides*), a Venezuelan suntiger tarantula (*Psalmopoeus irminia*) and a bird, a keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II). The PROFEPA reminds the public that notices proving the legal origin of the animals must be provided at purchase.³⁰



Chelus fimbriatus

April 5, 2018

Amacuzac and between Tepalcingo and Huitchila, Morelos State, Mexico

- Seizure of 66 birds from a car, indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), house finches (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), rose-breasted grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), white-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila torqueola*), hooded orioles (*Icterus cucullatus*), blue grosbeaks (*Passerina caerulea*), a curve-billed thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*), black-headed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), a rufous-backed thrush (*Turdus rufopalliatus*). They were suffering from thirst and overcrowding. Several had injuries around the beak. They were released without delay in the reserve forest of Sierra de Huautla.

- Seizure of a Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), a ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*), a Mexican spiny-tailed iguana (*Ctenosaura pectinata*), and two snakes, one a cinctate Bull Snake (*Pituophis lineaticollis*) and the other a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II). They were released without delay in the Yautepec forest not far from Amacuzac.³¹



Bassariscus astutus

April 5, 2018

Othón P. Blanco, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

A private individual had a tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and a Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II) in the city, in the courtyard of his house. The feline paced around the coconut tree he was tied to. He had escaped in December 2017 but was caught. The tiger and the Geoffroy's spider monkey were finally freed from their keeper by PROFEPA inspectors. The tiger went to the "Gran Santuario Mexicano Jaguar Negro Tigre Blanco" in Mexico. As for the monkey, he is in a PROFEPA warehouse until an appropriate home can be found for him.³²



FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 8, 2018

Mexico City, Mexico

Father and son had a stand specialized in reptiles and arachnids at the Morelos market. They were arrested during a raid by the federal police and PROFEPA, in April 2017. Hundreds of protected animals were seized (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 117). They have been sentenced to 3 years in prison, plus a fine of 247,535 pesos (\$13,500 US).³³



April 9, 2018

Guasave, Mazatlán and Culiacán, State of Sinaloa, Mexico

Seizure in shacks on the beach of a gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), a green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), and a Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*). After quarantine and medical examination, it is planned to release them in their appropriate habitats.³⁴



April 19, 2018

Leon, State of Guanajuato, Mexico

PROFEPA paid a call on two animal holders, following information given by a city resident. One yellow-headed parrot (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), one red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and one lilac-crowned amazon (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I) in a cage were first seized at the home of an individual. Then a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala) was found in the courtyard of a house.³⁵

April 23, 2018

State of Guerrero, Mexico

- Seizure at the bus station of two, 70-cm long boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II). One man fled when the police approached.
- Voluntary surrender of a Meso-American slider (*Trachemys venusta*)
- Voluntary surrender of a ferruginous pygmy owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*, Annex II) with an injured wing.³⁶

April 26, 2018

Tulancingo de Bravo, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

The zoo is threatened with closure. The city has 150,000 inhabitants. 132 animals are mistreated including a red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II), a common caracara (*Caracara plancus*, Appendix II), a crested guan (*Penelope purpurascens*, Appendix III in Honduras), a white-crowned parrot (*Pionus senilis*, Appendix II), a keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II), a great curassow (*Crax rubra*, Appendix III in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Colombia), a common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III in United States), a desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*, Appendix II), three common box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II), an orange box turtle (*Terrapene ornata*, Appendix II), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), two common iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), two Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), a Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II), two tufted capuchins (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II), a green monkey (*Chlorocebus sabaeus*, Appendix II), two Yucatan rusty-rumped tarantulas (*Brachypelma epicureanum*, Appendix II), a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II), a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), a white-noased coati (*Nasua narica*, Appendix III in Honduras), a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala), six lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), a jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), four tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), two collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II except in Mexico and United States), a kinkajou (*Potos flavus*, Appendix III in Honduras) and an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). They are threatened by thirst, hunger and heat. They come from transactions, donations, and questionable exchanges. The lions and the hippopotamus will never see their Africa.³⁷



Early May 2018

Tepito, State of Morelos, Mexico

Seizure of a lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and a spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II). Two arrests.³⁸

May 27, 2018

Compostela and Tepic, State of Nayarit, Mexico

- Seizure of a male ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I) about 10 months old from a private garden.

- Seizure of a keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II).

The feline and the bird were collected by a PIMVS (Predios o Instalaciones que Manejan Vida Silvestre).³⁹

May 31, 2018

Escuinapa, State of Sinaloa, Mexico

Seizure at a bus station of 140 orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, Appendix II), eight beaded lizards (*Heloderma horridum*, Appendix II) and two desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*, Appendix II) from four boxes. Worrying health condition. They were handed over to the vet at the Mazatlán aquarium.⁴⁰

June 1, 2018

Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure at the San Juan market of 67 kg of frozen meat packets. Among the choice meats praised by vendors for their gastronomic refinement, those of Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala), and water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*).⁴¹

June 16, 2018

Motul, State of Yucatán, Mexico

Seizure from an individual's house of a white-fronted parrot (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), two furrowed wood turtles (*Rhinoclemmys areolata*) which were collected temporarily by the Animaya zoo, and a Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II), a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III), three Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), a chachalaca (*Ortalis vetula*, Appendix III in Honduras and Guatemala) and two hawks from the genus *Accipiter* (Appendix II).⁴²

PARAGUAY

June 8, 2018

Benjamín Aceval, Department of Presidente Hayes, Paraguay

A surprise road block on the road coming from Chaco, a region of forest plains that has been eaten away by deforestation and poaching. The Secretariat for the Environment (SEAM) used to have permanent posts, but they became ineffective because the traffickers knew them too well. Today, the authorities prefer random controls. Last Friday night, a truck transporting cheese was targeted.

Among his merchandise, the driver had hidden four whole tatus (*Cabassous chacoensis*), 10 kg of deer (cervidae family) meat and 20 kg of peccary (*Catagonus wagneri*) meat. Truckers often get poached animals from the Indian populations (Ayoreos and Ishirs) and sell the meat in town. The driver was allowed to leave after the seizure, but was ordered to report to the Secretariat for the Environment within 10 days to answer to the violation of wildlife conservation law. The standard penalties range from 39 million to 1500 million guaranas (from \$6840 to \$263,000 US).⁴³

PERU

OPERATION "IF YOU BUY IT, YOU'RE AN ACCOMPLICE"

Early April 2018

District of La Victoria, Lima Province, Peru

Raid from SERFOR (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) and the environmental police. Seizure of eight iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), four boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor constrictor*, Appendix II), two canary-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II), an orange-winged Amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), 35 lizards (*Stenocercus chlorostictus*), 77 Peruvian purple-throated lizards (*Stenocercus imitator*) and a giant ameiva (*Ameiva ameiva*). The boas sold for 500 soles (\$155 US) "a piece," the iguanas 100 soles (\$21 US) and the birds between 50 and 100 soles (\$15 to \$46 US). All were mistreated.⁴⁴

April 26, 2018

Callao, Province of Callao, Callao Region, Peru

Seizure at a delivery platform in a package bound for Tyumen, Tyumen Oblast, West Siberian Economic Region of 45 hummingbirds (family Trochilidae), two manakins (family Pipridae), two black-tailed trogons (*Trogon melanurus*), a woodpecker (family Picidae), three tryant flycatchers from the family Tyrannidae, two motmots (family Momotidae), two woodcreepers from the genus *Lepidocolaptes*, a yellow-rumped cacique (*Cacicus cela*), a jacamars (family Galbulidae), a puffbird (family Bucconidae), a euphonias from the genus *Euphonia*, a swift (family Apodidae) and a lesser yellow-headed vulture (*Cathartes burrovianus*), or 84 birds and three bats, and a Rio Napo tamarin (*Saguinus fuscicollis*, Appendix II). The birds and the bats were gutted, covered in salt, and slipped into plastic cases. The monkey was skinned, gutted and dismembered. The mysterious shipment was entrusted with the Museum of Natural History. According to the first elements of the scientific investigation, the animals were captured in the departments of Amazonas, San Martín, Huánuco, Pasco, Ayacucho, Cuzco and Madre de Dios.⁴⁵



CAMBODIA

May 9, 2018

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Cruelty to animals pays on Youtube. When they were arrested, the Raty couple, Ah Lin and her husband Phoun Raty, had already earned \$500 US from the Google subsidiary for their videos showing the young woman grilling and devouring several protected species. A fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*, Appendix II), a king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II), a ray, a shark, a heron and various birds had already born the cost of their greed. Outraged Internet users finally notified the Ministry of the Environment, who launched an investigation. The couple live in Phnom Penh and claimed to have purchased the animals at the Preak Phnov market, in the suburbs of the capital. They publicly expressed regret for their crime. The companies whose advertising banners were displayed under the videos and generated the couple's revenue expressed no regret at all.⁴⁶


Southern Cardamom National Park, Cambodia

In the Cardamom Mountains alone, 110,000 traps have been removed by the NGO Wildlife Alliance in six years. NGO director Thomas Gray says the situation is even worse in Viet Nam and Laos and is worsening in Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand. Wildlife Alliance points out that protected areas that are a priority for poachers are now "empty forests". Bushmeat harvested in the jungle does not feed the poor. It is directed towards the cities to decorate the menus of the middle and higher classes. Bushmeat is an urban luxury. The few cameras scattered in the Park show a crippled and limping fauna. Survivors of traps are disabled animals, vulnerable to natural predators and poachers. Pangolins, large-toothed ferret badgers, bears, macaques are first and foremost. Rhinos, leopards and elephants are not spared. Traps don't sort out. The most threatened would be the saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*, Appendix I), an antelope-like ungulate of the Bovidae family. The traps are made with recovered moped brake cables.⁴⁷



May 10, 2018

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Raid on two houses with search warrants. Seizure of 56 wildlife "products", skulls, claws, vibrissas of leopards, clouded leopards (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I) and tigers, gall bladders of sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) and Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) and elephant tusks. The WRRT (Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team) was mobilized after photos and auctions were spotted on Facebook.⁴⁸



CHINA

Early April 2018

Near Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, China

Inhumane livestock truck. The truck intercepted on information by highway police between Shucheng County and the province of Guangdong – 1200 km – was transporting hundreds of snakes, herons, civets, porcupines destined for humane consumption. The survivors were handed over a Research institute of a forestry school. The driver and the owner of the truck are under arrest.⁴⁹

April 26, 2018
Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China

Continued from p. 18.

Seizure of two elephant tusks, 156 mammoth tusks, 1276 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), 70 bear teeth and 44 bear gall bladders (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and four deer genitals. Deer testicles and penises are recommended by traditional Chinese medicine to treat sexual impotence, deafness, liver disorders.

The total shipment along with parts of marine species is valued at 106 million yuan (\$15 million US). Eight Chinese and Russian suspects are in custody. The investigation is ongoing. Officially, the truck was carrying soybeans.⁵⁰



April 25, 2018
Lok Ma Chau, Hong Kong, China



Seizure from a truck of 29 kg of dried seahorses, 15 kg of pangolin scales, and 52 kg of agarwood (*Aquilaria malaccensis*, Appendix II). Total value: \$76,500 US.⁵¹



Mid-May 2018
Simao District, Yunnan Province, China

Customs seized 48.61 g of pangolin (*Manis* spp., Appendix I) scales, 130.78 g of dried elephant skin, 90 g of porcupine quills (*Hystriidae* spp. or *Erethizontidae* spp.) and some cuts of Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*).⁵²



May 29, 2018
Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

Today, customs handed over to the Provincial Department for the Ocean and Fisheries, various parts of protected animal species. The batch included 58 crocodile skins, along with hippopotamus teeth, whale teeth, sculpt elephant ivory and a stuffed turtle.⁵³



GANG
End May 2018
Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces, China

The Chinese customs report is brief, but the case is serious. During simultaneous operations in the cities of Canton (Guangzhou), Foshan (Guangdong province), Nanning and Chongzuo (Guangxi province), the unified command of the Customs and Excise Department dismantled a large-scale gang of traffickers. The Zambian customs office apparently supplied the information necessary. The seizure included 429 kg of pangolin scales, 11.25 t of horns of non-specified African ungulates and 21 t of dried bovine meat. Two warehouses were impounded and four suspects were arrested.⁵⁴



End May 2018
Beijing Capital International Airport, China

Customs track record since the beginning of the year: 158 worked ivories (17 kg) and 119 other wildlife treasures (antelope horns, leopard skins and wolves' teeth).⁵⁵



June 1, 2018
Jingdong Yi Autonomous County, Yunnan Province, China

What a smell. Police found in the kitchen, dining room, balcony, bedroom and freezer 3.4 kg of pangolin scales, 14 collared bear gall bladders (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), porcupine quills, 6 paws of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and "wild animal tails".⁵⁶



June 7, 2018
Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

The supermarket manager claims that the representatives of the three endangered species are there to attract customers but the prices on the three aquariums are there to say the opposite: 500 g Chinese giant salamander (*Andrias davidianus*, Appendix I) for 118 yuan (\$18 US), 500 g Chinese alligator (*Alligator sinensis*, Appendix I) for 88 yuan and 500 g Chinese sturgeon (*Acipenser sinensis*, Appendix II) for 22.5 yuan.⁵⁷



INDIA

May 9, 2018

Great Himalayan National Park, State of Himachal Pradesh, India

The worm is in the fruit. The poacher doubling as a businessman lives at the heart of the park in a village accessible after several hours of walking. At Sher Singh's house, the patrol composed of 19 guards got a hold of a skin, claws and teeth of a leopard, a dozen egrets and 200 feathers from Himalayan monals (*Lophophorus impejanus*, Appendix I) and western tragopans (*Tragopan melanocephalus*, Appendix I), as well as 13 mobile phones and ATM cards. Singh does not work alone. He directs a team of medicinal herb gatherers and hunters, and a workshop where egrets are mounted on silver jewels and their feathers on hats deeply rooted in the folk culture of Himachal Pradesh.⁵⁸

May 12, 2018

Indore, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

A coral- and turtle-trafficker has been arrested. Makad got his live corals from divers in Gujarat, on the coast of the Indian Ocean. Live coral is very sought-after as aquarium decoration for the bourgeoisie in the central regions of the country (see "On the Trail" n°13, p.7). Makad's arrest followed the arrest of one of his clients, Surwade, who sold live corals and Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II) in markets.⁵⁹

May 17, 2018

State of Tamil Nadu, India

The priest is in custody. To celebrate a puja in favor of his father, he had "invited" cobras and an elephant in violation of the law on the prevention of animal cruelty. The puas are rituals of veneration of deities. In this case, 45-year-old Sundaresan wanted to bring happiness and longevity to his 80-year-old father.⁶⁰

May 2018

Shivamogga or Shimoga, State of Karnataka, India

Arrest of a 35-year-old woman. She sold nails, claws, slender loris bones (*Loris tardigradus*, Appendix II), raptors and wild boars in the street. She was released on bail. She sold her wildlife curiosities between 3000 and 5000 rupees (\$44 US to \$74 US).⁶¹

IRAN

May 26, 2018

Iran

Protest by Iran's Environment and Wildlife Watch. The authorities have granted 105 hunting permits for urial (*Ovis aries*, Appendix II), gazelles (genus *Gazella*) and wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) at the very start of May, when targets are still in gestation or together with newborns and forest habitats need calm and safety.⁶²

June 9, 2018

Zabol, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran

Conviction of an ordinary poacher, with no criminal record and apparently repented to 270 hours (three hours per day) of community service in Zabol's garbage collection. Final seizure of his weapons.⁶³



MALAYSIA

May 28, June 4, 6 and 8, 2018

State of Perak, Ampang, State of Selangor, Seremban, State of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Three traffickers have been put out of service following Internet monitoring by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN). A total of 680 animals and animal parts were seized, notably 290 snakes, turtles and lizards, 222 frogs, 99 tarantulas, 17 scorpions, 12 skulls, including hornbills (Bucerotidae family).
- On May 28, an initial raid took place at the home of a 32-year-old man living in the State of Perak. He was found in possession of hornbills and 243 live animals, and was arrested.
- On June 4, a 65-year-old man living in the residential neighborhood of Ampang, near Kuala Lumpur, was arrested in his home in possession of 385 wild animals and 30 eggs.
- On June 6, in Seremban, a man with a white handed gibbon (*Hylobates lar*, Appendix I) and two Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) was apprehended. He was sentenced on June 8 to the maximum penalty of 3 years in prison and a fine of 20,000 ringgits (\$5018 US).⁶⁴



MYANMAR

June 9, 2018

Mandalay, Bago and Ayeyarwady Regions, Myanmar

Six traffickers were arrested during three raids carried out by the Forestry Department. The investigators' spoils are rich: elephant hides, a pair of tusks, horns and antlers of various species of deer and bovid (Bovidae), turtle shells and meat, porcupine quills (*Hystriidae* spp. or *Erethizontidae* spp.), bear (*Ursidae* spp.) claws, feet and bones, various animal skulls. According to U Khin Maung Myint, director of the Forestry Department of the Ayeyarwaddy Region, demand is high in neighboring countries, especially China and Thailand.⁶⁵



THAILAND

April 2018

Phuket, Phuket Province, Thailand

The marvels of Phuket, its beaches, its blue waters, its cliffs, its circuses and macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), its orangutans (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I), its elephant calves, its crocodiles and its snakes for the pleasure of tourists from around the world.⁶⁶



VIET NAM

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 17, 2018

Nam Tu Liem District, Hanoi Province, Viet Nam

He is a middleman but it is not the first time he has done it. Already convicted twice for trafficking of endangered wild species, Do Van Thanh (47 years old) this time was caught by the Environmental Police Department with 8 frozen pangolins and 4 bear paws in two bags. He had taken the packages at the Hanoi railway station and was in charge of transferring them by motorbike to the My Dinh bus station. That's where he was inspected around 8:00pm. He had to load on board a bus in the direction of Cao Bang, capital of the Province of the same name bordering China. According to his statements, he had bought the pangolins at 250,000 VND/kg (\$11 US/kg) and had to resell them \$28 US/kg, and the bear paws had cost him 10 million VND (\$440 US) for a resell price of 11 million VND (\$480 US). The transactions had been performed over the phone and paid by transfer. An investigation is ongoing.⁶⁷



April 28, 2018

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

It's an epidemic (see p.67) ! Seizure from a coach bus on the road from Binh Phuoc to Ho Chi Minh City of several iguanas, snakes, and civets. A trafficker had recruited the driver to deliver the lot to Ho Chi Minh City. Without doubt a routine trafficking.⁶⁸

Early May 2018

Viet Nam

The recipe for the mixture offered on an Internet user's Facebook page included king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) and pangolin (*Manis* spp., Appendix I) soaking in an unidentified liquid. An ENV activist convinced the seller to deliver the 10-liter jar to him. The police were ready and waiting.⁶⁹



May 30, 2018

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

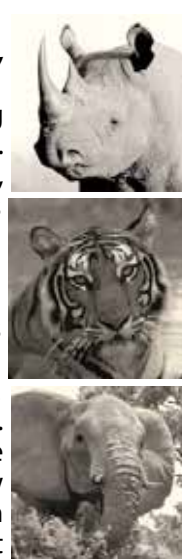
Two rhinoceros horns and 20 feline teeth seized inside the case of a welding machine carried by a passenger on Qatar Airways flight 834 from Doha. She left Mozambique. A certain Nguyen allegedly asked her as a service to bring this tool back to Viet Nam.⁷⁰



June 2018

Ha Dong Urban District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Nguyen Mau Chien, a trafficking big shot, is on the legal rebound. In his home, among other things, police found 34 kg of rhinoceros horn, two frozen tiger cubs and some raw or sculpt ivory (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 87, n°18 p. 57 and n°20 p. 127). On March 20, he was sentenced to 13 months in prison and a fine of 10 million dong (\$442 US). The accused has just appealed. His appeals trial should take place within the next two months. He now risks from 7 to 15 years in prison and up to \$660,000 US in fines. But until then, he has been released for procedural reasons, and he may not be back...⁷¹



June 23, 2018

Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

For two weeks, the police had been monitoring the comings-and-goings of a coach. Last Saturday, they made their move as it came back from Pakse in Laos. 26 turtles of an undetermined species, four Chinese softshell turtles and 37 pangolins (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II) were onboard. One of the pangolins was dead. Ngo Van Quang, the driver, stated that the animals had been purchased in Pakse and were destined to be sold for their meat in Nghe An province.⁷²



EUROPE

GERMANY

April 24, 2018

International Airport of Düsseldorf, State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

A 52-year old guy and another 69 were probably out of sex and wanted to impress their friends. They were bringing from Thailand four bottles with a scorpion and a cobra candied in a sort of liqueur. It's a new rip-off in souvenir stores in Thailand.⁷³

FRANCE

OPERATION THUNDERSTORM

May 2018

France



Under the auspices of Interpol and the World Customs Organization (WCO), the international operation Thunderstorm mobilized French customs in mainland France and its overseas territories, and was fruitful: over the course of one month, 26 seizures or arrests involving 30 protected species. Live animals, including pythons (*Python spp.*, Appendix I or II or *Loxocemidae spp.*, Appendix II), boas (*Boidae spp.* Appendix I or II), glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II); stuffed animals, including scorpions, cobras, owls (*Strigidae spp.*, Appendix I or II), hawks (*Buteo spp.*, Appendix II); seven animal parts including a crocodile head (*Crocodylia spp.*, Appendix I or II), two baboon skulls (*Papio spp.*, Appendix II), four turtle shells (*Cheloniidae spp.*, Appendix

I); 19 objects made of ivory and one elephant tusk, nearly 20 kg of coral and seashells, 7 kg of caviar, over 20 kg of brush meat, plus eight skins and articles made of skins (bear, snake) and 31 leather articles.

The customs officers highlighted several cases:

- May 1, seizure of a polar bear skin (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) by customs officers at Roissy airport, coming from Armenia, headed for the Netherlands;
- May 3, 60 kg of live glass eels intercepted by Roissy customs officers in the suitcases of transit passengers, coming from Portugal and going to China;
- May 12, 20 kg of pink conchs (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) seized in Martinique on a passenger of a ship coming from Saint Lucia;
- May 28, at Roissy Terminal 2, officers seized snake skins and articles made of snake skin and crocodile skin. A total of 33 specimens in baggage coming from Mali and destined for France;
- May 30, seizure in Watten (North of the country) of 11 live pythons in the home of an individual selling snakes on line. The man received a customs fine of 150 € and is being prosecuted for undeclared work, as well as possession and sale of non-domesticated animals.

Encouraging results, which illustrate that the French customs office should pay more attention to the trafficking of protected species, rather than waiting for an international mobilization.⁷⁴

INTERNATIONAL

Operation Thunderstorm – the second operation by that name – involved 92 countries between May 1st and 31st. Coordinated by Interpol and the WCO, with the participation of CITES, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank.

The provisional report mentions seizure of:

- 43 tons of wild meat (including bear, elephant, crocodile, whale and zebra);
- 18 t of American eel, coming from Asia, but initially poached at the glass eel stage in Europe;
- 8 tons of pangolin scales – the equivalent of 24,000 poached animals – including 4 t in a single seizure in Viet Nam onboard of a ship coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- 1.3 tons of raw and processed elephant ivory;
- 27,000 reptiles (including 869 alligators/crocodiles, 9,590 turtles and 10,000 snakes);
- almost 4,000 birds, including pelicans, ostriches, parrots and owls;
- 48 live primates;
- 14 big cats (tiger, lion, leopard and jaguar);
- the carcasses of seven bears, including two polar bears;

1400 suspects were identified or arrested. This is the provisional report because many investigations are still underway.⁷⁵



ITALY

June 2018

Naples, Campania Region, Italy

The container was resolutely waited for. It was shipped from Eritrea. It contained the personal belongings of two Italian citizens back to the country. Seizure of worked ivories, skins of monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), corals, a Phoenician amphora dating from 3 to 5 centuries BC and 20 kg of cigarettes.⁷⁶



RUSSIA

End of June 2018

Russia

Augmentation of penalties for the sale and purchase on the Internet of terrestrial and aquatic animals threatened with extinction or parts thereof. Offenders now face up to four years in prison and fines of up to 1.5 million rubles (\$ 26,000 US). Potentially compromised State officials face up to six years in prison and a fine of 3 million rubles (\$ 48,300 US). This law was signed by President Putin to eradicate online sales of bones, hides and other parts of wild animals.⁷⁷

SWITZERLAND

June 14, 2018

Switzerland

The Council of States has refused to ban the importation and transit of hunting trophies, as requested by a petition from the Swiss association OceanCare, signed by 12,400 people. The senators hid behind measures taken at the international level and border controls which they consider sufficient. Already in 2017, the National Council voted 118 to 72 to reject a motion introduced by Maya Graf to ban the importation of trophies. So, elephants, rhinoceroses, big cats and primates are still welcome in Switzerland, as long as they are dead.⁷⁸

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

End of April 2018

Eucla, Western Australia State, Australia

Seizure from a car of 198 reptiles including Gould's monitors (*Varanus gouldii*, Appendix II) and 58 venomous snakes, six marsupials, and two spiders. The driver was in charge of gathering the animals and exporting them.



The Gould's monitor is around thirty centimeters long. Diurnal, it eats small mammals and reptiles but will also eat birds, amphibians, reptile eggs, insects and crustaceans. Before egg-laying, the female chooses a termite mound, digs a tunnel to lay between 10 and 17 eggs that she then abandons to the good care of the termites who close up the mound behind her. The temperature and humidity of the spot are ideal for the hatching of the eggs.⁷⁹



Donkeys



Cover of Grain de Sel magazine, «Bim was the most beautiful donkey and Abdallah was his master», 1955.

The African wild ass *Equus africanus* is listed under CITES Appendix I. The domesticated form *Equus asinus* was 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

**June 2018
Botswana**

The Francistown slaughterhouse operated by Bo Chang Limited is reportedly about to reopen. It was closed in June 2017 after the neighbours bothered by pestilential odours gave the alarm. Their concerns were reinforced by vultures circling above suspect buildings. Several senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture went to China as a delegation to assess the market. "We have discovered that donkeys are a lucrative business." The Minister of Agriculture is euphoric. "There is a high potential for making some revenue from the donkey products. The return of donkey abattoirs would create employment, especially in the northern areas around Francistown where many people have lost jobs due to a string of recent mine closures."¹

BURKINA FASO

March 15-30, 2018. Pô, Centre-Sud Region, Burkina Faso. Border with Ghana.

Finding in the middle of the night of 1800 donkey skins in a damaged and abandoned truck.

Burning in the presence of defense forces, State duties, the Association for the Protection of Animals in the person of its president Juliette Ayinabou.²



April 30, 2018. Ouagadougou, Centre Region, Burkina Faso

Burning of 1305 skins seized on the outskirts of Ouagadougou. The trafficker could be the same as in Pô.³



KENYA

April 5, 2018

Kenya

A bit of good news for donkeys in Kenya. The government backed out. It suspended all new permits to operate a slaughterhouse but the slaughterhouses in Turkana in Nakuru County and Mogotio in Baringo County continue.⁴

Mid-June 2018

Naivasha, Nakuru County, Kenya

At dawn, Joseph Kamonjo Kariuki, a water carrier known as “Jose wa Mapunda” (Joseph of the donkeys in Swahili), looks at his three pack donkeys as he does every day almost before waking up but does not see them and leaves in panic in the bush to find them again. He knows that for donkeys, the times are bad in the county because of the reopening of the slaughterhouse. It is thanks to the children of the village that Joseph will find all that remains of his dear animals and working tools: three gaping heads on the bloody ground. Like millions of others, the skins of Joseph’s three donkeys will feed the gelatin tourism that is rampant in China and especially in Dong’e County, Shandong province. It is here that ejiao and its derivatives are produced from donkey skins from all over the world.⁵

ZIMBABWE

Mid-May 2018

Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Lumsden, director of Battlefront Investments persists. Ex-protected by the Mugabe clan, he tried to obtain authorization from the new government to operate his “model” slaughterhouse. He shows credentials and gives water to the 25 donkeys that survived the hell inflicted on the stolen livestock. A hundred donkeys from his pre-stock died of thirst and hunger or were finished by veterinarians with the agreement of the SPCA and the NGO Veterinarians for Animal Welfare. The meat was given to the Chipangali reserve to feed the lions. The investigation agency Oxpeckers says that behind Lumsden lies the Chinese operators of an illegal donkey slaughterhouse closed by the Botswana government (see “On the Trail” n°18 p. 121).⁶

ASIA

CHINA

April 2018

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China

The number of living donkeys that arrive from Kyrgyzstan and enter into China through the Erkeshtam border post is skyrocketing: 8000 in the first three months of the year. The donkeys are put in quarantine for 14 days and are subjected to a blood test. They are then routed to Shandong Province, 5000 km, slaughtered and skinned.

The skin is boiled to produce a gelatin incorporated into medicines and sweets. The Ejiao parapharmacy products have several indication: anemia, troubles with menopause ... In February, an official site of the Ministry of Health declared that Ejiao was less useful to human health than eggs before apologizing for the announcement going against advice of traditional medicine (see. “On the Trail” n°20, p.131).⁷

PAKISTAN

GANG

April 27, 2018

Karachi, Sind Province, Pakistan

Two members of the “Hamid Afghani” gang were arrested. Seizure of two trucks full of donkey skins in the Bilal Colony, a district of Orangi Town, in the suburbs of Karachi. According to Police Senior Superintendent Zulfiqar Mehar, the meat had been delivered to restaurants in Karachi and Hyderabad, while the skins were destined for the Chinese market. The Hamid Afghani gang consists of 14 members. The network allegedly starts in Pakistan, goes through Afghanistan and ends up in China.⁸

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

May 8, 2018

Australia

The Australian section of HSI -Humane Society International- reveals that Australia is the 8th country in the world to import ejiao from China and deplores that Australian consumers are complicit in the global persecution suffered by donkeys in recent years. Australia imported \$ 4 million US worth of ejiao products in the first 10 months of 2017, the USA \$ 12 million US and Canada \$ 2.8 million US. Exports are mainly destined for Chinese emigrants and their descent on the American and Australian continents. However, marketing and propaganda efforts developed by Chinese industry are likely to extend consumption to other cohorts than the Chinese communities. In Europe, the gateways to the ejiao according to customs statistics compiled by HSI are the Netherlands and Hungary. The field survey showed that many slaughterhouses and donkey hide melters in Shandong province pollute rivers, and provoke protests.

The Northern Territory is increasing contacts with China and plans to promote donkey breeding with a view to exporting skins to China. “This would make Australia the first economically developed country to fuel this appalling traffic,” says Georgie Dolphin, the NGO’s animal welfare officer.

“On the Trail” reported on Tex McGrath’s project to export wild donkeys to China from the State of South Australia (cf. n°19 p. 132).⁹

MAIN SOURCES

Sources are available on request by email to contact@robindesbois.org indicating the "On the Trail" issue number, section and reference of the event.

For instance, for the last event of "On the Trail" n°21 : chapitre Donkeys, Australia, reference 9.

Robin des Bois especially thanks the Species Survival Network and the NGO Save the Elephants.

Institutions

Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux du Gabon (ANPN), Australian Border Force, Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam (BKSDA - Indonesia), California Legislative Information, China Customs, CITES, Commission Européenne, Department of Environmental Affairs (South Africa), Devon and Cornwall Police, Douanes Françaises, Dutch Customs, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Gendarmerie Nationale française, German Customs, Government of Botswana, Hong Kong Customs, Hong Kong Government, Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA - Singapore), Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis (IBAMA), International Whaling Commission, Interpol, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Lusaka Agreement Task Force, Ministère de l'économie forestière-Congo (MEFCG), Ministère de la Transition écologique et solidaire (France), Ministerio del Ambiente del Ecuador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU - United Kingdom), Nederlandse Voedsel Waren Autoriteit Natuur (Netherlands), Nepal Police, Office Central de Lutte contre les Atteintes à l'Environnement et à la Santé Publique (OCLAESP - France), Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (ONCFS - France), Police Nationale du Burkina Faso, Préfecture française des Alpes-Maritimes, Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (PROFEPA - Mexico), Procuraduría General de la República (PGR - Mexico), Russian Customs, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB - India), Servicio Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre (SERFOR - Perú), South African National Parks, South African Police Service (SAPS), Sri Lanka Navy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UNESCO, United States Department of Justice, Vietnam Customs, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB - India), Zambian Department of National Parks & Wildlife.

Non Governmental Organizations

30 Millions d'Amis, African Parks Network, Alliance Nationale des Consommateurs et de l'Environnement au Togo (ANCE Togo), Appui à l'Application des Lois sur la Faune et la Flore au Bénin - AALF Bénin, Big Life Foundation, Blood Lions, Born Free Foundation, Bumi Hills Foundation, Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, Catalogue of Life (Species 2000 ITIS), Centre for Orangutan Protection (COP), Conservation justice, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (The), EAGLE Network, Education for Nature - Vietnam (ENV), Elephant Action League (EAL), Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Ferus, Fondation Franz Weber, Free the Bears Fund, Freeland Foundation, Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP-UNEP), Guinée Application de la Loi Faunique (GALF), Humane Society International (HSI), International Animal Rescue (IAR), International Anti-Poaching Foundation (IAPF), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), International Ranger Federation, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Iran's Environment and Wildlife Watch (IEW), Last Great Ape organization (LAGA), Ligue pour la protection des oiseaux (LPO), Mara Conservancy, Matusadona Lion Project, MozParks Foundation, National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA), Ocean Care, Ocean Sentry, Olarro Conservancy, Olhar Animal, Orangutan Information Centre (OIC), Outraged SA Citizens Against Poaching (OSCAP), Protected Area Management Solutions Foundation (PAMS) Foundation, Peace Parks Foundation, Pilanesberg National Park & Wildlife Trust, Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), Robin des Bois, SanWild Wildlife Trust, Save the Elephants, Save Vietnam's Wildlife, Saving The Survivors, Scorpion Foundation, Southern African Fight for Rhinos, Species Survival Network, Tikki Hywood Foundation, Traffic, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, Wildlands, Wildlife At Risk (WAR), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT), Wildlife Trust of India, Zambia Primate Project, Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

Médias

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