

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
n°25. Events from the 1st April 2019 to the 30 of June 2019
Published on January 9, 2020

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.

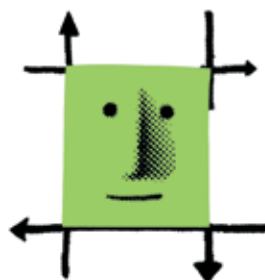
"On the Trail" highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new modus operandi of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. "On the Trail" gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling. 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

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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.

On the Front Lines

AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

April 24, 2019

Kahuzi-Biega National Park, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



© Lwiro Primates

Batasema Basoda Espoir, of the Bantou ethnic group, is dead. He was not in uniform or armed, but was going to get supplies in the village. He was confronted by some Pygmies and attacked with machetes. He is survived by his widow Charlotte and their three children.¹



TANZANIA

May 27, 2019

Udzungwa Mountains National Park, Iringa Region, Tanzania



© The Elite Anti-Poaching Units and Combat Trainers

Raphael Musabi Mwita, in charge of the fight against poaching, died on assignment in a dispute with unidentified killers. He was 28 years old.²



ZIMBABWE

April 22, 2019

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Clash between rangers and 4 poachers, 3 of whom were paddling in the river. The one who was keeping guard triggered the shooting. A life was lost in the poachers' camp.⁴



May 19, 2019

Bubye Valley Conservancy, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Death of 2 poachers in a clash with rangers. At least 6 persons have been yet killed within the conservancy, among them one ranger.⁵



ZAMBIA

June 22, 2019

Lower Zambezi National Park, Central Province, Zambia

The park management is sad at heart to announce the death by poisoning of Lego, a Belgian sheepdog who worked with the canine brigade. Since 2016, he has contributed to the arrest of 82 poachers and the seizure of 12 elephant tusks, 960 kg of bushmeat and 40 firearms.³



© Conservation Lower Zambezi

ASIA

BANGLADESH

GANG

May 29, 2019

Bagerhat District, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

The "Hasan Bahini" gang of tiger poachers, smugglers and kidnappers do not hesitate to open fire when the situation escapes them. This time 4 of their members—including Hasan, the leader—went down in a gunfight they had started against agents of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). Hasan (40), Mustain (37), Mainul (35) and Haider (44) were travelling at night in a boat in the western Sundarbans Forest Reserve when police commandos tried to arrest them. 11 firearms and many sharp weapons were on board the gang's boat. In one decade, at least 100 poachers have been killed in gunfire exchanges with the RAB. The number of Bengal tigers fell from 440 in 2004 to 106 in 2015. The last census this year counted 114.⁶



Seahorses

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

AMERICA

PERU

End of April 2019

Callao, Province of Callao, Peru

631 kg. 60,000 seahorses. 1.5 million US\$, or 25 US\$ per seahorse, in a warehouse among bales of cattle hides bound for China on a container ship.¹



ASIA

CHINA

May 17, 2019

Gongbei Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.

Seizure of 232 dried seahorses in the luggage of a passenger, for a total weight of 500 g. Average weight of a specimen: 2.15 g.²

June 5, 2019

Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China

192 g of seahorses. About 40. The Chinese passenger came from Jakarta.⁴

June 25, 2019

Qingdao Port, Shandong Province, China

Seizure in a container from Callao, Peru, of 1.2 t of dried seahorses worth an estimated 2.16 million US\$, or 1,800 US\$ per kg.⁵

SINGAPORE

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Singapore

Seizure by airport customs during luggage inspection by computerized tomography of seahorses coming from Indonesia and bound for Viet Nam.⁶

Seahorses, cf. May 15, 2019, Senegal, page 87.

Corals



Corallium rubrum

AFRICA

TUNISIA

GANG

May 9, 2019

Tunisia

Seizure of 671 kg of coral. 2.3 million US\$. 3,430 US\$/kg. Arrest of 7 Tunisians, 2 Spanish and 1 Algerian. Mediterranean red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) is renowned for its brilliance. Its range extends from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Gulf of Tunis. In Europe, the first importer, legally or by smuggling, is Italy. (see "On the Trail" n°10 p. 6, n°15 p. 6, n°18 p. 4, n°19 p.4, n°20 p. 5)¹

ASIA

CHINA

April 5, 2019

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong, China

Seizure of 18 red coral beads jewels (*Corallium rubrum*), including earrings and bracelets. Total weight: 346.7 g.²

April 9, 2019

Shenzhen Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 15 stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) in the luggage of a passenger. Total weight: 1.8 kg.³



April 10, 2019

Huanggang Port, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 15 stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) from a passenger's luggage.⁴



April 2019

Jiangmen, Guangdong Province, China

Three stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II). 1 kg.⁵

May 10, 2019

Futian Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong

Seizure of 5.75 kg of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) in the backpacks of 3 passengers.⁶

May 20, 2019

Hangzhou Port, Province of Zhejiang, China

Seizure of 12 mushroom coral fragments (*Fungia fungites*, Appendix II) with a total weight of 423.3 g and 3 staghorn coral fragments (*Acropora cervicornis*, Appendix II) with a total weight of 76.7 g.⁷



June 2019

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

1.4 kg of red coral jewellery (*Corallium rubrum*) in a postal parcel from abroad.⁸

June 2019

Huanggang Port, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 16 live stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) in water bags. Total weight: 2.2 kg.⁹

June 21, 2019

Huanggang Port, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 2 kg of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) necklaces and pendants.¹⁰



June 26, 2019

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Five branches of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) seized by customs.¹¹

INDIA

May 3, 2019

Mugalivakkam, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

An aquarium shop sold corals. Alerted, officers from the Forest Department and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) went there posing as buyers. They were offered several species, some of which were still alive. Officers seized the entire lot including blue corals (*Heliopora coerulea*, Appendix II), staghorn corals (*Acropora cervicornis*, Appendix II), and cauliflower corals (*Pocillopora damicornis*, Appendix II), for a total of 28 kg. But they pulled the live ones out of the water, which killed them. Two arrests. The corals were reportedly

purchased from another store in Kolathur, a district north of Chennai, which received them hidden in a shipment of fish. Blue coral colonies form natural barriers protecting the land from hurricanes and tsunamis. They do not live along the coasts of the region. Staghorn corals would be threatened by climate change. As for the cauliflower coral, highly sought after by aquarists, their overexploitation has wiped them out of the Gulf of Mannar.¹²



Heliopora coerulea

SRI LANKA

April 16, 2019

Kallaru, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Arrest of 6 alleged fishermen who were looting stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II). Seizure of the 2 boats and nets.¹³

EUROPE

ITALY

April 5, 2019

Catania-Fontanarossa National Airport, Province of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure in a woman's luggage of 13 fragments of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II), with a total weight of 1.4 kg. She had just returned from Porto Seguro, Brazil, and had a stopover in Rome.¹⁴

May 16, 2019

Naples-Capodichino International Airport, Campania Region, Italy

Seizure of a fragment of pocillopora coral (*Pocillopora* spp., Appendix II) and a fragment of organ-pipe coral (*Tubipora musica*, Appendix II) in the luggage of a Spanish national. M.G.A. (29) was planning to travel to Copenhagen, Denmark. She said she bought the 1.7 kg of coral on a local market.¹⁵

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Ancona, Marche Region, Italy

Seizure on board a car ferry from Greece of several parcels full of corals bound for France.¹⁶

Abalones

Haliotis spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 5, 2019

South Africa

In an attempt to curb abalone looting and reduce gang influence, the government has decided to increase the legal fishing quota for the 2018 - 2019 season. It goes from 50.6 t to 96 t. The purpose is to reduce "protest fishing" and bring back local "small" fishermen engaged in poaching to the legal fishery industry.¹

GANG

April 8, 2019

Gansbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Murder of Donovan Williams, a member of the Gansbaai gang suspected of working hand in hand with 9 agents of the DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) - see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 9. Mr. Williams was set to appear shortly before the Cape Town Regional Court with 18 other people involved in this case, oozing with bribery.²



Mid-April 2019

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

At noon, the SAPS (South African Police Service) who were on a stakeout saw a Mercedes arrive. Passengers unloaded large black bags and brought them into the house. A search was immediately initiated. Seizure of several thousand abalones and cooking equipment. Arrest of 5 individuals aged between 20 and 33 years.³

April 15, 2019

Swellendam, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 4,407 abalones in 44 bags in the back of a stolen pick-up truck. Estimated value of 3.8 million rand (258,000 US\$). One arrest. The vehicle was equipped with a fake license plate.⁴

April 15, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 4,407 abalones with a value of 268,500 US\$ in a stolen pick-up truck with fake license plates.⁵

April 18 and 19, 2019

Melkbosstrand and Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

- Seizure of a bag containing 22 abalones with shell and 132 abalones without shell at daybreak on a beach. Estimated value of 46,000 rand, or 3,130 US\$. Arrest of a 38-year-old man.

- Seizure of many bags of abalones, gas bottles and cooking equipment in a secret workshop. No arrests.⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS/ GANG

May 2, 2019

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Jan "Danie" Prinsloo, 31 years old, to 3 years in prison, of Paul Bezuidenhout, 23 years old



and Morne Blignault Junior to 5 years suspended prison for participating in a clandestine abalone capture and marketing conspiracy that was unveiled in 2016 as part of the Little Rhino operation. Morne Blignault Junior avoids jail. The court considers that he was led down the bad way by his father. Indeed, the family gang was managed by Morne Blignault Senior who was sentenced to 20 years in prison in September 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°22 p. 7). His wife, Marshelle Blignault, and his 3 accomplices, Jacobus Naumann, Petrus Smith and Frederick Nance, were sentenced in April 2019 to 12, 24 and 27 years in prison respectively. According to sources, the gang made between 2 million US\$ and 6 million US\$ from the trafficking.⁷

May 3, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 13,042 abalones in 35 crates at the back of a Hyundai H1. Arrest of a 37-year-old male. The police had stopped him because he had run a red light.⁸

May 8, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure in a warehouse of 16 crates containing 348 kg of dried abalones, cooking equipment, fans, salt bags, ladders and pots. Estimated value of 2 million rand, 136,000 US\$ and 390 US\$/kg. Arrest of a 25-year-old man.⁹

May 13, 2019

Hawston, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of diving suits and tanks, 661,453 rand in cash (45,000 US\$), 77 phones, 14 computers and 20 SIM cards from 10 homes searched as part of an investigation on poachers acting in conspiracy.¹⁰

May 19, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 6 freezers filled with abalones. Estimated value of 1.3 million rand, or 88,500 US\$. Arrest of a female Malawian national. The police were intervening for burglary. The burglar escaped.¹¹

May 20, 2019

Schoenmakerskop, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure on the beach of 481 freshly caught abalones, diving equipment and a grey Citroën. Abalone value estimated at more than one million rand (70,000 US\$). Arrest of 4 individuals, aged between 32 and 51 years. Joint operation of Dark Water Ops with a Dog Brigade.¹²

May 23, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

Seizure in an apartment of 660 abalones and a drying workshop. The police intervened when odours were reported. Estimated value of 300,000 rand, or 21,000 US\$¹³

May 23, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 7,670 abalones. 3.5 million rand (243,980 US\$), 31.80 US\$ per specimen, gas bottles, racks, burners and other cooking equipment. One arrest.¹⁴

End of May 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Interception of a high-speed road smuggler. The driver tries to escape. Seizure of 379 shucked abalones.¹⁵

End of May 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Search of a vehicle in the middle of the night. Seizure of 235 abalones.¹⁶

Beginning of June 2019

Kleinbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Discovery of 1,022 abalones in a ditch.¹⁷

June 6, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

5,490 dried abalones in plastic bags. 116,370 US\$. Flying Squad operation.¹⁸

June 9, 2019

Gansbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Suspicion of poaching by scuba diving. Reports by people living near Pearly Beach. Search of an inflatable boat on a trailer stuck at high tide. Seizure of some 40 abalones, arrest of 4 young men in their twenties.¹⁹

June 14, 2019

Worcester, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Cape Town to Pretoria by coach. 17 hours of driving. Intervention of the canine brigade on the way out of Cape Town. Arrest of 2 suspects. Seizure of 2,236 dried abalones. 54,500 US\$.²⁰

June 20, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The SAPS and the APU (Anti Poaching Unit) are in pursuit of abalone looters. They see them throwing the booty somewhere in the dunes. Bullet, the Belgian sheepdog of the K9, finds the exact location. 372 abalones.²¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 2019

East London, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The Chen couple was sentenced to 2 years in prison for being mixed up in 2 suspicious abalone cases, one in East London, the other in Cape Town. The cash, about 14,000 rand (930 US\$), equipment and vehicles seized in the workshops become the definitive property of the State.²²



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

April 2, 2019

Baronda Head, Mimosa Rocks National Park, State of New South Wales, Australia

Seizure of 1,093 abalones. 85 kg or about 77 g per abalone. In the Australian market, the kilo is sold at retail for around 106 AUS\$, or 74 US\$. 4 arrests.²³

June 11, 2019

Altona, State of Victoria, Australia

Two men were fined 10,494 US\$ for catching 298 abalones outside of the allowed time, 291 of which were under legal size. "The pair's illegal haul is nearly 30 times the daily recreational bag limit of five abalone per person," said the Victoria State Fisheries Director. The diving equipment of the two offenders and the vehicle used to transport the abalones were permanently confiscated for the benefit of the state.²⁴





Mid-April 2019, Table View



May 13, 2019, Hawston



May 20, 2019, Schoenmakerskop



May 23, 2019, Cape Town



End of May 2019, Cape Town



April 2, 2019, Baronda Head



June 20, 2019, Cape Town

Clams, Nautilus, Conches ...



Giant clam pearls

ASIA

CHINA

April 23, 2019

Linyi Shubuling Airport, Shandong Province, China

Five bracelets made of giant clam pearls (*Tridacninae*, Appendix II).¹

May 2019

Huanggang Port, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure from a passenger's luggage of 2 necklaces made of giant clam pearls (*Tridacninae*, Appendix II), totalling 198 pearls and 448 g.²



May 2019

Changzhou Benniu Airport, Province of Jiangsu, China

Seizure of 5 bracelets made of giant clam pearls (*Tridacninae*, Appendix II) in the luggage of Vietnamese nationals entering the country, for a total weight of 220 g.³

May 2019

Ordos Ejin Horo Airport, Inner Mongolia Province, China

Seizure of 2 giant clam shells (*Tridacninae*, Appendix II) in passengers' luggage, with a total weight of 2.57 kg. They were coming from Nha Trang in Viet Nam.⁴

June 13, 2019

Dalian Zhoushuizi International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of a giant clam shell pearls necklace (*Tridacninae*, Appendix II). 107 g.⁵

June 24, 2019

Zhangjiagang, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 32 shells or fragments of shells of nautilus (*Nautilidae* spp., Appendix II), giant clams (*Tridacninae*, Appendix II) and giant helmets (*Cassis cornuta*).⁶

INDIA

May 3, 2019

Chennai, District of Chennai, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Police raid on unpackers who sell shellfish along Marina Beach, a wealthy and tourist area of Chennai. Seizure of 8 horned helmets (*Cassis cornuta*), 136 spider conches (*Lambis* spp.) and 11 queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II). Arrest of short sellers Amjad Khan, P. Durairaj and V. Manoch.⁷

May 7, 2019

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The smuggling team was about to board a flight to Singapore, but the Air Intelligence Unit had them in their sights thanks to a tip-off. Jameel Usain, Yunus, Noor Mohammed, Allaudin, Nagoor Miran and a 6th man whose identity was not revealed concealed 352 green turbans (*Turbo marmoratus*) in their luggage with a total weight of approximately 180 kg. Protected in India, green turbans are endemic to Nicobar and Andaman Islands. Their value would exceed 50 US\$ each.⁸



Turbo marmoratus

SRI LANKA

April 7, 2019

Kahandamodara, Southern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 184 conches (genus *Strombus*). One arrest.⁹



April 17, 2019

Silavathurai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 376 conches (genus *Strombus*) less than 50 mm in diameter. Arrest of a 72-year-old man.¹⁰

April 18, 2019

Kokkuppadayan, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 349 conches (genus *Strombus*) and a vehicle. One arrest.¹¹

June 18, 2019

Talaimannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure by the nautical police of 1,645 conch shells (genus *Strombus*) in a pick-up truck in the Mannar peninsula. At the driver's home, additional seizure of 2,372 shells. They are cleaned, dried and polished to be marketed as decorative objects.¹²



EUROPE

ITALY

April 28, 2019

Castellammare di Stabia, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure of more than 60 kg of date mussels (*Litophaga litophaga*) distributed in 2 vans and a truck. The convoy was driving at night and tried to escape. Several arrests including 2 drivers who threatened and insulted the law enforcement.¹³



Cassis cornuta (p.10)

Sea Cucumbers

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



Isostichopus badionotus

AFRICA

MOROCCO

During the night of May 5 to May 6, 2019

Laayoune, Laâyoune-Sakia El Hamra Region, Morocco

Seizure of 1,280 kg of sea cucumbers and a vehicle. Arrest of 5 individuals, aged 24 to 40 years.¹

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Mid-June 2019

Riohacha, La Guajira Department, Colombia

Seizure of 151 chocolate chip cucumbers (*Isostichopus badionotus*) caught by snorkelers in a roadside check 6 km from the port of Riohacha. Corpoguajira, the Colombian environmental authority, stresses once again that sea cucumbers are recyclers of organic waste and actively participate in the balance of marine food chains.²



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 30, 2019

San Diego, State of California, United States of America

Two and a half years in prison for Cesar Daleo, 49 years old, ex-member of the border patrol, for organizing 80 smugglings of sea cucumbers from Mexico between 2014 and the end of 2016. Total value: 250,000 US\$. At the same time, Daleo was smuggling a precursor of fentanyl, the synthetic opioid that causes health and social damage, from China by parcel post. One of the packages received by Daleo contained enough 4ANPP (4-anilino-N-phenethyl-4-piperidine) to manufacture 25 kg of fentanyl. With the 13 ANPP packages fraudulently imported by Daleo, millions of individual doses may have been sold.³



MEXICO

Beginning of April 2019

Manzanillo, State of Colima, Mexico

Seizure of 12 t of sea cucumbers in a container bound for Shanghai. The container officially was carrying peanuts.⁴



End of May 2019

Boxol, State of Campeche, Mexico

Seizure of approximately 140 kg of sea cucumbers in several plastic bags up the beach.⁵

End of May 2019

Mexico City International Airport (AICM), Mexico City

Seizure in the freight hold of a commercial aircraft coming from Merida, state of Yucatan, of 40 boxes containing a total of 1,041 kg of sea cucumbers.⁶

Beginning of June 2019

Mexico City, Mexico

After the recent seizures of sea cucumbers in the port of Manzanillo and in Mexico City, Vice-Admiral Carlos Lanz Gutiérrez, commander of the 9th Naval Zone, suspects the "actions of a mafia or network that finances the secret capture of sea cucumbers in the State".⁷

ASIA

CHINA

End of April 2019

Wenzhou Longwan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 1.02 kg of Icelandic sea cucumbers in the luggage of a passenger entering the country. In cold and warm seas, sea cucumbers are risen to the surface to end up on plates.⁸

May 13, 2019

Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 18.91 kg of sea cucumbers from the luggage of a passenger arriving from Hong Kong.⁹

INDIA

June 1, 2019

Akkaraipettai, Nagapattinam District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The Coastal Security Group showed up in the wee hours of the morning at a warehouse, where T. Murugandham was in the middle of loading 61 bags of dried sea cucumbers into a van, with the help of driver, N. Rajukumar. The bags held 2410 kg of sea cucumbers, worth an estimated 10 million rupees (143,666 US\$). T. Murugandham had been stocking up for 7 or 8 months, purchasing small batches of 4 or 5 kg from local fishermen. The load was about to be transported to the Tuticorin harbor, before being smuggled to Sri Lanka, then to Thailand, Hong Kong, China, South Korea and Japan.¹⁰

SRI LANKA

April 23, 2019

Pooneryn, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Arrest in Coma Point Bay of 12 divers in the act of fishing for sea cucumbers. They are between 24 and 47 years old. Seizure of the boat and equipment.¹¹

May 7, 2019

Vankalai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 720 kg of dried sea cucumbers. Arrest of a 37-year-old man.¹²

EUROPE

ITALY

May 22, 2019

Torre Canne, Province of Brindisi, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure in the port of 2 t of sea cucumbers also known as holothurians or bêtes-de-mer. They were released by the Coast Guard.¹³

May 24, 2019

Fasano, Province of Brindisi, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of 1.5 kg of sea cucumbers. Arrest of a bait merchant.¹⁴

Fishes

AFRICA

TUNISIA

April 6 and 7, 2019

Kélibia, Nabeul Governorate, Tunisia

Seizure of 9 mobula rays (*Mobula mobular*, Appendix II) on the port.¹

April 2019

Sfax, Sfax Governorate, Tunisia

Seizure of 1,200 kg of Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*).²

ZIMBABWE

End of May 2019

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Six months suspended prison sentence for two Zambians illegally fishing at the confluence of the Zambezi and the Muyava. They said they did not know that they were in violation ; however they tried to escape in their canoe when the rangers approached them. Seizure of the boat, 200m of net and 5 kg of tiger fish (genus *Hydrocynus*).³



AMERICA

BRAZIL



Arapaima gigas
Brazil, the Amazon and the coast, 1879,
Smith, Herbert Huntington

April 11, 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 37 juvenile arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Total weight 1.7 t. Average weight per specimen: 46 kg. Instead of being sold at the markets for the agapes of Holy Week, they will be donated to charities.⁴

April 14, 2019

Belém, State of Pará, Brazil

Three tons of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). The arapaimas, better known by the name pirarucus, measure 3 meters long and weigh 250 kilograms as adults. The shipment was seized in a truck on the fishing port's docks.⁵



May 5, 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 120 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) on a market. Their capture is prohibited except in areas subject to management plans and under conditions that the specimens are 1.56 m long and weigh at least 40 kg, which corresponds to an age of 4 to 5 years. In addition, they must be made known and stamped by Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) agents. The seller was charged and the fish donated to charities.⁶



May 8, 2019

Belém, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure in the fishing port of the Guamá district of 1t of rotten arapaima flesh (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) of illegal origin. The 20 50-kg bags will be transformed into animal feed and donated to zoos.⁷

May 8, 2019

Porto Velho, State of Rondônia, Brazil

Seizure by a military police patrol of 80 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and black pacu (*Colossoma macropomum*) and of a firearm. The flesh was donated to a charity.⁸

May 10, 2019

Óbidos, State of Pará, Brazil

The boat had been under surveillance for several weeks. It was approached by the environmental police at around 3 am although she was sailing with all lights out. The captain acknowledges an illegal cargo of 10 t of arapaima meat (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 2 t of caiman meat (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II) but investigators believe that 15 to 18 t of wildlife products are on board. The flesh will be donated to charities, and to catholic and evangelical churches.

"It's always the same story. Boats transporting people and goods leave the city of Belém, loaded with pots, pans, mirrors and other utilitarian and decorative objects, and exchange them with communities along the Amazon for arapaima and alligator meat that is sold in Pará," said the Deputy Secretary of Environment of the city of Óbidos (about 50,000 inhabitants).⁹



Beginning of June 2019

Near Belém do Solimões, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 3 t of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) poached in the Jandiatuba, a tributary of the Solimões. According to the brief investigation, they were intended for sale on the markets of Tabatinga in the state of Amazonas and Leticia in Colombia. Fishing of arapaima has been prohibited since 1996 in the Amazon basin unless a management plan is duly authorized by the Ibama.¹⁰



June 18-21, 2019

Cantão National Park, Tocantins State, Brazil

Seizure by the Instituto Natureza do Tocantins (Naturatins) and the military police of 250 kg of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*) on several boats engaged in illegal fishing in Javaés and Araguaia.¹¹



End of June 2019

São Félix do Araguaia Mato Grosso, Brazil

Seizure of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), of barred catfish (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*), of tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*) and of butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*). 203.11 kg in 3 freezers. The poacher is given a fine of 29,000 reais or 7,600 US\$ and the city's orphanage is given the seized fish.¹²



OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Brazil

Seizure by airport customs of zebra plecos (*Hypancistrus zebra*, Appendix III in Brazil) and goldie plecos (*Scobinancistrus aureatus*). These ornamental fish were bound for Asia. See "On the Trail" n°19 p. 10-11, n°22 p. 11.



Operation Thunderball, coordinated by Interpol and the World Customs Organization, took place from June 4 to June 30. Wildlife protection enforcement operations was deployed in 109 countries.¹³

CANADA

June 19, 2019

Canada

Canada prohibits the import and export of shark fins. The country imported an average of 160 t of fins per year. Toronto is the source of this crucial decision. It is the hometown of Rob Stewart, who was among the first to alert world public opinion to the perversity of “finning” (amputation of fins and overboard discarding of live or dead sharks). Rob Stewart died in 2017 in a scuba diving accident.¹⁴



CHILI

April 24 and 25, 2019

Off Arica, Arica and Parinacota Region, off Antofagasta and Mejillones, Antofagasta Region, Chile

In 48 hours, the navy boarded 3 fishing boats from Peru. The *Nayely Yamileth II* had 210 blue shark fins (*Prionace glauca*), the *Maquera* 1 t of blue shark and the *Virgencita del buen paso* 1 t of blue and porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*, Appendix II). The crewmen, some of whom lacked identity documents, could not prove that the sharks had been caught outside Chilean waters. All 3 ships were diverted to Arica for investigation.¹⁵



Nayely Yamileth II

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 14, 2019

Orange County, State of California, United States of America

Liang and Huang, arrested for speeding, claim to have come to the United States to buy clothes in bulk and to have lived in Mexico for several years, but they cannot answer basic questions in Spanish. Feeling the scam and sensing a drug trade, the patrol asked for backup from the canine brigade. In the back of the van, there were no drugs nor clothes. The 3 packages contained 47 kg of totoaba bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I).

Depending on size and quality, dried organs sell for between 20,000 US\$ and 80,000 US\$ /kg. The minutes that Quartz magazine was able to read said that the bladder competes in terms of price with gold and cocaine.¹⁶

MEXICO

Mid-April 2019

General Roberto Fierro Villalobos International Airport of Chihuahua, State of Chihuahua, Mexico

Seizure of 28 kg of totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I). Totoaba flesh sells for between 600 US\$ and 2300 US\$/kg. Expensive, but much less than swim bladders!¹⁷

End of April 2019

Manuel Crescencio Rejón International Airport, State of Yucatan, Mexico

Seizure of 3 kg of totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) from a package bound for Washington D.C., United States of America.¹⁸

May 8, 2019

San Felipe, State of Baja California, Mexico

Discovery of 49 fresh totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) on Hawaii Playa in a black plastic bag found by police after a gone wrong attempt to land at night. The boat has not been identified, nor have been the accomplices on the shore.¹⁹

End of May 2019

Mérida International Airport, State of Yucatán, Mexico

Destination Hong Kong. The 2 brown cardboard parcels contained 18.9 kg of dried totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I).²⁰

June 8, 2019

Revillagigedo National Park, Colima State, Mexico

Often referred to as the Galapagos of North America due to the rarity and diversity of the species it hosts and feeds, the archipelagic marine park, which has been on the World Heritage List since 2017 and on paper protected from human predation, is in fact violated by large fishing boats from Topolobampo and Mazatlan, which are casting nets and longlines there. A shipowner of the Sinaloa state fisheries cartel has just been caught. He is prosecuted following reports from tourists and other witnesses.²¹



End of June 2019

Ensenada, State of Baja California, Mexico

Seizure of 43 totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) very close to the border with the United States of America.²²

PERU

Beginning of May 2019

Peru

After the revelations on shark fin trafficking and the involvement of the CITES focal point depending on the commerce ministry, the press and in particular Ojo-Publico.com received a letter in the form of a right to reply from an organisation set up last March. The Asociación de Exportadores y Acopiadores de Productos Hidrobiológicos Artesanales del Perú (Aeaphap) considers itself a victim of defamation that damages the image and economic interests of its members and the entire artisanal fishing industry. The treasurer of Aeaphap is Xiaouu Zheng, the main shareholder of a company specializing in the export of seafood products which has close commercial ties with other companies and individuals who do their business and sometimes their fortune on the backs of sharks protected or not by international conventions.²³

Sharks in Peru, see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 8, n°19 p. 13, n°23 p. 13.

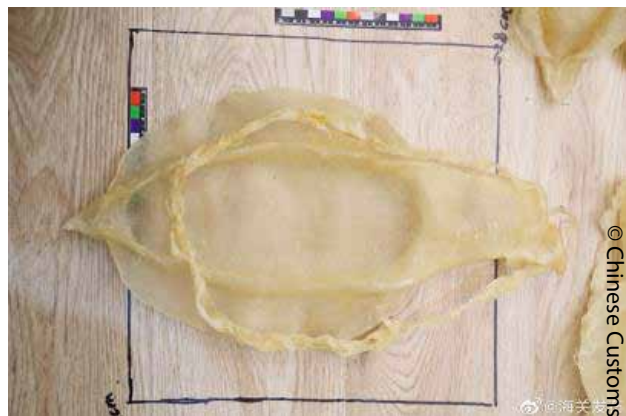
ASIA

CHINA

May 5, 2019

Sanya Phoenix International Airport, Hainan and Guangdong Provinces, China

Seizure in the suitcases of two passengers coming from Hong Kong: 440 totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I), weighing a total of 111 kg. That seizure was followed by others in the homes of members of a network in Hainan and Guangdong – 100 swim bladders, weighing a total of 51 kg. The cumulative value of the two batches is estimated at 53 million yuan, or 7.5 million US\$, 46,300 US\$/kg.²⁴



June 2019

Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of 91 totoaba bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I). 32 kg. 55,000 US\$ /kg.²⁵



INDIA

May 28, 2019

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

It's make or break... This time it broke: Bathur Jaman Madhar and Mahadeer Sheik Mathar were about to board Scoot Airlines flight TR579 to Singapore with 64 kg of dried shark fins estimated at 3,200,000 rupees (45,824 US\$, or 716 US\$/kg). They had been reported to the Air Intelligence Unit of the Customs department. They each carried 3 boxes of fins packed in jute bags.²⁶

SRI LANKA

June 23, 2019

Putumattalan, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Still in the north of the island, 854.3 kg of shark fins were seized when they were being loaded onto a refrigerated truck. Without precise information having transpired on this subject, it can be argued that the final destination was Hong Kong or mainland China, especially since the port of Colombo is in the hands of Chinese interests.

The origin of the fins also is raising questions. They may have been smuggled by sea from Indian Tamil Nadu.²⁷



VIET NAM

May 5, 2019

Sam Son Beach, Province de Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam

A video of the cutting of a “giant fish” was posted by local fishermen on Facebook. After 10 days of investigation, the Department of fishing of the province confirmed that it was a 1-ton whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II). Its meat was sold in a market. Viet Nam has to manage 3,260 km of coastlines and adjacent seas. The highest authorities plan on forbidding all net fishing activities for one month each year after 2021 and for 2 to 3 months after 2025.²⁸



EUROPE

BELGIUM

May 30, 2019

Brussels International Airport, Zaventem, Flemish Brabant Province, Flemish Region, Belgium

Seizure of 24 bags of great hammerhead shark fins (*Sphyrna mokarran*, Appendix II) equivalent to the poaching of 1,600 to 2,000 young specimens and giant guitarfishes (genus *Glaucostegus*, listed in Appendix II since August 2019 with entry into force on November 26). The shipment came from Liberia and was bound for Hong Kong. It was declared to contain “dried fish and fish entrails”. Only the contents of 5 of the bags match up with that declaration.²⁹

SPAIN

Beginning of April 2019

Madrid, Community of Madrid, Spain

Seizure of 2,598 ready-to-eat eels (500 kg) in an industrial area and in 4 Asian grocery stores, and of 25 eels in a tank. At first glance, it would be American eels (*Anguilla rostrata*) imported from China, but the wholesaler says they come from France, without being able to provide investigators with a delivery note or an invoice.³⁰

April 2, 2019

Province of Cádiz, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Seizure of 30 Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), 1,128 kg, in a truck at the exit of the port of Cadiz. According to the usual procedure, they would have been hung on a buoy in the access of the port and then smuggled in to circumvent reporting obligations. Considered still edible, they were distributed to charities.³¹

Beginning of May 2019

Murcia Region, Spain

The PACIAP (Annual Plan for the Control of Fishing Activities) resulted in the seizure in 3 fish farms of 1 ton of groupers (sub-family Epinephelinae), Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), common dentex (*Dentex dentex*), and gilt-headed bream (*Sparus aurata*) in the form of undersized whole fish or fillets. Undamaged fresh and frozen flesh will be donated to charities.³²

May 11, 2019

Zaragoza and Huesca, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Lérida, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Dismantling of an intra-European illegal fishing network in the Ebre basin which was smuggling wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*) and common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). The poachers were using forbidden fishing nets and electric fishing. The main traffic route connected Spain to Romania. France and Hungary contributed to the investigation. Seven people were arrested in Spain. Four tons of unsanitary fish, washed in bleach to hide the smell of rot, were seized and immediately destroyed.³³



OPERATION SUCULENTA

Mid-June 2019

Sevilla, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Follow-up to operation Suculenta. Sentencing of Delfin García, Juan Enrique Bonet and 3 other defendants to 14 months' imprisonment and a joint fine of 1.5 million € for attempting to smuggle 742 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) worth 580,000€ into Asia in 2011 and 2012. The sentences are less than 2 years and, in accordance with Spanish law, the convicted will not go to prison. However, García and Bonet, operators of a Catalan seafood company, are involved in a similar case since 2017 (see “On the Trail” n°16 p. 10). The annual figure of 100 t of glass eels smuggled and exported each year for fattening in China is put forward by Spanish experts and professional organizations. Eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) and their fry (called glass eels or elvers) have been listed in CITES Appendix II since 2009 and their export outside the European Union is prohibited.³⁴



The great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) is one of the eel's natural predators.

Mid-June 2019

Almería, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

The Guardia Civil continues to fight against illegal fishing of Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) and illegal landings, not to mention the mooring of dead tuna in the discreet surroundings of fishing ports. To counter concealing techniques, helicopter flyovers of doubtful boats are carried out:

- Seizure of 8 tunas on board a pleasure boat with a suspicious fabric covering the rear deck.
- Another observation was less successful. From the helicopter, tunas were visible on the foredeck. While returning to port, the pleasure boat turned back and the tuna were thrown into the sea. Only one of them was found by divers from the Guardia Civil. The average weight of poached tuna is 200 kg. The kilo is sold on the black market between 30 and 50 €.³⁵

FRANCE

April 25, 2019

Boulogne-sur-Mer, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France

Death of the last hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II) at the Nausicaa aquarium. It had been 3 weeks since he had stopped eating. He had been placed into an isolated tank.

Eight years ago, Nausicaa had been licensed to import 30 hammerhead sharks from Australia for a "research program". The program quickly turned into a nightmare (see "On the Trail" n°23, p. 15).³⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 23, 2019

Lorient, Department of Morbihan, France

Sentencing of 2 brothers (32 and 48 years old) to a 4 months suspended prison sentence for illegally fishing for glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in the Blavet estuary on the night of March 1, 2017.³⁷



June 20, 2019

Hendaye, Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques, France

Recreational fishing is not always a fun. It's also a gamble. Seizure on board 2 pleasure boats of several Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) - 240 kg - and 56 kg of fillets cut on board to be resold at the highest price to restaurant-receivers. The boats were released on bail of 20,000 and 10,000 €.³⁸

ICELAND

May 30, 2019

Iceland

Halldór Gústaf and Gunnar Þór, 2 young sailors, filmed themselves cutting the tail of a Greenland shark (*Somniosus microcephalus*). Before putting him back in the water, they laughed at him with a courageous "Good luck trying to swim, you bastard!".³⁹

MALTA

April 30, 2019

Haz-Zabbar, Southern Harbour District, South Eastern Region, Malta

Seizure of a fish stock in the industrial zone, including Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*). Value at several thousand euros. Traceability and hygiene standards were not respected. In February, Fisheries Director Andreina Fenech Farrugia had been dismissed by the Minister of the Environment for corruption.⁴⁰

ROMANIA

April 9, 2019

Vladeni, Ialomița County, Sud - Muntenia Development Region, Romania

Night seizure of 140 kg of sturgeon caviar (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) and weapons out of the trunk of a Mitsubishi Pajero. The car, registered in the United Kingdom, was hidden in a bush. Arrest of Eduard Anastase, Roméo Dumitrescu and 2 retired border guards, Eugen Giuglea and Liviu Marcoci.⁴¹



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

April 14, 2019

Adelaide International Airport, South Australia State, Australia

Seizure of an Asian arowana (*Scleropages formosus*, Appendix I). A Vietnamese national was carrying it in a bag hung around his neck. He was coming from Malaysia. The fish was killed to avoid any importation of diseases on the island.⁴²



© Australian Border Force

Manatees and Marine Mammals

AMERICA

BRAZIL

End of May 2019

Anapu River, State of Para, Brazil

A baby Amazonian manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*, Appendix I) has been rescued. He was lost and orphaned on the banks of the Anapu River. One month old, 6 kg, he was taken straight to a specialized rescue center in Santarém for emergency treatment. An adult manatee weighs between 350 and 600 kg.¹

ASIA

CHINA

April 11 and May 10, 2019

Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

- 24 spotted seals (*Phoca largha*) released at sea. They are among the 100 young seals seized from a mountain farm in February 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°24 p. 17).²

- 37 other seals released.³



© Xinhua / Pan Yulong

June 27, 2019

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 55 sperm whale teeth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I). "On the Trail" notes a resurgence of trafficking in odontocetes ivory and ambergris.⁴



© Chinese Customs

INDIA

June 16, 18 and 19, 2019

Mumbai, Mumbai City District, and Dahisar, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrested following a tip, in possession of 1.3 kg of sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) ambergris worth an estimated 17 million rupees (244,233 US\$), Rahule Dupare was talkative with the police. He gave the name of an accomplice, Lalit Vyas, who was arrested the next day, and the name of their supplier, Karim Abdullah Jat. The latter was arrested a few days later in Dahisar, in the northern suburbs of Mumbai. Owner of a cattle farm near the coast of Gujarat, he allegedly got the gray amber from local fishermen.⁵

EUROPE

SPAIN

Beginning of June 2019

Madrid, Community of Madrid, Spain

The Madrid dolphinarium is in the sights of NGOs. The 9 bottlenose dolphins suffer from eye problems due to permanent contact with the chlorine used to disinfect the water in the pool. One of them has skin lesions from the head to the caudal fins. Another has his snout mutilated from hitting the sides of the pool. The zoo management says Lala is a victim of the herpes virus. "We're not going to hide her because of a skin disease she contracted before she was even captured." Lala is said to be 42 years old. Together with her older sister Coral, she forms a friendly and united duo. "Our dolphins lack nothing." El País' article ends with an indisputably "All they lack is freedom".⁶

ICELAND

From June 19 to July 9, 2019

Heimaey Island, Sudurland Region, Iceland

Transfer of 2 belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II) from Changfeng Ocean World to Heimaey Bay, Westman Islands, south of Iceland. The 2 cetaceans covered the 6,000 km by truck, by plane, by truck again and then by car-ferry before being put in a quarantine pool, a necessary step before their introduction into the bay where they will have a closed enclosure of 32,000 m². The amount of transactions between the Chinese amusement park and the Sea Life Trust, which operates an aquarium, an educational centre under the name "Behind The Scenes" and a puffin refuge in Heimaey, is not known. The 2 belugas were transported free of charge by Cargolux. The airline has committed not to transport ivory, dolphin meat, animals intended for animal experimentation and, since March, lion trophies and bones (see "On the Trail" n°24, p.57).⁷

ITALY

May 24, 2019

Villa di Chiavenna, Province of Sondrio, Lombardy Region, Italy. Border with Switzerland.

Seizure of a walrus tusk (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) and 2 Russian police daggers with 21 cm long blades. The Ukrainian national (72 years old) intended to travel to Switzerland. He was fined.⁸



RUSSIA

June 2019

Russia

Two killer whales (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix II) and 6 belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II) caught in the Okhotsk Sea and held for more than a year in unhealthy basins facing Srednyaya Bay near Nakhodka, awaiting delivery to Chinese aquatic zoos, were released into open water near Cape Perovsky, Okhotsk Sea after a 6-day trip by boat under the supervision of vets and caretakers.

The experts advised against release in Srednyaya Bay. They feared that the released marine mammals would not find sufficient food resources there and would return in necessity near their place of detention or that well-intentioned people would come from the shore or in boats to throw fresh or frozen fish at them, thus contributing to their domesticity. The 8 ex-prisoners were released as close as possible to the area where they were captured.

The 6 killer whales stayed several hours near the coastline before moving away into the bay and the 2 belugas immediately moved offshore. Geolocation tags should make it possible to track their movements. It is only next year that further identical releases are envisaged if the results of this first initiative are positive.

There are 10 killer whales and 81 belugas left in Srednyaya prison. An inventory carried out on the orders of the Russian justice system reveals that 3 belugas and one killer whale have "vanished".

Two of the companies involved in the capture and ill-treatment of cetaceans were fined 896,000 US\$ and 466,000 US\$ at first trial.⁹



Addendum: contrary to what was expected and without waiting for summary information on the behaviour of the cetaceans released at sea, new releases were carried out in the Okhotsk Sea, 3 killer whales on 6 July, 3 killer whales on 6 August, 3 killer whales and 6 belugas on 27 August, 14 belugas on 2 October and 11 belugas on 23 October. Finally, from November 5 to 10, 50 belugas were released in Uspeniya Lazovsky Bay, adjacent to Srednyaya Bay.

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

April 13, 2019

Franz Josef, Westland District, West Coast Region, South Island, New Zealand

Stranding in a creek of a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) that has been dead for several weeks. The cause of death is not known.

The next morning, the bottom jaw – more than 1m long – had disappeared. It carries around thirty cone shaped ivory teeth. Local populations generally come to an agreement with the Department of Conservation to obtain the right to recover certain parts of stranded cetaceans. They are then dedicated to ritual ceremonies. "It is extremely disappointing that someone would disrespect these protocols," says Tim Rochford, local elected official.¹⁰

Various Marine Species

May 22, 2019

Marine bushmeat

Sharing and eating meat from marine mammals and turtles stranded on the shores of the Arctic, Africa and the Pacific Ocean can trigger collective health risks. The practice is millennia old, while the waste that accumulates in the digestive tract of sperm whales and the impregnation of fats and flesh of marine mammals and marine turtles with persistent pollutants is a few decades old. Epizootics of brucellosis, toxoplasmosis or canine distemper and contamination of coastal marine mammals such as belugas by faecal coliform bacteria or toxins from human land and sea activities are also recent phenomena. Last year in Madagascar, at least 7 young children, including 2 still nursing, died after they or their mothers ate flesh from turtles washed up on the beaches. In Alaska, according to National Geographic, an excess of botulism compared to the average in the United States of America would be due to the consumption of whale or seal flesh obtained under unsanitary conditions. Statistics on mortality and non-fatal diseases are scattered and random. A working group on health risks of marine bushmeat under the Convention on Migratory Species has just been established at the request of the United Nations.¹

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 25, 2019

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

287 abalones, 140 kg of sea cucumbers and 1,020 giant mud crabs (*Scylla serrata*) in a van coming from Cape Town (1,400 km). 3 arrests.²

SPAIN (CANARY ISLANDS)

End of April 2019

Fuerteventura, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain

Restaurants on the Spanish island opposite Western Sahara serve poached fish and tourists are involuntary receivers, and sometimes poisoned by the poor sanitary quality of the food. Seizure in the kitchens of ribbed Mediterranean limpets (*Patella ferruginea*), mussels (Mytilidae family), red porgies (*Pagrus pagrus*), combers (*Serranus cabrilla*) and barred hogfishes (*Bodianus scrofa*).³

AMERICA

FRANCE (GUADELOUPE)

May 22, 2019

Fajou Islet, Department of Guadeloupe, France

Finding of a clandestine net by divers of the nautical squad in the Fajou islet reserve in the heart of the marine national park. The net is pulled up. A carpet shark (Ginglymostomatidae family), who is still alive, is released. A hawksbill turtle on the edge of asphyxiation is saved. For another, it is too late. Immediately afterwards, a fishing boat arrived at full speed with 4 men on board and pulled up a second net. They are caught red-handed and fined. A second green turtle, still alive, is returned to the water after being disentangled from the net. The nets belong to Jean-Michel Landre, former vice-president of the Fisheries Committee. The Guadeloupe National Park filed a complaint.⁴

ASIA

CHINA, PHILIPPINES AND TAIWAN

April 23, 2019

Scarborough Shoal, South China Sea, Territory claimed by China, the Philippines and Taiwan

The tension between the Philippines and China in the Coral Triangle is not easing up. 104 km² of stony coral reefs (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) had been destroyed by the dragnets of Chinese fishing boats in search of giant clams (Tridacninae, Appendix II) whose shells are increasingly sought after as a substitute for elephant ivory jewellery and decorative objects. According to satellite photos, a key location for the looting would be the Scarborough Shoal. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs recalled that China is aware of these illegal activities and is not responding. China is seeking to consolidate its territorial presence in the maritime sector that it claims and begun to colonize through dredging and backfilling.⁵

CHINA

April 2019

Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) and a giant helmet (*Cassia cornuta*).⁶

May 2019

Port of Huangpu, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a 2,490 g of stony coral (order Scleractinia, Appendix II), a 2,315 g giant helmet (*Cassia cornuta*) and a 1,940 g giant clam (Tridacninae, Appendix II), on a sailor from a cargo ship flying Panama's flag.⁷

June 10, 2019

Huanggang Port, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of two giant clams (*Tridacninae*, Appendix II) and a hawksbill turtle shell marquetry (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I).⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

End of May 2019

Cádiz, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Behind-the-scenes seizure of 340 kg of dried sea cucumbers -the equivalent of more than 18,000 specimens according to the Andalusian Fisheries Inspection - and 293 seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) in an Asian restaurant. Four arrests. It is a national and international trade. Express parcels were regularly sent to restaurants in Madrid, the autonomous community of Asturias, and Italy.⁹



Marine Turtles



Green turtle and Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*) in the middle of a nap

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

AFRICA

EGYPT

Beginning of May 2019

Hurghada, Red Sea Governorate, Egypt

Three hawksbill turtles decapitated on Juzur Abu Minqar beach. The shells were removed to make eyeglass frames and the remains were put back in the water.¹

FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 23 and 27, 2019

Mamoudzou, Department of Mayotte, France

- Night poaching of 2 green turtles. Seizure of 2 canoes. Two arrests, including one "turtle guard" employed by the Departmental Council who had already been convicted in 2009 and 2017 for selling sea turtle meat.

- The guard was sentenced to one year in prison. His accomplice was given a 6-month suspended sentence and 180 hours of community service. Both will have to pay a fine of 800 € (900 US\$).

Since January 2019, 57 poached turtle carcasses have been found on this beach.²



AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Mid-April 2019

Gulf of Morrosquillo, Sucre and Córdoba Departments, Colombia

The officers of the national parks and the Fundación del Mar, reinforced by the navy infantry, are increasing controls as Holy Week and commercialised festivities approach. Seizure of earrings, rings and necklaces all made with hawksbill turtle shells.³

COSTA RICA

May 5, 2019

Province of Limón, Costa Rica

Seizure of 397 sea turtle eggs on a boat. Police custody of the 2 crew members.⁴



June 8, 2019

Doce Millas, Province of Limón, Costa Rica

Coast guards survey 12 km of beach day and night in summer during the laying period. Saturday morning, at dawn, a looter was arrested. He had 90 eggs in his bag.⁵

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 15 and 24, 2019

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America

Yaqun Lu, 41, a Chinese citizen officially residing in Michigan, was observed Saturday morning by members of the public and police trampling on an egg-laying site of green turtles, loggerheads and leatherback turtles on a Miami beach and whipping turtles with a stick. She had actually seized one of the wooden piles that delineates the spawning sites. They are connected to each other by a fluorescent ribbon and topped with a "Do not disturb" sign. Lu was arrested by police, released on bail pending trial and arrested again a few days later as she was about to fly to Panama from Miami airport.⁶



FRANCE (GUADELOUPE)

April 10, 2019

Le Moule, Département de la Guadeloupe, France

Stranding of a green turtle victim of an underwater firearm. The arrow fatally perforated the carapace, left lung and digestive tract.⁷

MEXICO

May 24, 2019

Soto Island, Mazatlan, State of Sinaloa, Mexico

Discovery after a phone tip-off of 40 shells and other remains of sea turtles.⁸

Mid-June 2019

State of Chiapas, Mexico

Seizure of 706 olive Ridley turtle eggs in a bus on the Tapachula-Tapanatepec road. Arrest of a female Guatemalan passenger. The eggs were transferred to the Puerto Arista shelter in the hopes they would hatch after artificial incubation.⁹

ASIA

CHINA

April 17, 2019

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong, China

Seizure of 4 hawksbill turtle shell bracelets.¹⁰

May 8, 2019

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of a hawksbill turtle of 0.55 kg and a green turtle of 3.21 kg, both stuffed.¹¹



June 18, 2019

Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of a hawksbill turtle shell.¹²

INDIA

GANG

April 3, 2019

Chinna Paalam, Tirunelveli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The guards at the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park had been tipped off. They picked up Mr. Anthony Santhiyaagu, Mr. Rooban, A. Michael and E. Vignesh loading 70 kg of turtle meat they had poached onto a tuk-tuk. Their accomplices Mr. Yesa and Mr. Poosadurai succeeded in escaping. They are now wanted, as well as the buyers. The price of the flesh was fixed at 200 rupees per kilo (2.88 US\$) in order to resell it at 400 rupees per kilo (5.77 US\$). As the poached species of turtle could not be determined, DNA samples were taken and sent to the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology of Hyderabad.¹³

June 17, 2019

Mumbai, Mumbai City District, State of Maharashtra, India

A last chance operation for an olive Ridley turtle found in pitiful condition on a beach. A five-hour surgical operation was necessary to remove a large fishing hook deeply embedded in his esophagus. Despite intensive care administered by the veterinarians at RAWW (Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare), the prognosis is uncertain.¹⁴

INDONESIA

April 19, 2019

Pantai Teluk Mata Ikan, Batam City, Riau Islands Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 39 hawksbill turtles, 79 green turtles and 30 other turtles, all dead, and a truck.¹⁵

SRI LANKA

April 3, 2019

Delft, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 4.5 kg of sea turtle meat. Arrest of a man.¹⁶

April 16, 2019

Palaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 2 live turtles, of one boat and of diving and fishing equipment. Arrest of 3 poachers.¹⁷

VIET NAM

April 5, 2019

Nha Trang, Province of Khanh Hoa, Viet Nam

Seizure of a hawksbill turtle in a café.¹⁸

April 16, 2019

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

Seizure in a private home of about 60 eggs and various parts of green turtles.¹⁹

April 24, 2019

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

Rescue of a green turtle and a hawksbill turtle trapped in abandoned fishing nets. They were released back into the water.²⁰



May 16, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure of a 31 kg hawksbill turtle in a restaurant.²¹

June 1, 2019

Long An Province, Viet Nam

Release of a loggerhead turtle held at home.²²

June 8, 2019

Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam

Release of a 20 kg green turtle that was kept prisoner in a net next to a floating restaurant in Kien Giang.²³



EUROPE

SPAIN

End of April 2019

Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Seizure of a green turtle shell.²⁴

Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

Cumulative quarterly seizures: examples

- 4,100 Horsfield's tortoises (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II)
- 899 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II - Appendix I since November 26, 2019)
- 606 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I)
- 74 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II)

AFRICA

GUINEA

June 11, 2019

Conakry, Conakry Region, Guinea

112 chestnut terrapins (*Pelusios castaneus*) in the hands of Mariame Condé, 67, resident of the Ratoma village. It was following an information received by the GALF (Guinée Application de la Loi Faunique)



that an operation was carried out. Ms. Condé was caught in the act of illegal possession, transport and marketing. She was placed under a detention warrant pending her trial. The turtles were to be released in the following days.¹

MADAGASCAR

April 27, 2019

Ivato International Airport, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

Seized in a model boat: 5 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). The package was heading for a flight to Bangkok, Thailand.

"The perpetrators thought that correspondence points would be under less surveillance on weekends and holidays," explained the director general customs, Lainkana Zafivanona Ernest, who added "The customs department monitors and protects the territory at all times." The identity of the smuggler was not revealed.²



May 22, 2019

Toliara, Atsimo-Andrefana Region, Madagascar

The appeals court has convicted 3 smugglers for trafficking 10,072 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Annexe I). They were sentenced to six years in prison and a fine of 130 million ariarys (38,800 US\$) in October 2018 (see "On the Trail" n° 23, p. 25). The sentence remains unchanged. In their defense, the accused repeated to the court that they were just "little fish," but did not give any useful information on who the "big fish" were.³



AMERICA

BRAZIL

April 20, 2019

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

Jabutis (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) are turtles living in the tropical forests of South America. Their size varies between 25 to 40 cm. They are appreciated as pets but also for their flesh. Three seizures:

- 36 were going to be sold on a market.
- 83 plus 700 kg of wild meat in a pick-up truck.
- 11 plus 25 kg of wild meat.⁴

The city of Cruzeiro do Sul has more than 80,000 inhabitants and its own international airport.

May 22, 2019

Divinópolis, Minas Gerais State, Brazil

Seizure of a yellow-footed turtle (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) in the home of a marijuana and cocaine dealer.⁵



COLOMBIA

Beginning of April 2019

Sahagún, Córdoba Department, Colombia

Easter celebrations are no cause for celebration for Colombian sliders (*Trachemys callirostris*). The faithful indulge in sinful gluttony and are ready to spend the equivalent of 350 to 1,000 US\$ to cook a Colombian slider. By motorcycle, by bus, by car, poachers swarm to the market. The police seized approximately 100 specimens. They will eventually be returned to the swamp.⁶



Mid-April 2019

Ibague, State of Tolima, Colombia

Seizure of a Colombian slider (*Trachemys callirostris*) in the bus station. As Holy Week approaches, the police are fighting against the traffic of wild animals who end up as offerings, masks, feathers or food.⁷

April 17, 2019

El Dorado International Airport, Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure on a parcel service platform of 1359 matamatas (*Chelus fimbriata*), freshwater turtles captured in the upper Orinoco basin. Hidden in plastic bags, 28 had already died of asphyxiation. The batch was probably intended for the culinary festivities of Holy Week.⁸

End of May 2019

Bogotá, Cundinamarca Department, Colombia

Three wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) were seized in the baggage of a woman of foreign nationality.⁹

ECUADOR

June 4, 2019

Isabela Island, Galápagos Province, Ecuador

The investigation into the theft of Galapagos giant tortoises (*Chelonoidis niger*, Appendix I) in the Alfonso Tupiza breeding center has led to results (see "On the Trail" n° 22 p. 21). Two forest rangers, Fernando F. and Daniel T., have been indicted. Because they are civil servants, they were not taken into preventive custody. They are required to report regularly to the legal authorities and are not allowed to travel abroad. The trafficking apparently dated back several years. Six other people may be involved and connections with international traffickers are suspected.¹⁰

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 17, 2019

State of South Carolina, United States of America

William « Billy » Gangemi would have played a minor role in the Baker network, which, for years, was involved in the import / export of protected turtles (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 24 and n°21 p. 20). Baker was sentenced to 16 months in prison, Brooks to five months, Kail to one year. Gangemi has given up. He pleaded guilty, gave useful information to the investigators and through his lawyer recalled that he was only a turtle collector, a "real" enthusiast whose earnings in this story were at least 10 times lower than those of the boss. The judge was sensitive to these arguments and Gangemi, 26, was given only 2 years of probation and 6 months' house arrest except to go to Mass, to complete some formalities or obligations of daily life and even to work on weekends. Gangemi's work requires the same skills as his trafficking. His family has been operating a legal trade in reptiles of all species for 40 years and Gangemi, with the approval of the vice prosecutor and the judge, will be able to participate in the weekends reptile show, which seem to be a powerful activity in South Carolina and many other states and are respected even by the magistrates.¹¹



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Trinidad and Tobago

Seizure by gamekeepers of yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) coming from Venezuela.¹²

ASIA

CAMBODIA

June 26, 2019

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Arrest of a man who had just captured 5 black marsh turtles (*Siebenrockiella crassicolis*, Appendix II). They therefore didn't end up in a restaurant's kitchen and garbage cans. They were immediately returned to the water.¹³



CHINA

April 13, 2019

Suzhou Zoo, Jiangsu Province, China

The last Yangtze softshell turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*, Appendix II) has died. At 90 years old, she died during an attempt to artificially inseminate her with the sperm for male who had died at the age of 100. Scientists say that it is a tragedy. What is particularly tragic is that the general public is led to believe that a species can be saved from extinction by this type of scientific manipulation, always orchestrated with maximum publicity.¹⁴



May 5, 2019

Lok Ma Chau Control Point, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Seizure in a car of 216 Chinese softshell turtles (*Pelodiscus sinensis*) and 75 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). Value estimated at 30,000 HK\$ (or 3,824 US\$, 103 US\$/turtle). The driver was arrested.¹⁵

INDIA

Beginning of April 2019

Tanda, Hoshiarpur District, Punjab State, India

In anticipation of federal parliamentary elections, the tax authorities have carried out raids in various cities, and seized illegal stocks of alcoholic beverages meant to be distributed to voters before the election, to encourage them to "vote right." Large quantities of bottles were confiscated at the home of municipal adviser, Radha Rani. Agents also found 11 live turtles. His mother-in-law, Bachni, said that she ate their flesh as a cure for an unspecified illness. The Forest Department has opened an investigation to identify Bachni's supplier, who may be from the same ethnic group, certain members of which are involved in poaching. The turtles, which according to differing opinions are either black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) or Indian flapshells (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II), were released in a wetlands zone.¹⁶

April 6, 2019

Chennai International Airport, Tamil Nadu State, India

Venkadesan was about to board an Air Asia flight to Bangkok. He had already registered his suitcase. But the young man lost his cool when customs officers asked him if he was carrying foreign currency or wild animals. His evasive responses led them to recall the suitcase. A good haul: the suitcase contained 65 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II - Appendix I since November 26, 2019) stuffed into several boxes. Venkadesan and the reptiles were turned over to the capable hands of the Tamil Nadu Ministry of Forests.¹⁷

GANG

June 10, 2019

Howrah, Haora District, West Bengal State, India

For the 834 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I since November 26, 2019) seized in the raid of a smuggling network, the adventure will end at the Alipore Zoological Garden. Depending on their age and size, they are each worth between 2000 and 5000 rupees (between 28 and 72 US\$) on the local black market. They had come from Chennai (Tamil Nadu state) by the Coromandel Express in 4 shopping carts transported by a man. The tax service intelligence agents were waiting for him and had stationed several teams inside and around the Santragachhi train station. Nonetheless, he managed to escape. But his three accomplices were arrested as they loaded the reptiles into the trunk of a Hyundai Verna. They were going to take the tortoises to Banipur (West Bengal state), before smuggling them into Bangladesh.¹⁸

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 21, 2019

Mumbai, Mumbai City District, State of Maharashtra, India

The NGOs Wildlife Welfare Association and SARRP (Spreading Awareness on Reptiles and Rehabilitation Programme), in co-operation with the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) set up a phony buyer operation to bring down a trafficker selling protected turtles. The rendezvous was set at the Crawford market. When Bilal Mohd Hanif Shaikh arrived with a plastic bag containing 20 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I), the members of the NGOs did not wait for WCCB agents to arrive. They grabbed the bag and took him manu militari to the nearest police station. Several videos and photos of Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I since November 26, 2019) were found on the trafficker's cell phone. A search of his home also led to the seizure of a parrot. Shaikh also has been involved in other cases of wild animal trafficking.¹⁹



ISRAEL

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv District, Israel

Seizure in an apartment occupied by a thirty-year-old of a snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III in the United States). The Directorate of Nature and Parks of Israel reports that they can be dangerous to humankind and local ecology. "They have terrifying jaws and their bites are among the strongest in nature. They can even break and cut fingers." »²¹

PAKISTAN

REPEATED OFFENSE

Mid May 2019

Islamabad, Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

Seizure of 3 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I) in a pet shop. They were released into the wild. In 2018, 13 other turtles were seized in the same pet shop.²²

THAILAND

April 3, 2019

Betong, Yala Province, Thailand. Border with Malaysia.

Seizure of 21 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), worth an estimated 650,000 bahts (or 20,400 US\$, 970 US\$/tortoise). A taxi driver was arrested. The turtles were hidden in boxes under the hood of the car. He had picked up the tortoises at a service station 2 km from Betong, and was taking them to Yala in Thailand, 130 km north of the border. Radiated tortoises in Malaysia cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p.21, in China cf. n°16 p.102, in Thailand, cf. n°15 p.20.²³

VIET NAM

April 12, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure of a female yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) weighing 6.8 kg and on sale in front of a pagoda. She was put in the good hands of the Ho Chi Minh City Zoo and Botanical Gardens.²⁴

June 23, 2019

Kamle and Subansiri Districts, Arunachal Pradesh State, India

Bunty Tao, a forest ranger, saved a turtle from the soup kettle, and at the same time made an exciting discovery for Indian herpetologists. Four days ago, the forest ranger confiscated the animal from the villager who was taking him home. He put the turtle in a cage until it could be released. Intrigued by the turtle's size and morphology, which seemed unusual for turtles of the region, Bunty Tao took some photographs and posted them on the Whatsapp group of the Arunachal Against Hunting network. Jayaditya Purkayastha, a specialist in Guwahati reptiles in Assam, responded with enthusiasm. He identified an impressed tortoise (*Manouria impressa*, Appendix II), a species from South-east Asia, never before observed in India. This past Sunday, he came to make observations on the field, accompanied by Dr Bharat Bhushan Bhatt, herpetologist, Dr Shailendra Singh and Arpita Dutta from the NGO Turtle Survival Alliance. With villagers as their guides, they explored the mountain forests of Yazali and discovered two other specimens that they formally identified. Up until now, the distribution area of impressed tortoises was considered to stop in western Myanmar. For Jayaditya Purkayastha, "This discovery will go a long way in giving a boost to turtle conservation in the Northeast."²⁰



April 17, 2019

Lac Thuy District, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a car of 29 keel-backed turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II) being delivered to restaurants. They were handed over to the Cuc Phuong rescue center.²⁵

End of April 2019

Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam

Fourteen big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I) and a yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) arrived at the park rescue center. They had been saved one month earlier from trafficking and temporarily put in the custody of the Pu Mat National Park rescue center.²⁶

June 26, 2019

District of Cam Le, Da Nang City, Viet Nam

Seizure on the fish market of Cam Le of Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora bourreti*, Appendix II) and ricefield turtles (*Malayemys subtrijuga*, Appendix II).²⁷

June 29, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

A rare prisoner, a yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) was freed from its jailer. He had "picked her up" in the forest and put her under bars in Ho Chi Minh City. She was transferred to Cat Tien National Park under the authority of ENV (Education for Nature Vietnam).²⁸

EUROPE

FRANCE

June 3, 2019

Petits Diables Garden, Dinan, Department of Côtes-d'Armor, France

Theft of picturesque hens, long-haired rabbits and a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) from the Val Cocherel public garden at the foot of the ramparts. The fence has been cut. The thugs didn't leave a fingerprint. Even the hens didn't have time to scream. Apparently, it's the perfect crime. The mayor has put out a missing turtle appeal calling the kidnappers to reason. "The Hermann's tortoise belongs to the city and she's chipped."²⁹

ITALY

April 4, 2019

Barletta, Province of Barletta-Andria-Trani, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of 24 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) at home of a prominent city figure.³⁰

May 7, 2019

San Vito Lo Capo, Province of Trapani, Sicily Region, Italy

Seizure of a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) at an illegal dump for used cars, asbestos, used oil, tires and leftover solvents and paints. Next to the dump, some migrants had set up makeshift housing.³¹

June 12, 2019

Port of Bari, Metropolitan City of Bari, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in a shoebox during the disembarking of a ferry from Greece.³²

RUSSIA

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 7, 2019

Orenburg, Orenburg Oblast, Russia

4,100 live Horsfield's tortoises (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II) in 24 bags in the middle of 7 t of cabbage. The market value of the seizure is 5 million rubles (77,411 US\$). The container came from Kazakhstan.³³



Snakes

AMERICA

BRAZIL

End of April 2019

Piraquara, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of a python (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) above a closet, 6 m long and weighing 6 kg, "a member of the family" according to the owner of the premises, and 2 tarantulas, including a goliath birdeater (*Theraphosa blondi*), who is able to catch and digest chicks.¹



COLOMBIA

Mid-April 2019

Funza, Cundinamarca Department, Colombia

Seizure of a snake (*Chironius monticola*) and 1,500 decorations made from the leaves of the endangered cera palm (*Ceroxylon quindiuense*), intended to be sold during Palm Sunday (cf. page 108).²



ASIA

CHINA

April 2019

Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in packages sent by merchant vessel crew members of 3 small purses, 2 made of python-skin (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) and the other made of cobra skin (genus *Naja*).³



April 2019

Linyi Shubuling Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of an incoming passenger: 2 drums made of python skin (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II). Since the beginning of the year, 25 objects in python skin have been seized at this airport, mostly drums and erhus (see "On the Trail" n° 24 p. 25).⁴

April 23, 2019

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 3 python leather drums (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) after the landing of a flight from Cambodia.⁵



INDIA

April 3, 2019

Manor, Palghar District, Maharashtra State, India

Sunil Dhanawa and Pawan Bhoya were each carrying a bag containing a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II), one was 56 inches long and weighed 4 kg, the other was 41 inches long and weighed 1 kg. The Palghar police picked them up following the tip. Investigators believe that they have arrested two middlemen, and are trying to identify the network.⁶

April 7, 2019

India-Nepal border, Uttar Pradesh State, India

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) is always concise. They sent out a brief news release today announcing that they had picked up a person somewhere near the border, trying to smuggle 3 very young pythons (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) into Nepal. Also, always very precise, they gave the weight and length of the snakes: respectively 170 g for 56 cm long, 127 g for 54 cm, and 60 g for 43 cm.⁷

April 14, 2019

India-Nepal border, Uttar Pradesh State, India

A joint SSB / Forest Department patrol. An individual on his way to Nepal was transporting a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) on his bicycle. The snake is estimated to be worth 40,000 rupees (577 US\$).⁸

April 21, 2019

Kalyan, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

Kiran Pawar is in the hands of his colleagues. A driver for the Vasai police station, the police officer was trying to sell a sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) for a pretty penny. It was 1.5 m long and weighed 2.5 kg. Agents from the Khardi Forest Department, assisted by members of the Thane anti-poaching unit, laid a trap for him. Two phony purchasers set a rendezvous with him in the Shilphata neighborhood. 11 agents in plain clothes were stationed in the vicinity. Kiran Pawar was taken into custody. Investigators are trying to find out who he got the snake from.⁹



GANG

April 28, 2019

Gharaunda, Karnal District, Haryana State, India

The famous Haffkine Institute in Mumbai, specialized in biomedical research since 1899, today sent the analysis results corresponding to a seizure made last February 27 by the Haryana Forest and Wildlife Department: it was definitely snake venom from Russel vipers (*Daboia russelii*, Appendix III) and saw-scaled vipers (*Echis carinatus*), among the most dangerous in the country. There was 1.6 kg of it, worth an estimated 15 million rupees (216,350 US\$) on the international market, according to the experts. Om Prakash, Karambir Singh, Jaibir Singh and Mukesh Kumar were arrested as they tried to sell a jar full of venom to an informer and an undercover officer at the Anaj Mandi market. The nature of the substance was not taken seriously at the time by justice officials, and the 3 men were freed on bail. The Forest and Wildlife Department are now on their heels.¹⁰



Daboia russelii

GANG

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 19, 2019

Villukaranpatti, Karur District, Tamil Nadu State, India

A sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) transaction went sour. The reptile is believed to bring gold and prosperity, but brought only lead to one of the traffickers. Thangavel and Kanjanaicker, alias Rengasamy, were to meet Mohammed Rafeeq, Vivek, Nithish and his brother, Nithin, to sell them the boa. But a fight broke out when Thangavel claimed that the 1 million rupees (14,320 US\$) the purchasers had already paid through a middleman, named Raja, was only a down-payment. Mohammed Rafeeq took out homemade pistol and shot Thangavel in the back as he fled. The police arrived and took in the protagonists, one to the hospital and the others to the police station. Kanjanaicker, alias Rengasamy, managed to disappear.¹¹

May 19, 2019

Nala Sopara, Palghar District, Maharashtra State, India

The criminal brigade got wind of a tip: Shashant Yogesh Mudaliar and Mohsin Rahim Qureishi were coming to town with a brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) to deliver it to a buyer. The price set for the 1.2-m-long reptile, weighing 1.5 kg, was 1.2 million rupees (17,180 US\$). They were picked up at dawn near the train station. The boa was handed over to the Forest Department.¹²

May 30, 2019

Bhayander, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

Wazid Hussain Mohammad Yusuf Qureshi (47 years old) and Shambu Acchelal Paswan (39 years old) were looking for buyers for 2 brown sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II), one weighing 2.98 kg and the other 2.5 kg. Two beautiful specimens estimated at 25 million rupees (358,000 US\$). The two men fell into a trap set by the criminal brigade.¹³

June 3, 2019

Airoli, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

Jaywant Sakpal was arrested near the train station with a bag containing 3 snakes in plastic containers. A search of his home led to the seizure of 2 other reptiles. In all, Jaywant Sakpal is charged with possession of 2 Indian cobras (*Naja naja*, Appendix II), 2 oriental ratsnakes (*Ptyas mucosa*) and an Indian sand boa (*Eryx conicus*, Appendix II). An investigation was carried out by the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and the Forest Department, in cooperation with the NGOs PAWS-Mumbai and Amma Care Foundation (ACF).¹⁴

June 5, 2019

Yerawada, Pune District, Maharashtra State, India

Another brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) has landed at the Rajiv Gandhi Zoo following a seizure by the city crime branch. Prashant Devidas Dange and Pramod Mansingh Pawar fell into a police trap. Dange had gotten the snake in the Amravati district.¹⁵

June 6, 2019

Pune, Pune District, Maharashtra State, India

Himanshu Tilak Sahu, Dashrath Niranjan Haldar, Vikas Manohar Bhaisare and Mahendra Raosaheb Jadhav were arrested by the Pune City Police Crime Branch. The 4 men were waiting in front of a hotel for someone to buy 1 liter of snake venom. They were hoping for 20 million rupees (287,330 US\$).¹⁶

June 21, 2019

Bokaro Steel City, Bokaro District, Jharkhand State, India

Sunil Paswan and Md Shahabuddin were arrested in a hotel in possession of a brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II).¹⁷

INDONESIA

April 6, 2019

Mopah Airport, Merauke, Merauke Regency, Papua Province, New Guinea Island, Indonesia

Seizure from a package of 3 juvenile pythons in plastic boxes (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). The package officially contained snacks.¹⁸

PAKISTAN

June 2, 2019

Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Sandals made of python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) are all the rage in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and among Pashtuns living in the Middle East since Nooruddin Shinwari, a luxury shoemaker, offered to give a pair to Prime Minister Imran Khan, as a wedding gift. The publicity attracted the attention of the Ministry of the Environment. The pair of sandals was seized. No support was given to the claim that the python skin had been legally imported from the United States. Once the fine equivalent to 333 US\$ was paid, the scandalous sandals were returned to their creator who is overjoyed by the orders coming in online. The purchasers want to receive their sandals for Eid. The python sandals sell for around 15,000 rupees (96 US\$) a pair, whereas a pair of traditional sandals sells for between 600 and 1000 rupees (3-6 US\$). In 2016, a pair of deerskin sandals intended for a Bollywood actor had already caused a scandal. One wonders whether the chappal manufacturers' union - that's the name of these traditional sandals in the country - is trying to revive fashion. In Peshawar, in the souk of Namak Mandi, there were 60 manufacturers selling chappal. Now there are only 20 left. Chappal was the heir to a real know-how. More than 600 models were on display on shelves. They are now abandoned by the younger generation in favour of the Nike and consort prêt-à-porter.¹⁹



© Zahid Imdad

PHILIPPINES

May 5, 2019

Manila Ninoy Aquino International Metropolitan Province, Philippines

Seizure of a 51-cm reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) in a bluetooth speaker. The package and the python were about to fly to Malaysia.²⁰



© BOC - NAI/A

VIET NAM

May 30, 2019

Hai Phong Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure of a Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) in a café. He will be released into the wild.²¹



© ENV

EUROPE

NETHERLANDS

May 2019

The Netherlands

Seizure of an African python leather coat (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) in the wardrobe of a traveller from Hong Kong.²²



© Dutch Customs

Sauria

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid-April 2019

Between Rosario and Buenos Aires, Province of Santa Fe, Argentina

Truck search at the Lagos toll on Rosario-Buenos Aires highway. Seizure of 7,100 skins of red tegus (*Salvator rufescens*, Appendix II) and black tegus (*Tupinambis teguixin*, Appendix II). The truck came from the province of Córdoba.¹



Tupinambis teguixin

BRAZIL

May 22, 2019

Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil

Surprise arrival in a postal parcel of a couple of bearded dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*) from Australia. The exotic couple was handing over to the Centro de Triagem de Animais Silvestres (Cetas) (see "On the Trail" n° 14 p. 23, n° 19 p. 30, n° 20 p. 124, n° 20 p. 128, n° 21 p. 25, n° 23 p. 36).²



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 23, 2019

Boston, Massachusetts State, United States of America

Semedo (26 years old) has pleaded guilty to trafficking over 20 live water monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) between March and December 2016: *Varanus cumingi*, *Varanus nuchalis* and *Varanus marmoratus*. He sold them to accomplices in Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, labeled as imported speakers and other IT equipment. The lizards were put in socks that were taped shut and stuffed into the speakers and other electronic equipment.³

MEXICO

April 6, 2019

San Pedro Tlaquepaque, State of Jalisco, Mexico

Seizure on the truck platform of a bearded lizard (*Heloderma horridum*, Appendix I) inside a package declared to contain spare parts and on its way to Mexico City. The addresses of the sender and receiver were nonsense.⁴

May 15, 2019

Mérida International Airport, State of Yucatán, Mexico

The canine brigade detected live merchandise – 20 juvenile Mexican spinytail iguanas (*Ctenosaura pectinata*). The package was on its way to Ciudad Juárez, in the state of Chihuahua (2060 km away).⁵

ASIA

BANGLADESH

May 31, 2019

Uttara, Dhaka District, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh

The swindle was rudimentary. Two men were picked up by agents of the Wildlife Crime Control Unit (WCCU) and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). They were transporting a gecko (*Gekko* spp.) smuggled in from India. Its peculiarity: it had been painted with pink and black stripes and fitted with artificial extensions on its feet and tail, to make it look like a flying gecko (*Ptychozoon* spp.), a rarer and more expensive species. The little lizard was cleaned and relieved of its disguise at the Forest Department laboratory. The 2 crooks got 3 months in prison.⁶



INDIA

April 20, 2019

Darjeeling District, West Bengal State, India

Seizure of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II since November 26, 2019) and arrest of 2 traffickers by a patrol of the 41st battalion of the SSB.⁷

ISRAEL

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Tel Aviv, Israel

Seizure in an apartment of flat-tailed geckos (*Uroplatus* spp., Appendix II) fraudulently imported from Madagascar.⁸

VIET NAM

April 23, 2019

Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

A Bengal lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) was voluntarily handed over to the ENV and the Forest Department by a purchaser who either regretted his act or became fearful of legal repercussions. The lizard was released in the Dong Nai Park.⁹

EUROPE

ITALY

April 16, 2019

Teverola, Caserta Province, Campania Region, Italy

A private individual rescued an injured iguana who was suffering from the cold and wandering aimlessly around the parking lot of a housing complex. He was taken to see a veterinarian, and then transferred to the Naples zoo.¹⁰



June 20, 2019

Turin-Caselle Airport, Metropolitan City of Turin, Piedmont Region, Italy

Seizure of a monitor lizard bag (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) with leather, legs and head. A souvenir of Niger, according to the Romanian traveller residing in Rivalta.¹¹



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

April 17, 2019

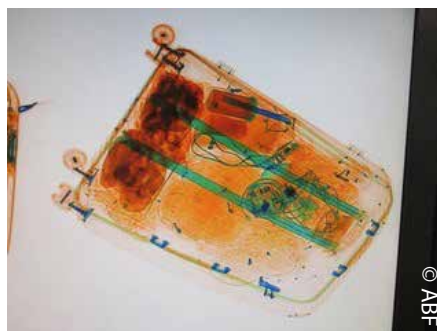
Melbourne, Victoria State, Australia

A Taiwanese national has been sentenced to 6 months in prison for possession and trafficking of reptiles, including one black-headed monitor (*Varanus tristis*, Appendix II), 33 eastern water dragons (*Intellagama lesueurii lesueurii*) and 17 eastern blue-tongue lizards (*Tiliqua scincoides*). He hid them in socks that were taped shut and put inside of rice-cookers and other pots sent to Hong Kong, labeled as "cooking utensils." He had a temporary work visa. One injured skink had to be put out of pain. The others were handed over to NGOs.¹²

April 23, 2019

Melbourne International Airport, Victoria State, Australia

Seizure in the luggage of a 27-year-old female Japanese tourist of 17 shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and 2 common blue-tongued skinks (*Tiliqua scincoides*). On November 8, 2018 and February 5, 2019, two other Japanese nationals were arrested in possession of reptiles (see "On the Trail" n° 23 p. 34, n° 24 p. 28). They are all part of the same network, according to investigators.¹³

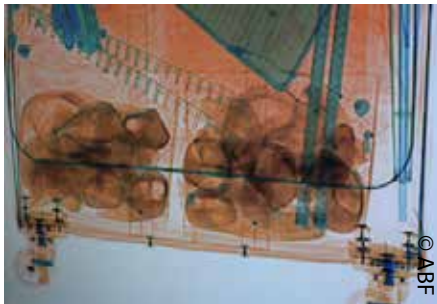


June 5, 2019

Perth International Airport, State of Western Australia, Australia

Seizure in the bags of two Japanese of 13 shingleback lizards. They were going to get on separate flights, one to Singapore, the other to Kuala Lumpur. It appears from the packaging of the reptiles and photos found by ABF (Australian Border Force) agents in the phone of one of the suspects that they knew each other and were "working" together. The first arrived in Brisbane on May 3, the second in Perth on June 3. Each shingleback lizard sells for 10,000 US\$ on the international market.

This is the third time in 6 months that Japanese people have been caught in the act of fraudulent export of shingleback lizards (see "On the Trail" n°17 p.25).¹⁴



Crocodilians

AMERICA

MEXICO

April 10, 2019

Victoria, State of Tamaulipas, Mexico

Voluntary handing over to PROFEPA (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) of 2 young female Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II) who, due to their good general condition, were released into the water in the reservoir of the Vicente Guerrero dam.¹



ASIA

CHINA

May 2019

Fuzhou International Airport, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of two Nile crocodile skins (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I). Total weight: 28.69 kg.²



MALAYSIA

May 18, 2019

Tawau, Sabah State, Borneo Island, Malaysia. Border with North Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Seizure in bags of 225 crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), 5 of which were dead. Four individuals have been arrested, including 2 Indonesian nationals. They had allegedly transported the crocodiles from Indonesia on a long-tail boat, or "katinting".³

Various Reptile Species

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

May 29, 2019

Medellin, Antioquia Department, Colombia

Rather than the "personal documents" that he claimed to be transporting, the man's box held 39 wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), 89 Colombian sliders (*Trachemys calirostris*) and 46 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), all juveniles. The Medellin police took him to the police station. He is liable from 48 hours to 9 years in prison.¹



© Policia

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 6, 2019

Charlotte County, State of Florida, United States of America

Seizure of 41 three-striped mud turtles (*Kinosternon baurii*) in the car stopped by a roadblock. When asked if she had anything else to declare, the female driver pulled a baby alligator out of her pants (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II).²



© Mary Keim

PERU

Mid-April 2019

Juliaca, Puno Region, Peru

- In a sports bag, he was carrying a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II).

- In a massage parlour, he was selling the head of a caiman (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II) and a forest tortoise shell (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II). "If you buy, you are an accomplice," reminds SERFOR (National Forest and Wildlife Service).³

ASIA

THAILAND

June 18, 2019

Ban Huai Hin Fon, Tak Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.

Heavy rain at the border post. The van was about to enter Thailand from former Burma. The occupants were in order. Not so much the 586 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I), the 3,885 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), the 75 common snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III in the USA), nor the 35 snakehead murels (*Channa striata*). Red-eared sliders are considered invasive. Their future is bleak. Bred in farms, they will probably end up in a crocodile breeding.⁴



© Khaosod

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 23, 2019

Sydney, New South Wales State, Australia

Seizure by the Strike Force Raptor, which specializes in the fight against poaching, of 12 shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*), 3 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), a Stimson's python (*Antaresia stimsoni*, Appendix II), a matamora turtle (*Chelus fimbriata*) and 2 dead crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II). Arrest of a 25-year-old man charged with international trafficking in endangered species and cruelty to animals. The responsibility of the same man in a traffic of 147 reptiles including a death adder (*Acanthophis antarcticus*), 58 geckos (Gekkonidae family), 21 bearded dragons (genus *Pogona*) and common blue-tongued skinks (*Tiliqua scincoides*) had already been established in 2017.⁵

Amphibiens

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

April 13 and 17, 2019

El Dorado International Airport, Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of 400 poisonous frogs stuffed in film roll cases. Arrest of a Colombian national about to embark for Germany via Brazil. Lehman's poison frogs (*Oophaga lehmanni*, Appendix II) and Harlequin poison frogs (*Oophaga histrionica*, Appendix II) are endangered.¹



PERU

June 22, 2019

Pucusana, Lima Province, Peru

Seized in a Peru Bus coach of 2,517 Titicaca water frogs (*Telmatobius culeus*, Appendix I) that were to be sold as juice on Lima markets (see "On the Trail" n°18 p. 28).²



ASIA

ISRAEL

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv District, Israel

Seizure in an apartment of poison-dart frogs (Dendrobatidae family) from South America. Their poison is fatal and is said to be 200 times more powerful than morphine. It has been used by Amerindian tribes to coat arrowheads.³

Arachnids and insects

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

Beginning of April 2019

Trenton, State of New Jersey, United States of America

Sentencing of Wlodzimie Lapkiewicz, 30 years old, to 6 months' house arrest and 4 years' probation for smuggling and illegal trade in dictator scorpions (*Pandinus dictator*, Appendix II), emperor scorpions (*Pandinus imperator*, Appendix II), millipedes (class Diplododa), spiders and mantises. He is a fan of the "brown boxing scheme", in which small anonymous packages are shipped unnoticed—except for when scorpions escape in a post office. This had happened in 2015 and Lapkiewicz had therefore received a formal warning from the US Fish and Wildlife of New Jersey. But he had continued his game (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.34).¹



Pandinus imperator

ASIA

CHINA

April 21, 2019

Changzhou Benniu Airport, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure on a flight coming from Thailand of 3 butterflies, 2 birdwings (*Ornithoptera* spp., Appendix I or II) and one *Papilio ulysses*.²



Ornithoptera euphorion

PAKISTAN

May 12, 2019

Islamabad International Airport, Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

Seizure in 2 plastic boxes under the coat of a supposed fabric salesman of 2 tarantulas (*Theraphosidae* family). Usman Khan was on his way back from China and had a stopover in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. He had been paid 50,000 rupees (354 US\$) plus travel expenses to bring back the spiders. Khan often travels to China. The total number of tarantulas that he has smuggled was not revealed. Grilled tarantulas are a delicacy in Cambodia and other countries and according to the Pakistani press, tarantula venom can be used to cure cancer.³



PHILIPPINES

April 1, 2019

Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Metropolitan Manila Province, Philippines

Seizure of 757 *Cyriopagopus minax*, black spiders with tan and brown stripes, endemic in Myanmar and Thailand. They were stuffed in plastic tubes and hidden in boxes of Belvita biscuits and Lord Nelson tea. Estimated value of 310,000 pesos, or 5824 US\$. The package had been sent from Poland by a certain Wojciech Pakasz, a spider breeder, and was addressed to a certain Jesse Camaro. Tarantulas in Manila, see also p. 117.⁴



Annelids

AMERICA

CANADA

May 24, 2019

Brampton, Ontario Province, Canada

Ippolit Bodounov was sentenced to a fine of 15,000 CA\$ or 11,140 US\$ for having attempted to illegally import 4,788 southern medicinal leeches (*Hirudo verbana*, Appendix II) from Russia in October 2018. He transported them wrapped in damp clothing inside his bag. The species was identified through genetic analysis at the laboratory of the New York Museum of Natural History. They had been captured in their natural habitat. The species was one of the first to be the object of sales restrictions in Canada, back in 1823.¹



EUROPE

NETHERLANDS

Beginning of April 2019

The Netherlands

A "slippery" seizure, according to the customs department tweet, in the luggage of a passenger arriving from Turkey. He was carrying 30 medicinal leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*, Appendix II) inside a plastic bottle.²



Birds

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 2019

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Mending of a fracture in the right leg of a young blue crane (*Anthropoides paradiseus*, Appendix II) that was injured and poorly treated while in captivity at a private individual's home.¹



May 18, 2019

Near Maphelane, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Rescue of a young martial eagle (*Polemaetus bellicosus*, Appendix II). He hung miserably by a leg from a tree branch on the side of the road. The other leg was cut off by his torturer(s). Urgently taken to a Wild Vet veterinarian, he underwent the necessary treatment under anaesthesia and found himself perched on a leg looking at his rescuers with sorry and grateful eyes.²



June 7 and 12, 2019

Zululand District, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Poisoning of 23 white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), 3 lappet-faced vultures (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II) and one white-headed vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Appendix II)

The reasons for this poisoning are not clear. The needs of traditional muthi medicine or black magic are brought up.

Seven species of vultures in southern Africa are threatened with extinction. These serial murders are all the more serious because the vultures are in the breeding season. Dozens of eggs and chicks are sentenced to abandonment and death (see "On the Trail" n°11 p. 75 to 77).³



CAMEROON

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 29, 2019

Kienke, South Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 18 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). The 44-year-old Ghanaian is a repeat offender. Two of his accomplices fled. This is the third time he has been arrested for trafficking in grey parrots. Each time he is released pending trial (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 28). He planned to fly about 100 specimens to Accra, Ghana, from Yaoundé via Abidjan. He obtains his supplies from a network of trappers in the Lukoundje district.⁴

On the Trail n°25. Robin des Bois

GUINEA

June 6 and 21, 2019

Conakry, Conakry Region, Guinea

Sentence of a fisherman from Dubreka to 6 months' suspended prison for catching, holding and marketing a pelican (Pelecanidae family). He was about to sell him "to a lady who had contacted him by phone" for 500,000 Guinean francs, or 54 US\$. "I found him in the water" "I'm not used to catching such birds".

He was also fined 54 US\$ for damages to the Ministry of the Environment. He was remanded in custody between June 6, the date of his arrest, and June 21, the date of the trial.⁵



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid May 2019

San Clemente del Tuyú, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

"Found" on the beach in Miramar (province of Buenos Aires), the Magellanic penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) had been exiled 1000 km away by a family from Córdoba, who treated him as a pet. He was their mascot and an object of curiosity. A witness reported his presence to the authorities. Rescued from his unfortunate situation on March 12, he spent 2 months at the Fundación Mundo Marino rescue center. He was afterwards released on the beach in San Clemente del Tuyú along with 14 of his peers who were suffering from malnutrition when they were rescued on the beach during migration. They all hurried back to the sea. We can only hope that despite overfishing, they will be able to find a few anchovies, hakes and sardines here and there.⁶



End of May 2019

Laguna del Diamante, Mendoza Province, Argentina

Seizure of a rhea (*Rhea* spp., Appendix I or II) caught in the Laguna del Diamante, 2 bikes and one firearm. Three arrests.⁷

BOLIVIA

Beginning of May 2019

San Josecito, Tarija Department, Bolivia

Seizure of a toucan (familie Ramphastidae) in a bus. His beak was sticking out from a box and attracted the attention of police at a roadblock.⁸



May 20, 2019

Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Santa Cruz Department, Bolivia

Seizure of 6 Quaker parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), 4 toucans (*Ramphastidae* family) and 4 ducks (*Anatidae* family). The couple said that they were unemployed and in a state of necessity, and had no way of making a living other than wildlife trafficking. Their starting price for a toucan was 500 bolivianos, or 72 US\$.⁹



BRAZIL

April 10, 2019

State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Appeal confirmation of the sentence to 2 years' community service and a 3,500 reais fine, or 889 US\$, for a certified breeder who used falsified rings to put birds caught in the wild into his cages and sell them. The case dates back to 2008. It had been uncovered by a surprise inspection by IBAMA. On the day of the inspection, 19 birds were illegally detained.¹⁰



Seizures in Brazil, map and pictures pages 40 and 41.

COLOMBIA

April 26, 2019

El Dorado International Airport, Bogotá, Colombia

Opening by customs as it was being loaded to depart for the islands of San Andres and Providence (Caribbean Sea, Colombia) of a package. It contained 9 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) and 3 tocuco sparrows (*Arremonops tocuensis*), that had arrived on a flight from Barranquilla.¹¹



End of April 2019

Caucasia, Antioquia Department, Colombia

Seizure of 4 Amazons (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II) hidden in a piggy bank.¹²



Mid May 2019

Cúcuta, Norte de Santander Department, Colombia

Seizure of 2 yellow-headed parrots (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) at a market, on sale by a foreign national.¹³

CUBA

End of April 2019

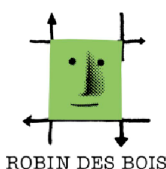
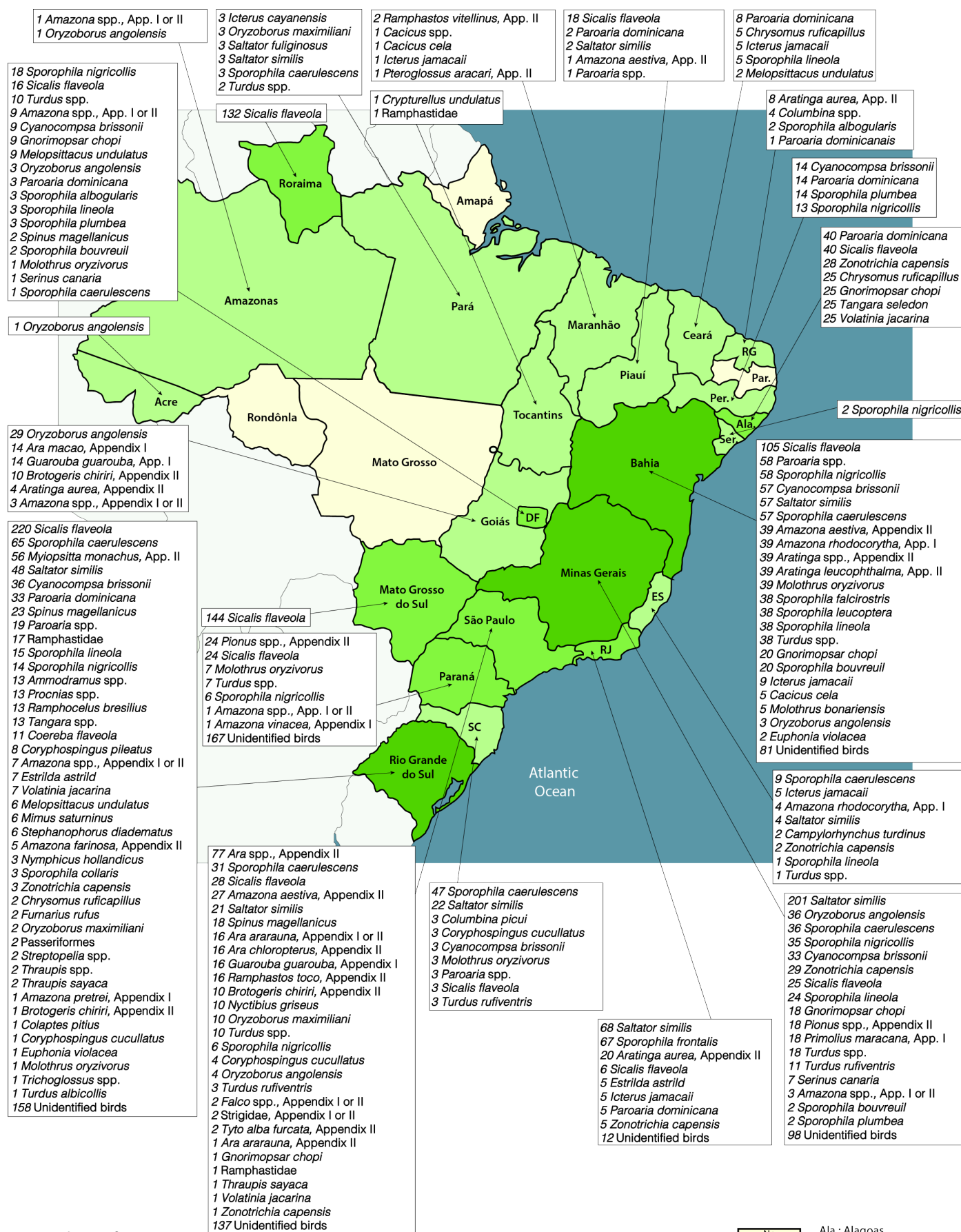
José Martí International Airport, Havana, Cuba

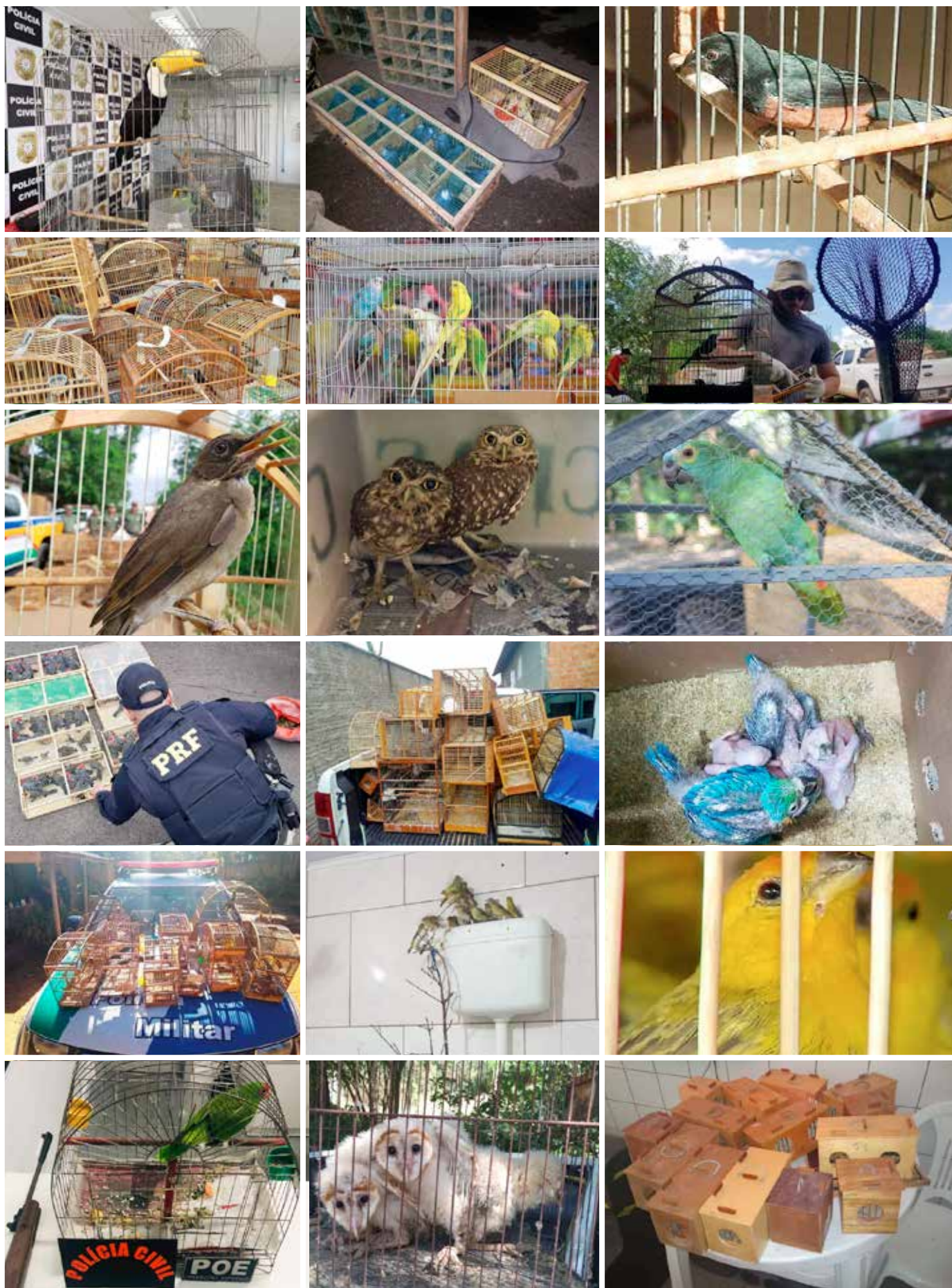
Aborted attempt to smuggle Cuba's natural heritage. Seizure by customs of 277 birds, Cuban trogon cardinals (*Priotelus temnurus*), cardinals (genus *Cardinalis*), painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*), indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), Cuban grassquits (*Tiaris canorus*), yellow-faced grassquits (*Tiaris olivaceus*), Cuban bullfinches (*Melopyrrha nigra*) and cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*).¹⁴



Tiaris canorus

4187 birds seized in Brazil between 1 April and 30 June 2019 according to official sources and the media





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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 14, 2019

Sacramento, State of California, United States of America

Richard Parker was sentenced to 90 days in prison and cumulative fines of 75,000 US\$. Birds of prey were this serial killer's favourite target (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 119). He was doing well for himself. For every bird poached, he risked 5,000 US\$, and on his hunting list he had more than 130.¹⁵



May 1, 2019

Chestertown and Talbot County, Maryland State, United States of America

An appeal for witnesses has been put out to find the culprits in the fatal poisoning of 7 bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) and one great-horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II). Two great horned owls were taken into care in time and are in stable condition. Bait containing carbofuran had been put out to kill foxes and raccoons. The birds were then poisoned by eating the carcasses.

13 eagles were poisoned in the same way in 2016. Sold under the brand name Furadan, carbofuran is made from carbamate. Its appearance is misleading. It comes in granules. A single granule is fatal to a



June 12, 2019

Albuquerque, State of New Mexico, United States of America

37 days in prison for Wayne Martin, guilty of having killed robins, hummingbirds (Trochilidae, Appendix I or II), and birds of prey in violation of the Migratory Birds Treaty. He had pleaded guilty in January 2017 and since then had no longer responded to the summons to appear before the courts. The police arrested him 21 months later.¹⁷



June 16, 2019

John F. Kennedy International Airport, State of New York, United States of America

Hair curlers network (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 43, n°21 p. 43). Francis Gurahoo arrested upon landing from Georgetown, Guyana. Seizure of 34 songbirds. The trafficker intended to sell them for 3,000 US\$ per specimen. The finches (Fringillidae family) are used in clandestine singing competitions in New York. Significant amounts of money are spent by gamblers to select the best singers.¹⁸

MEXICO

April 10, 2019

San Juan del Rio, State of Durango, Mexico

A man turned a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) into a living torch. The Durango prosecutor filed a complaint. The arsonist faces 9 years in prison.¹⁹

May 8, 2019

Culiacán Rosales, Sinaloa State, Mexico

Seizure of 2 varied buntings (*Passerina versicolor*), 4 indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*) and 13 painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*) on a street vendor's stand.²⁰



June 7, 2019

Monterrey, San Pedro Garza García, Guadalupe and Santiago, Nuevo Leon State, Mexico

- A yellow-headed Amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) was seized in the home of a private individual, following a denunciation.

- An injured Harris' hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*, Appendix II) and a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II) were wandering down the road, undoubtedly survivors of traffic accidents.

- A military macaw (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I) was closed up in the vestibule of a hotel.

- Five white-nosed coatis (*Nasua narica*, Appendix III in Honduras), only a few days old, were abandoned on a street corner. They were taken to the Guadalupe zoo.

- A western diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*) 50 cm long was captured in a housing development. It was released near Higuera.²¹



PARAGUAY

June 8, 2019

San Lorenzo, Central Department, Paraguay

Seized at a market: 2 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), 3 nanday conures (*Nandayus nenday*, Appendix II), 1 scaly-headed parrot (*Pionus maximiliani*, Appendix II) and 1 blue-headed macaw (*Primolius couloni*, Appendix I).²²

PERU

Beginning of April 2019

Chiclayo, Lambayeque Region, Peru

A blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and 2 orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II) pulled out of a bad situation by the city's environmental police. "It was people in our family who entrusted them to us." A lousy alibi for animals that were up for sale. Chiclayo would have become a mecca for bird traffic.²³

SALVADOR

Beginning of April 2019

Department of Sonsonate, El Salvador

Raids on the markets and bus stations. Seizure of 12 Pacific parakeets (*Aratinga strenua*, Appendix II), 6 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) and 2 amazons (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II).²⁴

URUGUAY

June 9, 2019

Uruguay

Seizure in a car at 3 a.m. of 350 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) on their way to Argentina; 72 of them were already dead.²⁵

ASIA

CHINA

April 3, 2019

Shenzhen Bay Control Point, Kwai Chung and Sham Shui Po, Hong Kong, China.

Seizure in a car of 7 "swallows' nests". The female driver was arrested. The investigation led to the seizure of 79 kg and 19 kg of nests, as well as a second car in an industrial building and in a private residence. The total 105 kg are estimated to be worth 3.5 million Hong Kong dollars (446,000 US\$, or 4,248 US\$/kg).²⁶



Aerodramus fuciphagus

GANG

April 11, 2019

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Guangdong and Fujian Provinces, China

Seizure of 300 kg of "swallows' nests". 18 individuals were arrested. They bought the nests in Indonesia or in Malaysia. According to the Shantou customs agents, these gangs have already imported around 160 t of nests, estimated at 2 billion yuan (298 million US\$, or 1860 US\$/kg). Given that a nest weighs between 3 and 14 g, the 160 t correspond to at least 11.4 million nests.²⁷

May 22, 2019

Gongbei Port of Entry, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.

Seizure in 40 boxes of 31 kg of "swallows' nests". A bus driver was arrested.²⁸



June 17, 2019

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 222 bodies of white-throated kingfishers (*Halcyon smyrnensis*). Found from Bulgaria to South Asia, they settle along rivers, in the marshes, in the jungle and on the beaches. Their diet is varied enough, consisting of fish but also of frogs, lizards, rodents and insects.²⁹



INDIA

April 7, 2019

Kolkata, Kolkata District, West Bengal State, India

The double-bladed razor technique: last Sunday at 7:15 a.m., a first joint raid by federal agents of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and the state forest rangers at the Galiff Street market led to the seizure of approximately 250 parakeets (*Psittacidae* family) and the arrest of vendors. At 12:30 p.m., they carried out a second raid after other traffickers had set up shop. New seizure of around 300 birds, 3 people were arrested. A total of 550 birds, including hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), and Asian koels (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*), along with many parakeet chicks. They would have had very little chance of survival in their overcrowded iron cages. Nine vendors, aged 18 to 32, were arrested.³⁰

April 17, 2019

Dehli, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

Three men left from Bhatinda (Punjab), changed buses in Ludhiana and arrived in Delhi at 5:30 a.m. with 155 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II), stuffed in metal cages. They were all 10-day-old chicks. Alimuddin, Imran and Mohammad Kamar had captured them from nests in the trees of the Punjab hills. They had come to deliver them to a bird-seller in the Moolchand neighborhood, and to other merchants near the Jama Masjid mosque and the Shastri Park. Reputed to be able to imitate a few words if taught when they are young, the Alexandrine parakeets were worth between 4000 and 5000 rupees (58 to 72 US\$) in the city, and up to 25,000 rupees (360 US\$) for good talkers. But a local NGO got wind of the trafficking. Members of the NGO transmitted the information to the police, who arrested the 3 traffickers as they got off the bus. They were taken in to preventive custody. The 155 parakeets were sent to the Jain Charity Birds Hospital – a hospital dedicated to birds and run by Jainists.³¹

April 22, 2019

Chatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Mumbai Suburban District, Maharashtra State, India

100 kg of Indian peafowl feathers (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III) in 6 bags transported by 4 passengers going to Dubai. A record for Mumbai airport.³²



May 5, 2019

Ugayanur, Tiruppur District, Tamil Nadu State, India

A forest ranger patrol came across R. Murugan, N. Subramani, N. Sakthivel, R. Praveen and V. Mohan Kumar in possession of the carcass of an Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III) and a rifle. They were indicted. G. Manikandan and N. Saravanan are on the run.³³



May 26, 2019

Bhoohalli, Ramanagara District, Karnataka State, India

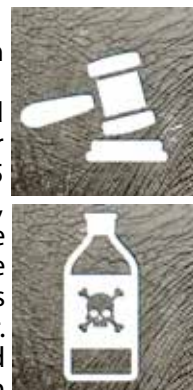
Residents from his village denounced him. Forest rangers invited themselves at Manjunatha Lingegowda's home and found a peacock and 4 peahens that he had poached the night before in and around the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary. They also seized a homemade rifle. The farmer was put in temporary custody. His accomplice, Muthanna, managed to escape.³⁴



End of May 2019

Guwahati, Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam State, India

The High Court sentenced Dhanpati Das to plant and care for 25 trees for having poisoned 25 long-billed vultures (*Gyps indicus*, Appendix II) with a pesticide applied to a goat carcass. The events had taken place 3 months earlier in the village of Kamalpur. Dhanpati Das was arrested and placed in temporary detention for 28 days, then freed on bail on April 4. Bibhab Talukdar from the NGO Aaranyak expressed satisfaction at the verdict: "This form of punishment should have a positive impact on the person and make him contribute to nature."³⁵



June 12, 2019

Kalayarkoil, Sivaganga District, and Velayuthampatti, Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Agents from the Forest Department were checking vehicles near Sivaganga when a man on a motorcycle with a large bag dodged them and fled. The agents pursued him and found the motorcycle and its load 11 km down the road. The bag contained 6 peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III) weighing between 3 and 5 kg each. The driver, a 26-year-old man, was arrested a little later in Velayuthampatti. He had planned to preserve the birds in salt and eat them later. He had used a carnival pellet gun to hunt the birds.³⁶



INDONESIA

April 4, 2019

Samasuru, Central Maluku Regency, Maluku Province, Maluku Islands, Indonesia

Seizure of 6 Moluccan cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I), 1 purple-naped lory (*Lorius domicella*, Appendix II), 12 great-billed parrots (*Tanygnathus megalorynchos*, Appendix II), 43 red lorries (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II), 1 sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II) and 11 rainbow lorikeets (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*). Ronald Rumarisa was arrested. The birds had been caught by the villagers. They were then sent to Ambon, 90 km from Samasuru, through the ports of Kamariang, Waai or Waipirit. They were then transported to the island of Java by car ferry.³⁷

April 4, 2019

Bakauheni Port, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure in 53 cages in a bus going to Jakarta: 1625 birds, including Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*), bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*), streaked weavers (*Ploceus manyar*) and yellow-vented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus goiavier*). They were all released.³⁸

April 13, 2019

Belawan Port, Medan city, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure on a tug boat – it works as a shuttle between the islands and tows barges loaded with wood – of 4 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), 23 Ambon king-parrots (*Alisterus Amboinensis*, Appendix II) and 1 black-capped lory (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II). The birds were hidden behind phony dividing walls. The 9 crewmembers were arrested.³⁹

April 18, 2019

Nongsa, Batam City, Riau Islands Province, Indonesia

Seizure on a speed boat of 1370 birds from Malaysia: white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*).



The pilot took advantage of the darkness to flee on foot through the mangrove. Another boat escaped out to sea.⁴⁰



Copsychus malabaricus

April 19, 2019

Malang City, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure of a yellow-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I) and a Moluccan cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I). One arrest. The trafficker sold the birds on social networks. He was about to deliver them by train to Bandung, packed into PVC tubes.⁴¹



April 22, 2019

Sukamaju, Pangadaran Regency, West Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Voluntary handing over by an 18-year-old man of a red-backed kite (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II) who he had held for a year and a half. Irvan Nur Aziz's initiative was welcomed by the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) District Head.⁴²

May 10, 2019

Sungai Perak, Indragiri Hilir Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia

Seizure on board the *Dita Exspres* on the Indragiri River of 141 cockatoos (*Cacatuidae*, Appendix I or II) in 22 boxes.⁴³

May 12, 2019

Samarinda Port, Samarinda City, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Seizure in 36 small cages of 59 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), 420 starlings (*Sturnidae* family), 7 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and 25 starlings (genus *Aplonis*). They were to be taken to Parepare on the *KM Prince Soya*. Their final destination was Makassar (island of Sulawesi), 600 km to the south-east. The owner was not identified. The birds will be released into the wild after they have been checked by a vet.⁴⁴



May 17, 2019

Kualanamu International Airport, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure in the luggage of a Malayan national of 22 melodious laughing thrushes (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II) in 6 small boxes. They will be killed to avoid any risk of spreading avian flu.⁴⁵



Garrulax canorus

MALAYSIA

May 27, 2019

Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Leong Hon Poh was sentenced to pay a fine of 16,000 ringgits (3,820 US\$) for possession and sale of 243 baya weavers (*Ploceus philippinus*) in a pet shop that he has since closed.⁴⁶



PAKISTAN

From May 21 to 23, 2019

Islamabad, Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

When birds brood, poachers have it easy. Seizure at markets and in a large pet shop of 585 birds, including baya weavers (*Ploceus philippinus*), scaly-breasted munias (*Lonchura punctulata*) and house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). Almost 400 were immediately released in cooperation with the IWMB (Islamabad Wildlife Management Board).⁴⁷



THAILAND

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 30, 2019

Phrom Phiram, Phitsanulok Province, Thailand

Seizure from 2 neighbouring houses of 14 birds, hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), black-collared starlings (*Sturnus nigricollis*), scarlet-faced liocichlas (*Liocichla ripponi*) and black-throated laughingthrushes (*Garrulax chinensis*) and 20 cages. Three arrests. The suspects are from the same family. The clan leader is Ekachai. He had been selling birds of all species including peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) via Facebook for 2 years.⁴⁸

facebook



June 20, 2019

District of Lat Krabang, Bangkok, Bangkok Province, Thailand

Seizure at home of Mr. Aknarupol Piemsup, 38 years old, who sells birds on Facebook, of 6 bulbuls including 3 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*). Between them, their economic value is close to 3,500 US\$.⁴⁹

facebook



VIET NAM

June 17, 2019

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure of 300 live red lories (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II), distributed in 10 parcels shipped from Indonesia with transit in Malaysia. The price of a specimen in Viet Nam is about 200 US\$. It is even higher in China. The sender is Pt Sinar Natama Trans Logistic and the recipient is located in Hoàng Ma district, Hanoi metropolitan area.⁵⁰

EUROPE

SPAIN

End of April 2019

Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Seizure of a stuffed grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*).⁵¹

OPERATION "FULGOR" (BRIGHTNESS)

October 2018 to May 2019

Spain

The Guardia Civil and SEPRONA (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) hunt down power lines that do not have the isolators to protect birds from electrocution. Between October 2018 and May 2019, remains of 33 eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), 19 golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), 17 griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) and 6 Adalbert's eagles (*Aquila adalberti*, Appendix I) were found by the spotters at the foot of the lines. In a sole agricultural estate classified as a special protection area next to Albacete (Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha), 44 birds were electrocuted. 107 complaints were filed.⁵²

Birds and electrocution, see "On the Trail" n°11 p. 76-77.



Beginning of May 2019

Villar de la Encina, Cuenca Province, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

A gamekeeper was sentenced to one year, 7 months and a day in prison, plus a fine of 268,000 € for having captured, killed and frozen a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II), 3 golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), 6 northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), 8 black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), 9 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), a short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*, Appendix II), 9 eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) and 6 common ravens (*Corvus corax*). According to the investigation file, the victims were meant to feed ferrets. "The game reserve was a true extermination camp where birds of prey of protected species were systematically killed." In the serial poacher's arsenal, there were 255 fishing hooks that he would put into meat bait to provoke fatal hemorrhages in birds.⁵³



Beginning of June 2019

Valence, Valencian Community, Spain

Seizure of a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and an eclectus parrot (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II) in the park of a private residence.⁵⁴

FRANCE

April 2 and 4, 2019

Lille, Nord Department, France

Seizure during 3 searches: 21 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 18 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 12 common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*), 10 common redpolls (*Acanthis flammea*), 20 Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*), 23 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), 3 bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*), 4 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and 46 traps. The birds were released into the wild. The goldfinches are captured mainly for song and beauty contests that take place in Belgium. Wild birds are "cleared" by giving them phony bands meant to prove that they are "products" of breeding farms. During the first quarter of 2019, 186 birds were seized in the departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais, compared to 442 over the entire year of 2018.⁵⁵



May 2, 2019

Avignon, Vaucluse Department, France

Isabelle H. and Joseph N. were sentenced to 2 months in prison and fines of 3000 € and 2500 € for having captured 15 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and for the sale of passerines. "The goldfinches are worth around 300 € on the black market," according to the lawyer for the Ligue de Protection des Oiseaux. Southern France, under the cultural influence of Northern Africa, and the north of France, where passerines were used in coal mines as brothers in misery and firedamp detectors, are the main trafficking centers.⁵⁶



May 22, 2019

Draguignan, Var Department, France

Fine of 3,000 € for catching, breeding and trafficking in European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). In 2016, a search led to the seizure of 200 goldfinches and 100,000 € in cash. The whole thing started with a few caged goldfinches spotted through their singing on a balcony in Draguignan. The ONCFS's (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune sauvage) sleuths had found the off the book breeder's hideout near the Verdon gorges. This expert, of Belgian origin, devoted himself to his passion and business 24 hours a day. The vertical or horizontal nets placed in his gardens and capturing passerines attracted by caged callers were connected by twine with bells to his bedroom. The price of a tenor goldfinch can reach 2,500 €, while a goldfinch crossed with a canary can cost up to 3,000 €. ⁵⁷



From December 2018 to May 2019 Department of Ariège, France

Seizures of 60 birds protected by law; 13 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 12 bullfinches (genus *Pyrrhula*), 11 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 7 hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), 6 bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*), 4 Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*), 3 European serins (*Serinus serinus*), 2 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), 2 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), 1 Eurasian nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*), 1 Eurasian blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), 1 redstart (genus *Phoenicurus*), 1 European robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and 7 Hermann's turtles (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), and traps. Strong presumption of wild catches. The ONCFS sounds the alarm. The number of goldfinches and bullfinches decreased by 40% and 64% between 1989 and 2014.⁵⁸



ITALY

REPEATED OFFENSE

Beginning April 2019 and May 3, 2019

Castello Inici, Castellammare del Golfo, Province of Trapani, Sicily Region, Italy

- Seizure under a pile of burlap bags in the trunk of a car: 20 birds, including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*)

and one "mule" (a canary -*Serinus canaria*- goldfinch hybrid), and some nets. Francesco Fiore and A.E. were arrested. They are both unemployed and have criminal records for minor delinquency. The birds were released into the wild.

- Caught red-handed: seizure of 9 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and trapping equipment. Francesco Fiore was sentenced to 6 months in prison and a fine of 600 € (683 US\$). One month after he was arrested last April, the carabinieri surprised him once again as he set up his illegal nets and glued down goldfinches as callers.⁵⁹



April 1, 2019

Serino, Province of Avellino, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure of 5 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), a trap and a net. A village "elder" was arrested. He had gotten into the business by word of mouth and thanks to his reputation. He was reported. He had set up a net trap with a quick-closing cage in his yard.⁶⁰

April 13, 2019

Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure in the home of a couple, aged 56 and 59, of 36 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) shut up in a cage measuring 77 cm long and 24 high. The 2 poachers were accused of capturing and trafficking wildlife for commercial gain and animal abuse.⁶¹

April 18, 2019

Malvito, Province of Cosenza, Calabria Region, Italy

Seizure under search warrant of 4 common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), 2 carrion crows (*Corvus corone*) and 3 Eurasian jays (*Garrulus glandarius*). One arrest.⁶²

End of April 2019

Garfagnana, Province of Lucca, Region of Tuscany, Italy

A goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) died when he got caught in a wire mesh set out to keep crows away from a chicken coop. A man was arrested. The man did not have a hunting permit. Traps and other hunting equipment were seized from his house.⁶³

May 2019

Catania, Province of Catania, Syracuse, Province of Syracuse, Enna, Province of Enna, Messina, Province of Messina and Ragusa, Province of Ragusa, Sicily Region, Italy

During their northward migration, European honey-buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II), marsh harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II), booted eagles (*Hieraaetus pennatus*, Appendix II), pale harriers (*Circus macrourus*, Appendix II), black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), black storks (*Ciconia nigra*, Appendix II) – all fly over the Strait of Messina. During that period, the carabinieri and the SOARDA (Sezione Operativa Antibracconaggio e Reati in Danno degli Animali) reinforced patrolling and verifications along the Sicilian coast. They have seized a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), calandra larks (*Melanocorypha calandra*), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), European serins (*Serinus serinus*), rifles, ammunitions and nets. Seven people were arrested. Seizure in a parallel operation of a green-cheeked conure (*Pyrrhura molinae*, Appendix II) and 6 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II).⁶⁴



Pernis apivorus

OPERATION ADORNO 2019

May 2019

Reggio Calabria and Bagnara, Province of Reggio Calabria, Calabria Region, Italy

The coasts of the Calabria region are under closer surveillance. Seizure of 120 birds, including 3 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), Eurasian collared doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*), Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*), song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*) and common wood pigeons (*Columba palumbus*). Most were quickly released. Four arrests. Four rifles seized.⁶⁵

May 2019

**Monfalcone, Province of Gorizia,
Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Italy**

An international gang glides over the goldfinch. Seizure in a van coming from Slovenia, with Ukrainian license plates, of 133 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 10,525 € in cash. Two Ukrainian nationals received a fine. The birds were transported in 3 wooden cages, hidden under luggage, tarps and other odds and ends. They were released into the wild after having been examined by a veterinarian in Trieste.⁶⁶



June 4, 2019

**Palermo, Palermo Province, Region of Sicily,
Italy**

The carabinieri keep the pressure on the Ballarò market and in the street. Seizure and release into the wild of 18 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 2 European serins (*Serinus serinus*).⁶⁷



UNITED KINGDOM

April 4, 2019

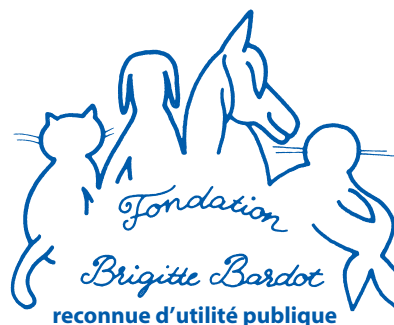
**Cheltenham, County of
Gloucestershire, England,
United Kingdom**

Matthew Reynolds has been sentenced to 6 months of house arrest between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m., along with a fine of 170 £ (220 US\$), plus legal fees, for having sold a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) in 2017. He was late in providing the buyer with a usurped certificate with a different ring number and age than the one verbally given at the time of the transaction (6 years instead of 11).⁶⁸

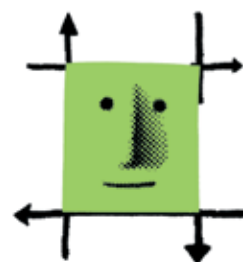


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ROBIN DES BOIS

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°25
Value on the black market
according to media or official sources

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	India	6,269	17
	Singapore	3,000	22
		3,000	6*
	Indonesia	2,782	95**
	Malaysia	3,000 - 4,830	102**

Value of a pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref.
Asia	Viet Nam	85-120	28

Value of 1 kg of pangolin meat

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Cameroon	5.2	2
Asia	Indonesia	1,113	95**

* Cf. chapter « Pangolins and elephants »

** Cf. chapter « Multi-species »

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid-June 2019

Limpopo Province, South Africa

Five years in prison for 3 men aged 30 to 62 years. They had transported and held a pangolin in a 25-litre plastic barrel. He was pulled out of it and immediately returned to the wild. The traffickers were released on bail of 3,000 rand each (210 US\$).¹

CAMEROON

Mid-May 2019

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon

Daily poaching: a little pangolin of 2.5 kg (of meat) sells for 8,000 CFA francs, or 13 US\$. The meat is eaten on the spot, the scales go to Asia.²

End of May 2019

Tonga, Western Region, Cameroon

Four arrests, 2 women and 2 men. Seizure of 100 kg of scales. Traffickers got their supply from bushmeat vendors and beaters around Tonga and Makenéné.³



GANG

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 2019

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 100 kg of scales. Are pangolin scales traffickers protected by Cameroonian law? The man caught in the act at the end of June 2019 is the same one who was caught in the act in August 2018. At that time, it was 700 kg. He was released shortly after his arrest. The network's favourite corridor would be Bangui-Douala and then Douala-Lagos before smuggling by container ship to Asia (see “On the Trail” n°22 p. 50).⁴

NIGERIA

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Nigeria

Customs seizure of 500 kg of pangolin scales bound for Asia.⁵

UGANDA

June 9, 2019

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Rescue of 5 pangolins by the UWA (Ugandan Wildlife Authority) and the NRCN (Natural Resource Conservation Network). Three females and 2 males in a backpack. They were surrounded by a fabric strap and unable to unfold. One of the males did not survive the abuse.⁶



ZIMBABWE

April 19 and the beginning of May 2019 Kariba, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe. Border with Zambia.

Sentencing of a 26-year-old man to 9 years in prison for hunting and capturing a pangolin with dogs in a game reserve.⁷

May 19, 2019 Near Matobo National Park, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Search of Xolani Ndiweni's house. A bag was hung on the ceiling of his hut. It contained 404 scales for a total weight of 2 kg or 4.95 g per scale, and 5 pangolin claws. Among other beliefs, the consumption of scales is supposed to cure skin diseases, asthma and promote lactation.⁸

AMERICA

CANADA

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Montreal, Province of Quebec, Canada

Seizure of 2 pangolin carcasses in a postal parcel coming from Cameroon, a first in Canada.⁹

ASIA

CHINA

April 20, 2019 City of Tenchong, China. Border with Myanmar.

Attempt to import a pangolin for commercial and food purposes by a Burmese national and a Chinese border resident.¹⁰



May 6, 2019 Hong Kong, China

Lin Jin-Bao (44 years old) was sentenced to 20 months in prison for trafficking 48 kg of pangolin scales, representing over 140 specimens, in November 2018. He had brought the scales back from the Democratic Republic of Congo, had stopped over in Ethiopia and planned to take them to Macao. The cargo was worth an estimated 24,100 US\$, or 502 US\$/kg.

Between the beginning of 2014 and the end of 2018, 54 t of pangolin scales were seized in continental China, coming from Hong Kong.¹¹



May 20, 2019

Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of 679.2 grams of scales.¹²

June 7, 2019

Quanzhou Jinjiang International Airport, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of 117 g of scales in the luggage of a Chinese passenger coming from Togo via Hong Kong.¹³

June 25, 2019

Zhanjiang International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Twenty-three scales, 40 g in total, or 1.73 g per scale, on a Chinese passenger arriving from Phnom Penh.¹⁴

INDIA

May 5, 2019

Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

Agents from the Forest Department, posing as buyers laid a trap for traffickers who were trying to sell 2 live pangolins, a mother and her young, only a few months old. A meeting was set at the intersection of Goa Road, in Mumbai, where they seized the animals a 4x4 and a motorcycle and locked up the 3 suspects. Following their confession, 5 accomplices, including one woman were arrested. Since they were in good health, the 2 little mammals were released the next day in one appropriated habitat.¹⁵

June 5, 2019

Katraj, Pune District, Maharashtra State, India

They had looked on the Internet to get an idea of the prices. They were full of beans. They wanted to sell the pangolin at the starting price of 5 million rupees (71,835 US\$). The criminal police didn't give Ramchandra Dinkar Gaikwad and Suraj Dhanaji Phalke time to find a buyer. They were arrested when they arrived in town in their car. The live pangolin was hidden in a backpack. He went to the Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park.¹⁶

June 18, 2019

Navghar, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

Seizure of 5.5 kg of scales in a 4x4 driven by Sachin Dhole, Nilesh Unde and Satish Bahire. The animals had been poached in the forests along the Konkan Coast. The batch of scales was estimated at 2.4 million rupees (34,480 US\$).¹⁷

June 20, 2019

Lokhra, Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam State, India

In a hotel room in the southern suburb of Guwahati, Micheal Palmar and Biri Hachi were in the process of bargaining the sale of a live pangolin, weighing 6.2 kg, when agents from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) burst in. The buyer fled. The 2 traffickers had gotten the animal in Naharlagun, in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The networks then go through the state of Nagaland, before the pangolins are exported to China.¹⁸

INDONESIA

April 20, 2019

Kualanamu International Airport, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Arrest of 2 Chinese nationals leaving for Guangzhou. The case is in the hands of the police. The Chinese consulate in Medan was approached.¹⁹

May 9, 2019

Mentawa Baru Hilir, East Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Seizure in the home of a private individual of 13.25 kg of scales in a bag of rice. The scales came from the province of Western Kalimantan.²⁰

PHILIPPINES

June 28, 2019

Tagaytay, Cavite Province, Philippines

Seizure of 10 live pangolins in a van. 3 arrests including 2 fishermen.²¹

SINGAPORE

April 8, 2019

Pasir Panjang Port, Singapore

Search of a 40-foot container coming from Nigeria and bound to Viet Nam supposed to contain "cassia seeds". Customs actually discovered 474 bags containing 12.7 t of scales corresponding to at least 21,000 pangolins. Customs estimates the cargo at 51.6 million US\$ or about 38.1 million US\$ and 3,000 US\$/kg.²²

Scales seizure in Singapore, see also next chapter «Pangolins and elephants».

VIET NAM

April 9, 2019

Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam

Save Vietnam's Wildlife welcomes a pangolin covered by wounds.²³

April 18, 2019

Tan Tien, Hung Yen Province, Viet Nam

39 juvenile pangolins – average weight 3.49 kg – seized in a vehicle following a car chase on the Hanoi-Hai Phong highway. The driver and passengers fled.²⁴

April 24, 2019

Hue, Thua Thien Hue Province, Viet Nam

To defend himself, he says he "accidentally" caught a pangolin on a street in the city. It feels like a scam. The scaly mammal was pulled out of this tight spot and released in the wild.²⁵

May 23, 2019

Cai Mep International Port Terminal, Ba Ria Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 151 bags in 2 containers, totaling 5.264 t of pangolin scales. They were part of a load said to be cashew nuts (see "On the Trail" n° 6 p. 95, n° 16 p. 71, n° 21 p. 48). Only 63 bags indeed contained cashew nuts. The cargo arrived from Nigeria on board the *Maersk Cape Coast*. It was imported by Nam Ha Services Trading Company.²⁶



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May 31, 2019

Nam Giang Border Post, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos

Four pangolins, one dead and a young one clinging to his mother in a truck near the Giang Nam border post.²⁷



© SVW

June 2, 2019

Hung Loi, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seven dead pangolins. Average weight: 3 kg. They had been bought from poachers in Kon Tum for a price of 85 US\$ per specimen. The 2 suspects planned to sell them for 120 US\$ to an intermediary in Nghe An.²⁸

June 30, 2019

Huong Son District, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

Seizure of 2 live pangolins hidden in bags of clothing in a car intercepted by a night patrol on the 8A expressway near the Cau Treo border post.²⁹

Pangolins and Elephants



AFRICA

CAMEROON

April 12, 2019

10 km from Meiganga, Adamawa Region, Cameroon

Seizure on a bus going from Bertoua to Ngaoundéré of 24 kg of ivory and of 12 kg of pangolin scales in the baggage compartment. The trafficker claimed at first that the elephant tusks were cow horns. ¹

COTE D'IVOIRE

May 31, 2019

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Tran Van Tu and 5 accomplices were found guilty of attempting to export 469 kg of ivory and 578 kg of pangolin scales destined for Asia, in January 2018. They were sentenced to one year in prison and a fine of 510 US\$ each. The cargo was worth 800,000 US\$.²



NAMIBIA

Sunday June 2, 2019

Katima Mulilo, Sacona and Lubuta, Zambezi Region, Namibia

- Transportation and attempted sale of 11 elephant tusks. One arrest.
- Transportation and attempted sale of 2 live pangolins. Two arrests, teenagers aged 15 and 17 years. A girl and a boy. Their accomplices fled.
- Illegal detention of 5 pieces of elephant's tusk. A man of Zambian nationality was arrested. His accomplices fled.³

ZAMBIA

Mid April 2019

Chipata, Mambwe and Petauke, Eastern Province, Zambia

Sentenced to:

- 5 years in prison with forced labor for Joseph Nkhoma. Illegal detention of 4 tusk sections (9 kg).
- 5 years in prison with forced labor for Emerson Banda, Sanford Muhande and Gideon Chulu. Illegal detention of a pair of tusks (10,5 kg).
- 5 years in prison with forced labor for Zakeyo Zulu. Illegal detention of pangolin scales.⁴



ASIA

CHINA

2019

Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, China

In the first 4 months of the year, Lhasa Customs seized nearly 10 kg of pangolin scales and 6 worked ivories (65 g in total), 425 kg of sandalwood and 14 kg of fritillaries (genus *Fritillaria*), a genus of plants comprising nearly 150 species, some of which are used in traditional medicine.⁵

SINGAPORE

April 3, 2019

Pasir Panjang Port, Singapore

Seizure of 12.9 t of scales in 230 bags hidden in the middle of a load of frozen meat in a container coming from Nigeria and headed for Viet Nam, along with 177 kg of raw and semi-raw ivory. The scales were estimated to be worth 38.7 million US\$, or 3000 US\$/kg. The ivory was estimated at 88,500 US\$, or 500 US\$/kg.⁶



Primates

AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Beginning of May 2019

Kisangani, Tshopo Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

He was living in a cage in a private garden of a city reputed as a hub for bush meat and a pet market. The 3-year-old chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) was in the hands of a family that had bought him "so he wouldn't be eaten."¹



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

End of April 2019

General Obligado Department, Santa Fe Province, Argentina



Five black howlers (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II) were released in a dry forest within the range of the species, with sufficient food resources, where the newcomers would not be exposed to competition or aggressiveness from

monkeys already present. In Argentina, the 5 species of monkeys, brown howler monkeys (*Alouatta guariba*, Appendix II), black howlers (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II), Azara's night monkeys (*Aotus azarae*, Appendix II), black tufted capuchins (*Cebus nigritus*, synonyme for *Sapajus nigritus*, Appendix II) and black-striped tufted capuchins (*Cebus libidinosus*, Appendix II), are all listed as vulnerable or extinct.²

BRAZIL

April 17, 2019

Joinville, Santa Catarina State, Brazil

A black howling monkey (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II) in a cage at the fire station. It was dropped off by an anonymous woman who claimed that she had found it in the forest in poor health. There are toys in the cage and the animal is tame. He must have been held captive for a long time. The fire fighters cannot find an organization to take care of him. The Centro de Triagem de Animais Silvestres (Cetas) de Florianópolis stopped taking in animals 3 months ago. They are overcrowded.³

COLOMBIA

Beginning of April 2019

Bogotá, Cundinamarca Department, Colombia

Seizure during the unloading of a truck from Barranquilla of a juvenile red howler (*Alouatta seniculus*, Appendix II) showing signs of stress and behavioural disorders.⁴



May 16, 2019

Bogotá, Cundinamarca Department, Colombia

Teeth missing, injuries to his face and gums. Had not eat or drunk in a long time. Sitting dazed in the branches of a tree. Reported by a passerby, taken in by the Instituto de Protección y Bienestar Animal, the tiny marmoset was transferred from the Palermo public park to a veterinary clinic. In and around Bogota, during the month of April alone, 954 wild animals, victims of trafficking, were rescued.⁵

MEXICO

Beginning of April 2019

Tapachula, Chiapas State, Mexico. Border with Guatemala.

Arrest of a smuggler from Guatemala. She was on a bus with several wooden boxes inside which the unfortunate migrants were tossed, 9 white-faced capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II) and 5 sloths, who were taken to Tuxtla Gutiérrez Zoo for examination.⁶

PERU

Beginning of May 2019

Mollendo, Arequipa Department, Peru

Rescue of a skinny and injured black spider monkey (*Ateles chamek*, Appendix II). The “master” who let him wander and support himself on the rooftops and in the streets of the city was arrested.⁷

ASIA

CAMBODIA

April 27, 2019

Central Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Pulling out of the clutches from a poacher of a small female macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) stolen from her mother. After emergency treatments, she was taken to the primate shelter and will join a group of orphaned macaques of the same age in the hope that later on she will also be able to be released in the forest.⁸



INDIA

April 10, 2019

Ramkuleshwar, Barwani District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Today, Durgesh Rana, district chairman of the All India Trinamool Congress political party, lost his cool and the esteem of his fellow-citizens. Around noon, annoyed by a group of monkeys lounging on a wall across from his residence, he stormed out of his house and shot at them with an air pistol. One of the primates died on the spot. A large crowd gathered in front of his house to protest against his disgraceful act. Forest rangers, accompanied by police officers, arrived to calm the crowd and arrest Durgesh Rana.⁹

April 21, 2019

Sri Chamarajendra Park, Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, Karnataka State, India

Last minute rescue of a wounded slender loris (*Loris tardigradus*, Appendix II), attacked by some crows. Two employees of the press club, located in the park, picked him up and informed the Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (WRRRC). According to a rescue worker, the animal had marks from being attached and burned. The Sri Chamarajendra Park is in the middle of the city, where no loris is living from his own. He seems to have been the victim of ritual magic, and was discarded in the park after he was no longer needed.¹⁰

INDONESIA - ORANGUTANS

Orangutans (*Pongo* spp.) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

April 11, 2019

Berau Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Two orangutans were released after having gone through a wildlife retraining program. As soon as the cage doors were opened, the 2 individuals took off. They climbed up the first tree they found and then made their way across the canopy, at a good height.¹¹

April 12, 2019

Sei Serdang, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

30 kg. About 15 years old. Stuck in the last grove of trees left in a palm oil plantation, the orangutan was anesthetized and exfiltrated, then released on Mount Leuser.¹²



April 24, 2019

Pucuk Lembang, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

This 3-year-old orphan was “found by a villager.” For 15 days, he had been living in a cardboard box, in the middle of his own excrements. After being washed with plenty of water by the team at the OIC (Orangutan Information Center), he was transferred to the SOCP (Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme). Depending on how well he recovers his survival instincts, he could be freed into the wild.¹³

May 14, 2019

Alur Selalas, Aceh Tamiang Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The mother, around 25 years old and 45 kg, and her youngster, about one year old, were anesthetized and evacuated from the orchard, where they had sought refuge.¹⁴



May 25, 2019

Sei Litur Tasik, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Despite the broken access, she was located in agricultural plots. About 25 years old and weighing 45 kg, she was immediately released into Mount Leuser.¹⁵

May 30, 2019

Simpang Tiga, North Kayong Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

The mother and her youngster were confined in a plot of community gardens, an area measuring about 10 hectares, surrounded by roads, fields and houses. The rescuers arrived early in the morning, managed to isolate, anesthetize and exfiltrate them in the transport cage of the Gunung Palung National Park. Earlier in the month, already, a young orphan orangutan was exfiltrated from the same location in the same conditions. All local specialists make the same observation. The orangutans are expropriated from their habitats by forest clearing and deliberately lit forest fires. They leave to look for food, and hunger pushes them toward orchards and palm oil plantations.¹⁶



June 13, 2019

Cot Bayu, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province and Mekar Makmur, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

One week after the end of Ramadan, HOCRU (Human-Orangutan Conflict Response Unit) teams gently caught 2 orangutans that were squatting private crops at their own risk, one female aged about 17 years, 40 kg, and one male aged about 25 years, 50 kg and transferred them in a more secure place.¹⁷

June 22 and 26, 2019

Sumber Makmur, Kapuas Regency and Telok, Katingan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Two orphans arrived at the Nyaru Menteng Reintroduction Center. The first is 5 months old. He was being chased by hunting dogs when he was picked up by a villager. The second is a year and a half old. In unknown circumstances, he had been "adopted" by a private individual, 3 months earlier.¹⁸

June 26, 2019

Parang Batang, Seruyan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Rescue of a solitary orangutan in difficulty; 6 years old, 9 kg. He was taken to the Pasir Panjang shelter and quarantined.¹⁹



INDONESIA - EXCEPT ORANGUTANS

April 10, 2019

Sampit, West Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Voluntary handing over of a male slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) to the local BKSDA post. He would have been "taken in" by the giver some time ago. The authorities are full of praise for these initiatives. They hope that they will be imitated by other inhabitants of the regency and that in the long run, "mascotism" will decline.²⁰

April 21, 2019

Cigugur District, Kuningan Regency, West Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure in a housing complex of a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I). He is a fighter and a biter. He was captured by BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) agents, wearing protective gloves, and immediately put in custody in a cage. He will be taken back to the forest soon. He still has his wild instincts and according to a BKSDA spokesperson, he may be released in the mountains of Ciremai (see "On the Trail" n° 17 p. 49).²¹



April 23, 2019

Palembang City, South Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 8 slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I); arrest of the trafficker at the animal market in Ilir Street.²²

April 28, 2019

Wedelan, Jepara Regency, Central Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure in the home of a private individual of a grey gibbon (*Hylobates muelleri*, Appendix I), endemic to the island of Borneo, an ebony leaf monkey (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II) and 2 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II). The resident of the house, a 20-year-old truck driver, was arrested. He was selling the monkeys on line.²³



June 27, 2019

Dumai Port, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Rescue operation for 7 young primates, still nursing and destined for international traffic. The 3 orangutans, 2 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), one siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I) and one binturong (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India) were hidden in cardboard boxes in the home of 2 suspects in the harbor neighborhood. They were to embark on a ship to continental Malaysia. The economic value of the 7 monkeys was estimated at 1.42 million rupies, or 100,320 US\$.²⁴

THAILAND

April 15, 17 and 18, 2019

Trat Province, Thailand

Rescue of a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) half paralyzed by a 9 mm bullet lodged in his spinal cord. He was taken for permanent care to the Bang Phra Bird Sanctuary, Chonburi province.²⁵



April 20, 2019

Tha Mai Ruak Sub-District, Tha Yang District, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Purchased a few weeks old via the Internet, the long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), now one year old, had become the pest of the house through grumbling and especially biting. Voluntary handing over to the WFFT, which hopes to eventually restore his monkey's dignity.²⁶



April 25, 2019

Bangkok, Thailand

Rescue in the city of an adult Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I). One of his canines was cut off. The habit of loris holders is generally to cut the 4 canines to avoid deep and sometimes fatal bites. This precaution taken by families prevents captive adult lorises of being released into the forests if they escape or are abandoned by their "owners".²⁷



May 4, 2019

Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

The WFFT rescued a Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I) who was suffering from burns after a forest fire.²⁸

Mid May 2019

Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

A white-thighed leaf monkey (*Presbytis siamensis*, Appendix II) was voluntarily handed over to the authority. She was 5 months old, purchased from a trafficker on Facebook, and she had become ill while living with her host family who gave her goat's milk to drink.²⁹



facebook

May 15, 2019

Kaeng Krachan National Park, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Five poachers arrested – two 16-year-old minors, a 50-year-old woman and 2 men, aged 19 and 43 – transporting 27 pieces of langur (*Semnopithecus* spp., Appendix I) in 5 fertilizer bags.³⁰

May 20, 2019

Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

- A Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I) from the nearby forest in search of food in these dry, hot weather conditions gets electrocuted by climbing on an electric pylon.

- A long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) was hit by a car in the suburbs of the city. The driver fled. The victim was rescued by a pedestrian. She broke her right arm.

The 2 accident victims were spontaneously brought to the WFFT (Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand) care centre. The Bengal slow loris cannot be returned to the forest. One of his hands is permanently atrophied by the short circuit.³¹

Beginning of June 2019

Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

A young long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) was hit by a car and remained injured and alone on the side of the road, with a fractured femur. His mother, who was accompanying him, had fled. He was picked up by witnesses and put in the good hands of the WFFT clinic.³²

VIET NAM

April 4, 2019

Chau Doc District, An Giang Province and Quang Tri, Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam

- Rescue of a crippled rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) chained to the entrance of a house. He was handed over to the forest rangers.

- Rescue of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) chained to a bench in front of Di Lac Pagoda. He was released into the nearest forest.³³

April 17, 2019

Huong Khe District, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Phan Van Hoi, Thai Dinh Quy and Thai Kim Hong to 12 and 15 months in prison. They had filmed themselves killing, cutting up and eating the raw brain of a red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I). The video could be watched on Facebook (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.78). Three accomplices were sentenced to 12 months suspended prison terms.³⁴



April 20, 2019

Hon Tau, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of a pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) held in a restaurant as an attraction. He was released into the Hon Tau Forest.³⁵

May 13, 2019

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

A failed attempt to sell a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) in front of a primary school.³⁶

June 4, 2019

Phu My, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

More or less voluntary handing over to forest rangers of a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) that had been reported by an anonymous informant.³⁷

June 5, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

200 g. The little pygmy loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) had just been abandoned by a masked individual in the municipal botanic garden. A team of rescuers managed to catch him without harming. He was left in capable hands.³⁸

June 15, 2019

Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam

Three pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II), believed to bring good luck and prosperity in homes and shops, were extracted from their cages and from the on-line traps, thanks to mediation by the ENV.³⁹

June 25, 2019

Chau Khe, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Vieng Van Thuy was sentenced to 3 years, Vieng Van Sinh to 30 months, and Lo Van Hau and Vi Van Hai to 4 months in prison for breaking the criminal code on the management of endangered species. The 4 individuals were armed with homemade rifles, ropes and traps. They had set up a bivouac in the Pu Mat National Park, and poached 2 Phayre's langurs (*Trachypithecus phayrei*, Appendix II) before they were surprised by a group of rangers on patrol. The 4 convicts had been invited to a workshop on the usefulness of wildlife, but preferred a poaching campaign.⁴⁰



Guanacos and Vicunas

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Beginning of April 2019

Santa Maria Department, Catamarca Province, Argentina

Poaching of vicunas and guanacos continues. A man triumphantly displaying a dead guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) sparks off indignation well beyond the province. The photo was passed on social media by the Patitas Calchaquies organisation.¹

facebook

April 7, 2019

Chubut Province, Argentina

Seizure of 3 skinned guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), knives and a rifle in the back of a sedan.²



April 14, 2019

Uspallata, Mendoza Province, Argentina

Seizure of 2 dead guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) in the back of a pick-up truck. The female was in gestation. The driver and his passenger were in possession of a Remington rifle.³



Mid June 2019

Chaquiago, Catamarca Province, Argentina

Seizure in a truck of 60 kg of guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) meat, a 7.65-caliber Mauser, a 22-caliber Winchester and 27 cartridges. Two arrests. 47 and 63 years old.⁴

PERU

Mid May 2019

Caylloma Province, Arequipa Department, Peru

The orphan vicugna (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) was 9 days old. She still had her umbilical cord. A farmer brought her to the veterinarians in Serfor office where she was given a bottle of milk and various other kinds of care. She was then taken to a zoo that is already home to alpagas, lamas and one vicugna.⁵



Felines

"On the Trail" n°25 The value of felines or felines parts on the black market, according to media or official sources

Tigers	p.60
Lions	p.63
Leopards	p.64
Cheetahs	p.67
Clouded leopards	p.68
Leopard cats	p.68
Jaguars	p.68
Ocelots	p.68
Margays	p.69
Pampas cats	p.69
Pumas	p.69
Caracals	p.70
Lynx	p.70
Multi-felines	p.70

Continent	Country	Animal/part	US\$	Ref.
Asia	India Madhya Pradesh state	Tiger vibrissae, teeth, claws and paws	140 - 280	8
	India Assam state	Tiger skin and bones	57,466	10
	India Assam state	Tiger skin, teeth and bones	21,550	11
	Viet Nam	100 g of tiger bones	860	13
	India Telangana state	Leopard skin and 4 claws	14,400	28
	India Orisha state	Leopard skin	7,160	37
	India Maharashtra state		25,775	38
	India Maharashtra state		5,746 - 28,733	41
	India Odisha state		10,056	42
	Indonesia	Sumatran tiger skull	2,250	4*

* Cf. chapter «Felines and Elephants»

TIGERS

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

AFRICA

TUNISIA

June 15, 2019

Ras Ajdir Checkpoint, Medenine Governorate, Tunisia. Border with Libya.

Seizure in a car belonging to a Libyan national of 4 tiger cubs that he had purchased at the Friguia zoo, 70 km from Tunis, on the Gulf of Hammamet. Two days later, the zoo director confirmed that it was an official transaction with a Libyan zoo. However, the man who was stopped at the border with the tiger cubs in cat-carriers had no official documents. They are currently in transit at the office of the Regional Agriculture Department. They are in fragile condition, and authorities are looking for an appropriate place to send them.¹



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AMERICA

MEXICO

End of June 2019

Perote, Veracruz State, Mexico

Seizure of several vehicles, construction materials and a tiger cub, who was placed with a UMA (Unidades de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre).²



© Cortesía

ASIA

INDIA

GANG
REPEATED OFFENSE

April 7, 2019

Lakhimpur Kheri District, Uttar Pradesh State, India

Fariyad, alias Lambu, has finally fallen. The Special Task Force of Uttar Pradesh, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau of India (WCCB), Interpol and the Central Investigation Bureau of Nepal Police (CIB) had been looking for him since 2015. He was accused of being involved in 11 different cases – 6 in India and 5 in Nepal – of poaching and trafficking tiger and leopard bones and skins. He was found guilty in 2014, and freed on bail one year later. He then vanished and went back into business. Fariyad is considered the “brains” of a gang that supplies Nepalese wholesalers in animal parts that are then re-exported to China. It was the CIB who informed the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department: Fariyad and his associate, Rizwan, alias Bengali, were on their way to Nepal. They set a trap at dawn. Fariyad was captured with 5 tiger bones, but Rizwan was able to get away. The bones were just samples meant to validate a larger transaction with a certain Lama, alias Master, in Nepal. Fariyad's new court proceeding is just beginning. After his indictment in India, Nepal asked for his extradition.³



FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 8, 11 and 20, May 8, 2019

Ajmalmari forest, villages of Madhya Gurguria and Bhasha Gurguria, South 24 Parganas District, West Bengal State, India

The villages of Madhya Gurguria and Bhasha Gurguria are located at the edge of the Sundarbans National Park, a site which is listed as a World Heritage site, and recently integrated the Ramsar Convention.

- After one month on the run, Bimal Das and his wife, Anita, have been arrested. They are suspected of having caused the death of a tiger in a trap that they set with 3 accomplices. The decomposing body was found on April 8. On April 11, Probodh Manna and Sadananda Halder were arrested in Madhya Gurguria, and poaching equipment – barbed wire, cutters and an axe – were seized at the Das couple's home.

- On April 20, the arrest of Ashok Mondal in Bhasha Gurguria triggered rioting in the village: nearly 100 people – including 70 women – came running to the call of conque shells and attacked the forest rangers with sickles, axes and metal rods, wounding 8 civil servants, including the division forest officer.⁴



April 8 and 12, 2019

Ratapani Tiger Reserve, Raisen District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

A tiger carcass was found, with no bullet wounds or other apparent injury, but missing his paws and tail, which had been cut off and taken. In a month and a half, this is the third feline to suffer the same fate in Madhya Pradesh: another tiger and a leopard were found with missing paws and whiskers. This news outraged the forest administration directors who suspended several forest rangers. The investigation quickly led to Ram Singh Vishwakarma, who was in possession of the tail, but claims to have had nothing to do with the tiger's death. His accomplice, Lala Ram, whose house was searched and revealed a trap, is on the run with the paws. He is considered the main suspect. The feline paws and whiskers trade is related to black magic. According to local superstitions, a tiger's tail can make money rain down from the sky. No trace was found of the vibrissae. Madhya Pradesh has lost 11 tigers in just 4 months.⁵

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 13, 15, 16 and 18, 2019

Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Chandrapur District, Maharashtra State, India

Last Saturday, a forest ranger patrol found the body of an 18-month-old female strangled by a snare, less than 200 m from one of the reserve entrances and from a ranger station. The feline appears to have died 2 or 3 days earlier, and the carcass is intact. Two days later, Suresh Mitthu Kanake Kumre was arrested. He admitted to setting 2 traps on April 10 to catch herbivores. He came back on April 11 and fled when he saw the dead tigress. He added that he was not alone, and gave the names of his accomplices. The next day, Ramesh Baburao Masram and Amol Uddhav Atram were also taken in. On April 18, Vinayak Baburao Masram joined them in pre-trial detention. Investigators' raids revealed snares, fishing nets, an axe, knives and various other poaching tools. They also seized 7 deer's feet hidden nicely in a bamboo grove.⁶

May 6, 2019

Potlai, Seoni District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Arresting Hemchand Bhalavi was no easy task for forest rangers. After receiving information that he was trying to sell a tiger skin, they set a trap for him with a phony buyer. The transaction was scheduled to take place in the evening at a farm. When it came time for the meeting, the rangers seized the skin and snagged Bhalavi, but his brother-in-law ran away screaming that thieves were attacking them. A group of threatening villagers surrounded the rangers and damaged their vehicle. When police reinforcements arrived, the villagers greeted them by throwing stones. After an hour of arguing, the police were able to leave with their prisoner. The brother-in-law is the object of a sped up chase.⁷

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

GANG

May 7, 2019

Ramtek, Nagpur District and Chhindwara, Chhindwara District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Ramdas Bhangu Chavan, Tukurmal, Tarasingh Shivprasad Rathod and Bhikam Jitsingh Rathod were caught in a trap set by forest rangers in the early morning, on the parking lot of the Gad Mandir temple. They were in possession of tiger whiskers. Their motorcycle was seized. Following their interrogations, a grave containing the bones of the feline was uncovered in Chhindwara. Over the days that followed, 13 poachers, middlemen and witch doctors were arrested. The skins, claws and paws of a second adult tiger, a tiger cub and a leopard were seized. The gang specialized in supplying felines parts to 2 witch doctors who claimed to ward off the evil eye, or bring health and prosperity through their rituals. The felines were most often electrocuted, and sometimes poisoned. Their vibrissae, teeth, claws and paws were cut off, they were skinned and the rest was buried in the forest. Each of the parts was purchased for between 10,000 and 20,000 rupees (140 to 280 US\$) by the witch doctors.⁸



May 15, 2019

Majhgawan, Satna District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Ranjan Kol, Rajesh Mawasi and Jwala Satnami managed to escape from their police cell around midnight, despite being theoretically guarded by 5 forest rangers. The 3 men were arrested on May 12 for having electrocuted a 3-year-old tiger in a trap set near a river to poach herbivores for a wedding feast.⁹



June 9, 2019

Jonai, Dhemaji District, Assam State, India. Border with Arunachal Pradesh State.

Taying Joshi, Taging Jomyong (53 years old) and Jobang Paro (51 years old) attempted to cross the border into Assam in a Hyundai EON, but the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) detectives were waiting at the check point. They were transporting a tiger skin and bones worth an estimated 4 million rupees (57,466 US\$). They had gotten them in Tuting in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.¹⁰

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Mid June 2019

Srirampur, Kokrajhar District, Assam State, India

Prabhat Narzary, Ishaq Narzary, Bibalan Narzary, Dimbeshwar Roy and Binadeep Roy thought they had the ideal cover for their trafficking activities: an Assam government ambulance. But they found themselves in a trap. The buyers of their tiger skin, teeth and bones were forest agents. They had agreed on a price of 1.5 million rupees (21,550 US\$). The 5 traffickers were wary. They were arrested at the meeting point, but were only carrying pictures on their cell phones. However, they revealed the location of their hidden treasure, in a village in the Chirang district. The tiger was one of 20 specimens with "double nationality" – Indian and Bhutanese – living in the mountains along the border, in the Transboundary Manas Conservation Area. He had been poached about a month earlier on the Indian side, which is easier to access than Bhutan, where tigers are preying as high as 4000 m.¹¹

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 18, 2019

Nagpur, Nagpur District, Maharashtra State, India

Badlu Pansari Patlepawar, alias "Mamru," Prakash Bisan Chouhan, alias "Damoh Shiri" and Bhagru Rumalsingh Dhurve, alias "Ujiyar," pleaded guilty and admitted everything. They poached a tiger and other wild animals during the second half of April 2013 in the Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary. On May 30 and June 1, 2013, they sold their trophies to Sarju Bagdi and Naresh Lala (see "On the Trail" n° 2 p.41 and n°3 p.43). The threesome has already been sentenced to 6 years in prison for similar charges. The KS Totla chief judicial magistrate sentenced them this time to 3 years in prison, fines of between 10,000 and 25,000 rupees (143 to 359 US\$) and 6 additional months in prison if they do not pay their fines. "Mamru" has apparently paid out and would yet be out of jail.¹²



VIET NAM

April 10, 2019

Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam. Border with China.

The border police seized a skin and 5.4 kg of bones. Pham Van Hiep tried to cross the Chinese border. The bones, boiled and turned into glue, sell for 860 US\$ per 100-g-portion.¹³

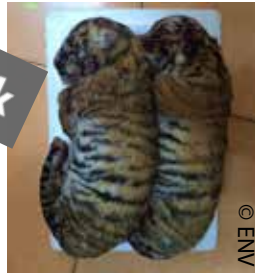


TIGERS - FOLLOWED

April 23, 2019
Bac Ninh, Bac Ninh Province, Viet Nam

A man transporting 2 tiger cubs was arrested. He was trying to sell them on Facebook.¹⁴

facebook



EUROPE

CZECH REPUBLIC

June 5, 2019

Ceska Lipa, Liberec Region, Czech Republic

A taxidermist, Miloš Hrozínek, a zoo manager who is also a member of a famous circus family, Ludvík Berousek and a Vietnamese businessman, Xuan Vu Le, received a 3-years prison sentence, a 2-year suspended sentence and a 2-year prison sentence, respectively, for having acted in conspiracy to kill a tiger and 20 other animals protected by law, and having fraudulently exported their parts to Asia (see "On the Trail" n° 22 p. 69).¹⁵

LIONS

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

AFRICA

KENYA

May 4, 2019

Chyulu Hills National Park, Kenya

A lion was dying in the savanna. Wounded or poisoned, during or after an incursion in a wandering cattle herd, he was reported by the Lion Guardian sentry. After searching for 6 hours, the veterinarians gave up on finding him.¹⁶

May 18, 2019

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

The pride was in a grove of trees. There were eight of them, and they had just finished eating a warthog. When the vets arrived, they had all fled, except the lioness who was wounded through to the bone on her back paw by a projectile weapon. She stayed behind. The team had the impression that she wanted help. A ranger patrol had reported that she was limping. Anesthesia, treatment and awakening. Prognostic is good.¹⁷



June 7, 2019

Olgulului, Kajiado County, Kenya

A 5-year-old lioness, member of a pride of 5, supposedly tried to attack a cow, in plain daylight. The cattle herder, a Maasai, responded with a projectile on her muzzle. Rather



than persisting in their attack, the herders called for help from the rangers of the Big Life Foundation, the Lion Guardians and the local KWS section. The lioness was located, observed and followed for a day. Her condition did not require anesthesia or surgery. If the cow had been killed, the herder would have received compensation on the condition that no retaliation was taken against the attacking lion or other lions.¹⁸

June 13, 2019

Near Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Caught in a trap, literally tied to a tree, he could not get untangled. He was exhausted and more dead than alive. Anesthesia. Wire cables were cut. Wounds treated. Awakened. Prognosis is good.¹⁹



ASIA

INDIA

April 2, 2019

Pachpachiya, Amreli District, Gujarat State, India

An unlucky day for Vashram Dhapa: he thought he would be able to get rid of the 14 (out of 18) claws that he had taken from the carcass of an Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*, Appendix I) last February 14 in the Mitiyala Wildlife Sanctuary. But the Forest Department took the case very seriously. Ten teams of investigators were mobilized. Vashram Dhapa was spotted when he started looking for clients. The search of his house ended at the finding of the 14 claws. According to Nikunj Parmar, Forest Conservation Assistant, Dhapa was known for coming to collect forest products in the protected area. The autopsy of the lion is concluding in favor of a natural death. Vashram Dhapa was charged with poaching, in accordance with the law.²⁰

LIONS - FOLLOWED

GANG

May 8, 2019

Amreli, Amreli District, Gujarat State, India

On February 16, when they attacked a police team that had come to arrest them for possession of illegal weapons, 5 members of a gang precipitated the fall of the others. An inspector was seriously wounded when he was stabbed in the stomach. They had gone one step too far. Based in the village of Shemardi (80 inhabitants), the gang had imposed a reign of terror on the local population since 1996, pillaging and threatening the villagers. They were also specialized in poaching lions (*Panthera leo persica*, Appendix I) and in exploiting them in "shows" for tourists. The lions were lured with sick animals, so that they could be observed and photographed close at hand. They took in 7,000 to 10,000 rupees (from 100 to 145 US\$) per "show." The practice is illegal, and is suspected of having contributed to spreading canine distemper, which killed 23 lions in 2018. In early 2019, claws and other lion parts along with 7 homemade rifles were seized in the haunt of the gang. Today, the district magistrate has put out a ruling applicable until February 28, 2020, banning the 20 associates from the entire Amreli district, as well as 15 other administrative divisions around the Gir National Park, where the last Asiatic lions live. Other proceedings are also underway against them.²¹

EUROPE

ALBANIA

May 7, 2019

Tirana, Tirana Region, Albania

Transfer of 3 lions in very bad condition to the Felida Big Cat Centre in the Netherlands, after a transit in the Tirana zoo. They were prisoners in a private zoo in Fier, about 100 kilometres from the Albanian capital, with by a bear that was transferred to a reception centre in Germany, a zebra that died during his transfer to Tirana, antelopes and foxes that were released into the wild after care and quarantine. The Felida Big Cat Centre is located in Nijeberkoop in the north of the Netherlands. It shelters tigers and lions who have survived very bad treatment in circuses, zoos or other private menageries.²²

LEOPARDS

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

AFRICA

GABON

Beginning of April 2019

Libreville, Estuaire Province and Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

One trafficker turned in another. A man transporting a leopard skin was arrested in a hotel in Libreville. His accomplice, also transporting a leopard skin, was arrested in Oyem.²³



SENEGAL

April 16, 2019

Kédougou Region, Senegal

The Kédougou police and rangers from the Niokolo Koba National Park arrested 3 nationals. They were transporting the skins of 3 freshly killed leopards and 3 antelope skins.²⁴

ASIA

INDIA

April 3, 2019

Nal Fala Village, Dungarpur District, Rajasthan State, India

A 5-year-old male leopard came into the village one night. Around 8 a.m., 2 inhabitants were going to work when they were attacked and injured by the animal who was hiding in the bushes. Villagers heard their cries and came running with spades, pick-axes and other farming tools and inflicted fatal wounds on the animal. The forest rangers were alerted. They came to pick up the carcass and took it to the district hospital for an autopsy. An investigation has been opened.²⁵

LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

April 3, 14 and 18, 2019

Pune and Satara Districts, Maharashtra State, India

The problem with sugar cane plantations is that female leopards consider them to be good protection for their dens and their young. During harvesting, agricultural workers risk dangerous encounters and the leopards risk death. On April 3, the workers from the Bhimashankar sugar cooperative were about to harvest a field near the village of Gawdewadi when they were frightened at the sight of a Russell's viper. They found nothing better to do than burn the field to drive out the viper. When they came back to the site, they found 5 carbonized leopard cubs – 3 females and 2 males barely two weeks old. The tragedy led the Forest Department to organize meetings in the villages to incite farmers and their workers not to panic when they see a leopard, and not to burn the fields, but to inform the authorities. An excellent initiative: the very next week, they were contacted by villagers in Kale who had come across two leopard cubs in a sugar cane field – one had starved to death and the other was in good health. The little female, about 40 days old and weighing 2 kg, was placed in a box at the edge of the plantation, and monitored with camera traps. After cautious visits over a 5-day period, the mother finally came back to get her young on April 14. Four days later, a new alert. Farm workers in the village of Valti reported having found 2 leopard cubs early in the morning living in the sugar cane. The forest rangers evacuated the field and set a camera trap around 10 a.m., near the cubs. The mother came to fetch them around midnight.²⁶

April 5, 2019

Bahraich District, Uttar Pradesh State, India

Another leopard was lynched by a mob after having been driven out by farmers working in a sugar cane field. This one was 3 years old. The villagers came to the farmers' rescue and beat the leopard with sticks. The forest administration was informed and were able to capture him and take him to the hospital, but he succumbed to his wounds. Proceedings were opened against 2 identified individuals and agents are trying to unmask 50 to 100 anonymous ones who were taking part in the lynching. The villagers accused the feline of several assaults since February, including 3 deadly ones.²⁷

GANG

April 15, 2019

Hyderabad, Hyderabad and Rangareddy Districts, Telangana State, India

A nice dragnet carried out by the special operations team of the Malkajigiri police department, in a room at the Mayur Hotel. Basudev Masti (23 years old), Jagannath Sisa (19 years old), Bali Pangri (26 years old) and Nagothi Banu (24 years old) were waiting for a buyer for the skin and 4 claws of a 2-year-old male leopard. But their contact turned out to be an undercover police officer. They had set a price with



him for 1 million rupees (14,400 US\$) and told him that the animal had been poached using an electric cable 3 months earlier in the forest, near Silpada in the state of Odisha. They even bragged about being part of a team of 10 poachers specialized in felines and operating in the forest reserves in the states of Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. They were very professional, experts in tracking tigers and leopards, and skilled in skinning the animals without causing any damage to the hides, so as to avoid any defect that would bring the price down. The 4 men admitted to having poached several felines, and selling the skins for 2 to 2.5 million rupees (from 28,845 to 36,000 US\$) for tigers and 500,000 to 1 million rupees (7200 to 14,400 US\$) for leopards.²⁸

April 15, 2019

Chichari, Muzaffarpur District, Bihar State, India

A 4-year-old leopard strayed into a village and is said to have harassed residents. Nine people were hurt, most of them slightly, but 2 were seriously injured. A crowd cornered the animal and stoned it, before beating it to death. According to the forest administration, the feline may have come from Nepal, nearly 60 km away.²⁹

April 17, 2019

Chalakaveedhi, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh State, India

Seizure of the skin of a leopard approximately 7 years old, in the home of Kadala Yerram Reddy, arrested with his accomplice Madi Manganna Dora. The 2 men are allegedly intermediaries for a third one, based in the village of Sudikonda, in the same district.³⁰

May 2, 2019

Manjakombai, Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu State, India

A female, around 4 years old, was found strangled to death in a snare, on a tea plantation. T. Rajendran, who had set the trap, was arrested.

B. K. Kumaran, chairman of the association Nilgiris Ecology and Animals Protection, says that they have already asked that the forest administration put together a rapid intervention team to counter the wave of traps that have been set.³¹



May 10, 2019

Kyathanahalli, Mandya District, Karnataka State, India

The ordeal of a female leopard, around 3 years old, ended in her death in the forest ranger vehicle which was taking her to the Mysore zoo for treatment. The injured and emaciated feline found her way into a house one morning. The inhabitants closed her up in the house and called the forest administration. It was the second time that she had been seen in the village this week. A snare was clasped tightly around her neck and the wound was infected. Her back left paw was also injured. The animal appears to have survived for nearly 3 weeks with a steel cable around her neck that kept her from eating. It may have been the anesthetizing dart that was used to capture her that finished her off.³²

LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

May 13, 2019

Chowari, Chamba District, Himachal Pradesh State, India

A police patrol just happened upon a man with a bag one night. He fled when they approached. He was caught and his bag was searched. It contained 2 leopard's skins, 1.57 m and 1.98 m long.³³

May 16, 2019

Hariharpur Maua, Bareilly District, Uttar Pradesh State, India

Another leopard was beaten to death after having clawed a man near a village. The male, approximately 2½ years old, died of a fractured skull. Four men have been identified. The Bharat divisional forest officer, Bharat Lal, promises that they will be arrested.³⁴

May 20, 2019

Khed Shivapur, Pune District, Maharashtra State, India

The Pune rural police had a good nose for things when they checked a Toyota Innova sedan at a toll booth, around 10 a.m. It was coming from Satara with 3 men aboard. The agents also had good ears – as they were checking the driver's papers, they heard little crying noises. They searched the vehicle and found 2 leopard cubs, aged 1 to 2½ months, hidden in baskets. Munna Habib Sayyad, Irfaz Mehmood Shaikh and Ayaz Bakshul Khan Pathan were left speechless. The cubs were handed over to the wildlife center in Katraj.³⁵

May 20, 2019

Mandsaur District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

A young male, one and half years old and 45 kg, was lynched by a furious mob, under the very eyes of the police and agents from the Forest Department.



The leopard is said to have attacked a woman. The villagers encircled the leopard, and the massacre began, with sticks and stones. The young leopard defended himself as best he could, clawing 4 people. But he was done for; more and more villagers gathered around him, making it impossible for the authorities who had arrived on the scene to intervene. Left for dead, the feline actually died in the rangers' vehicle as they took him to see a veterinarian.³⁶

May 27, 2019

Kulei, Dhenkanal District, Odisha State, India

A worshipper who had come to make offerings was shocked to see a priest practicing witchcraft on a leopard's skin at the Taleswar Shiva temple. She told other inhabitants of her village about it, and they in turn notified the Forest Department. A team of forest rangers came and seized the skin and arrested the priest, Pritiranjana Lenka, as well as his 2 assistants. During the interrogation, Pritiranjana Lenka admitted that he had gotten the skin from a pharmacist in the village of Kampur, Jayakrushna Rout, for a sum of 500,000 rupees (7,160 US\$). According to him, the leopard skin's "powers" helped him arrange marriages for young men who were rejected by the girls. The investigation is ongoing to identify the poaching network.³⁷

May 29, 2019

Thane, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

Rajesh Arora and Moses, alias Moza Kapren Agamani, were intercepted in the Wagle Estate industrial zone with a leopard skin worth an estimated 1.8 million rupees (25,775 US\$). The police acted on a tip. They are now trying to identify the supplier and the buyer.³⁸

June 1, 2019

Barwah Forest Area, Khargone District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

The carcass of a 2½-year-old male was found near a watering hole in the forest. The forest rangers suspect deliberate poisoning, but have not excluded death by gunshot. The body is in an advanced state of decomposition and the search dogs were not able to follow any tracks.³⁹

June 6, 2019

Morongial, Jorhat District, Assam State, India

A male around 6 to 7 years old was found dead in a pit on the Parbat tea plantation. Several teeth and claws were missing. The animal seems to have been poisoned. His body was taken to the district veterinary hospital for autopsy. There are 3 forest reserves and one wildlife sanctuary in the district, surrounded by many tea plantations and villages. Incidents have become more and more frequent over the past ten years. Felines attack livestock and are exterminated in return. When the Forest Department is notified, they set up cages to catch the problem animals and move them elsewhere. But the displacements risk putting them in competition with other leopards who are already living in the territory.⁴⁰



LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

GANG

June 19 and 20, 2019

Yeoor, Thane District, and Roha, Raigad District, Maharashtra State, India

The traffickers had set a meeting point in the Yeoor hills, in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, to sell an adult leopard skin that they had purchased for 400,000 rupees (5,746 US\$) and were hoping to sell for 2 million rupees (28,733 US\$). The forest rangers heard about the deal and were waiting for them at the park entrance. They arrested Bashir Mohammad Pathan, Javid Dawood Pathan, Kiran Raut and Madhukar Ramchandra Kank when they arrived in their 4X4. The skin was seized. The "owner" of the skin – Devji Hirve – and the 2 poachers, Madhukar Kirtane and Uttam Kirtane, were arrested the next day.⁴¹

June 21 and 28, and July 2, 2019

Barkote, Deogarh District, Odisha State, India

First Sachikanta Nayak, Ramanisen Behera and Jagnadutta Behera were picked up on June 21 by the Special Task Force of Crime Branch. The 3 traffickers were trying to sell a skin 2.13 m long for 700,000 rupees (10,056 US\$). Their suppliers, Kaliacharan Das, Bhagirathi Naik, Pitambar Khatei and Netrananda Kissan, were taken in on June 28. Then on July 2, their accomplices, Rashmi Ranjan Mishra, a prison guard, and Likul Kumar Sahu, sergeant with the 4th Battalion, joined them in pre-trial detention.⁴²



NEPAL

May 27, 2019

Bigu, Dolakha District, Province No. 3, Nepal

The 3 smugglers were denounced. Jagdish Khadka, Milan Gole and Bhim Bahadur Tamang were transporting a 2.43m-long skin. They were arrested and transferred, along with the skin, to the Gaurishankar conservation area office, who are responsible for the investigation and prosecution.⁴³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 26, 2019

Kathmandu, Province No. 3, Nepal

Mishrung Chemjong and Prashant Das Chemjong were caught red-handed by metropolitan police, in a room at the Navadurga Guesthouse. They were in possession of a leopard skin and skull. Katmandou is a hub for wildlife traffickers.⁴⁴

VIET NAM

April 10 2019

Thanh Hoa, Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Do Huu Cuingis is detained while the investigation progresses. He was selling leopard claws and teeth, wild pig skulls (*Sus scrofa*) and deer antlers (Cervidae family) on Facebook and Zalo.⁴⁵

facebook

CHEETAHS

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

AFRICA

SOMALIA

Mid May – beginning of June 2019

Hargeisa, Erigavo, Aynabo, Somaliland Autonomous Region, Somalia

- A new arrival at the CCF (Cheetah Conservation Fund) refuge center. There were 3 at first; there are only 2 left. The weakest of the 3 did not survive the stress of the smuggling experience.

- Seizure by the CCF, in cooperation with the local authorities, of 10 cheetah cubs. Trafficking toward Gulf countries is increasing. The felines were captured in Ethiopia, in northern Kenya and in Somalia. It is also possible that illegal breedings exist. There are multiple smuggling routes. The most common are by plane in accompanied luggage preceded by anesthesia, or by truck transport in phony compartments. According to the CCF, approximately 300 cheetahs are illegally exported every year from Somalia, and sent to the Middle East. However, the Arabian Peninsula and Lebanon may not be the only final destinations.⁴⁶



CLOUDED LEOPARDS

Clouded leopards (*Neofelis nebulosa*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

ASIA

MALAYSIA

May 8, 2019

Tampin, Negeri Sembilan State, Malaysia

There are pictures going around Facebook showing 3 men proudly exhibiting the carcass of a clouded leopard. In the pictures, 3 other accomplices are also visible. They are wearing JPAM (Malaysian Civil Defense Force) uniforms.⁴⁷



BENGAL LEOPARD CATS

Bengal leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, with the exception of the populations of Bangladesh, India and Thailand which are in Appendix I.

ASIA

VIET NAM

May 9, 2019

Hai Phong, Hai Phong Province, Viet Nam

Rescue of a leopard cat in front of a barter store.⁴⁸



May 10, 2019

Núi Chua National Park, Ninh Thuan Province, Viet Nam

Release of a leopard cat. He was reportedly purchased from a poacher by a generous animal defender who later alerted ENV, who in turn sought the help of park officials.⁴⁹

June 28, 2019

Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

A leopard cat was freed after mediation by the ENV.⁵⁰

JAGUARS

Jaguars (*Panthera onca*) are in Appendix I.

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid May 2019

Salta Province, Argentina

A jaguar skin decorated the wall of a restaurant. Poaching is dating back one year ago. There are fewer than 250 jaguars left in the wild in Argentina.⁵¹



OCELOTS

Ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

AMERICA

BRAZIL

May 29, 2019

Xapuri, Acre State, Brazil

He died in the street. Firefighters arrived at his deathbed. He had blood flowing out of his mouth. Despite his condition, the neighbors were frightened. They thought he was sleeping. His tragic story will undoubtedly remain a mystery.⁵²



ECUADOR

June 18, 2019

Pedro Vicente Maldonado, Pichincha Province, Ecuador

In May 2018, seizure in a house of a female ocelot who was later transported on foot, in a wooden cage carried by 4 porters, into the heart of an appropriate habitat, after a one-year program to readapt to life in the wild.⁵³

MARGAYS

Margays (*Leopardus wiedii*) are in Appendix I.

AMERICA

GUATEMALA

End of May 2019

Tactic, Alta Verapaz Department, Guatemala

Seizure of several feline skins, including one margay, and a marijuana bag. An 18-year-old man was arrested.⁵⁴

PAMPAS CATS

Pampas cats (*Leopardus colocolo*) are in Appendix II.

AMERICA

PERU

Beginning of May 2019

Paimas District, Department of Piura, Peru

He looked like an alley cat or any other ordinary cat, but on second glance, he was definitely a pampas cat. He was taken from the suspicious house where he had been living for a week and transferred to the Cecilia Margarita de Piura Zoo, until a better solution can be found.⁵⁵



PUMAS

Pumas (*Puma concolor*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, with the exception of the subspecies *Puma concolor costaricensis* which is listed under Appendix I.

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

May 25, 2019

Near Campo Gallo, Santiago del Estero Province, Argentina

The 2 poachers were transporting a puma riddled with bullets and 5 live big hairy armadillos (*Chaetophractus villosus*). As they approached the roadblock, they threw the puma into a ditch.⁵⁶



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 3, 2019

Livingston, Montana State, United States of America

Three young people, aged 19 to 20 years old, were sentenced to 3 years of probation including a ban on any kind of hunting or fishing. Peterson, Juhnke and Simmons shot and killed a mountain lion in the northern section of Yellowstone National Park, home to between 20 and 31 mountain lions.⁵⁷



MEXICO

April 17, 2019

San Luis Potosí, San Luis Potosí State, Mexico

The puma was wandering through the courtyard of a housing complex and through the streets of the city. He was anesthetized and placed in a UMA. A male, around a year and a half old, with all of the characteristics of a wild animal: healthy fur, and all of his teeth and claws. If it is confirmed that he is fully self-sufficient, he will be released in "a location far from any city."⁵⁸

ASIA

CHINA

April 2, 2019

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of 9 cougar teeth (195 g) in a package coming from Peru. They were hidden in 2 boxes of tea.⁵⁹



CARACALS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May and beginning of June 2019
Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

African caracals (*Caracal caracal*, Appendix II in Africa) in the mountains of Noordhoek have a tough life. They are hunted among other means by dazzling with car headlights; they would also be victims of car accidents, as well as bush meat traps. It even happened to "Spitfire," a caracal well-known to horseback riders through the mountain. Fortunately, rangers found him in time to be saved. Another caracal was not that lucky when he got caught in a trap. The poachers did not bother to take his meat, but they skinned him to sell his hide, and left the rest where it was.⁶⁰



LYNX

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 15, 2019

Denver, Colorado State, United States of America

Thad Bingham was charged with catching bobcats (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II) in traps and selling their furs on the international market in violation of the Lacey Act. Between 2012 and 2016, Bingham, expedited 51 bobcat skins to fur traders in Greece. Profits were close to 25,600 US\$. In 1990 and in 2014, he had already been found guilty of poaching and illegal

detention of protected species. The Lacey Act bans the export, import, sale, purchase or acquisition of animals captured or killed in violation of federal or Native American laws.⁶¹

MULTI-FELINES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 12 and May 2, 2019

Pienika Farm, North West Province, South Africa

Appalling conditions in a lion breeding facility. Completely apathetic lion cubs who seem to be suffering from neurological problems. The adults are covered with parasites. The enclosures are overcrowded (108 lions, 99 tigers and leopards, one caracal) and the animals are emaciated. The owner, Jan Steinman, is a member of the SAPA (South African Predator Association). The NGO, which includes 200 feline-breeding facilities, has observer status with CITES. The "products" of the breeding facilities are used as game for "sport" hunting as well as for legal and illegal trade with China and Viet Nam. There are currently 12,000 lions in captivity in South Africa. According to the NGO Conservation Action Trust, SAPA guidelines consider it acceptable that from time to time, captive felines be subjected to hunger, fear or thirst, like in a natural habitat. It is supposedly a way of preserving their survival instincts and their immune systems. The NSPCA (National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) is pressing charges.⁶²



Caracal caracal

Felines and Elephants



AFRICA

CAMEROON

End of May 2019

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon

A guard in charge of wildlife protection in sector 12 of the buffer zone around the Bouba Ndjida National Park has been arrested. He was in possession of an elephant tusk, a leopard skin and 5 lion skulls.¹

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

May 13, 2019

Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

Banda Armand Tonton and Wawa Justin, nationals of the Democratic Republic of Congo, were sentenced to 2 years in prison and a fine equal to 1,700 US\$ for possession and illegal transport of 260 ivory chop sticks, around one hundred bracelets, necklaces and rings, one hundred pendants, 2 cubes of ivory and 3 leopard skins.²



REPEATED OFFENSE

June 21 and 23, 2019

Djambala, Plateaux Department, Republic of the Congo

Five traffickers were arrested in possession of 4 elephant tusks and a leopard skin. One of them had already been arrested in the past for poaching in the Oogoué-Lékiti National Park.³

ASIA

INDONESIA

April 19, 2019

Bukittinggi City, West Sumatra Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

Arrest of an antique dealer who sold Sumatran tiger skulls (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*, Appendix I) at a price of 2,250 US\$ per unit, as well as tiger's skin, worked ivories and tapir skulls (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II).⁴

Wolves

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

AFRICA

ALGERIA

June 14, 2019

Tafraoui, Oran Province, Algeria

Poaching of 3 African golden wolves (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III) with a pack of sloughi dogs. An argument is raging among geneticists. Klaus-Peter Koepfli of the Front Royal Conservation Institute in Virginia considers in a scientific report published in Current Biology in 2015 that the African golden wolf is actually a wolf in its own right. Philippe Gaubert of the University of Montpellier, France, believes that the African golden wolf is a subspecies of the grey wolf.¹



ASIA

BANGLADESH

June 4, 2019

Upazila de Taltali, Barguna District, Barisal Division, Bangladesh

A male Indian grey wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*, Appendix I) had been attacking livestock for several days. The villagers set a trap and beat it to death once it was captured. The awful triteness of the event is misleading: it was the first time that an Indian grey wolf had been observed



in Bangladesh since the species was eradicated in the 1940s. Two international canine specialists, Dr Yadvendradev V. Jhala, from the Wildlife Institute of India, and Dr Jan F. Kamler, from the University of Oxford confirmed the species identification referring to pictures sent by Md Anwarul Islam, professor of zoology at the University of Dhaka. The wolf may have been the same one that was photographed in April 2017 in India, in the Sundarbans National Park.²

CHINA

April 2019

Hohhot, Inner Mongolia Region, China

Seizure of 205 wolf skins in a truck full of coal (see "On the Trail" n° 23 p. 96). The driver, a Mongolian, admitted to having been paid the equivalent of 300 US\$ to import the skins into China.³

EUROPE

RUSSIA

June 10, 2019

Republic of Dagestan, North Caucasian Federal District, Russia

Torturing to death of a wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I or II) who was accused by shepherds of eating no less than 200 sheep. The fine-tuning and length of the ordeal speak volumes about the mental state of these so-called sheep lovers.⁴



Bears

AMERICA

CANADA

April 8, 2019

Pentincton, British Columbia Province, Canada

A 18,500 Canadian dollars (13,775 US\$) fine for James Wiens, 51 years old, a licensed gamekeeper. He believed he was being accompanied by 2 tourists from the United States of America on the hunt for an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) on this day of May 2016. To make the task easier, the threesome placed several baits in the forest and cooked fat to tickle the bears' sense of smell. A bear fell into the trap and was killed. Wiens' clients were agents fighting against poaching in the states of Washington and Idaho. The court judge had a hard time with Wiens. She said baiting the bear resulted in the animal becoming a "sitting duck" and that it wasn't a hunt but rather a "shooting gallery". Despite his setbacks, Wiens continues to post on the internet about his 100% success rate and asks for 4,000 US\$ for a 6-day hunting trip and the pleasure of killing bears.¹



June 19, 2019

Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Canada

Court hearing for the killer of a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II). The killing took place on the faraway banks of Garry Island where he was with a friend hunting caribous and beluga, also known as white whales. When the inflatable boat landed on a pebble beach, a polar bear stood up to see what was going on. Before he climbed to the top of the hill to look for white whales, Allen Merreck asked Justin Elias to "make sure he doesn't come prowling around me." He had just arrived at his look-out point, when he heard 3 gunshots, or maybe 2. Elias had just killed the bear. The judge observed that the bear's presence had not dissuaded the 2 hunters from landing on the island and continuing their activities, and ruled that they could not claim self-defense since proximity to the bear was deliberate and accepted.²

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Provinces of New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Canada. Border with the United States of America

Seizure of 16 penile bones, testicles and paws of American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II).³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 10, 2019

Denver, State of Colorado, United States of America

58-year-old Dan Roe and his 28-year-old son Alex Roe are banned from fishing and hunting for 20 years and 15 years respectively. In September 2016, the Roes killed an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in the Pitkin county landfill area outside the hunting reserve. They had skinned and beheaded the animal on the spot, and then covered the body with waste, hoping that their crime would remain hidden forever. The son ran a taxidermy business in Indiana until at least 2018, and with his father they taught shooters and archers how to "hunt properly".⁴



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FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 16, 2019

Dayton, State of Nevada, United States of America

Sentencing of Elisio Rubio Sr., Elisio Rubio Jr. and Daniel Rubio to 5,000 US\$ each for ambushing an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in the Pinenut Mountains near Dayton. In February 2017, they had surrounded his den from 3 different angles and had riddled him with bullets. Investigators from the Nevada Wildlife Department were able to locate the exact scene of the crime by collecting empty cartridges and numerous fingerprints. The 3 men knew that the bear was in hibernation, were familiar with the precise location of his den and carried out his execution in cold blood without a hunting permit. Their mobile phones, 4 firearms, the bear meat and also deer meat are part of the evidence. The 3 men will never be allowed to own a gun again.⁵



ASIA

CHINA

May 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of an Asian black bear tooth (*Ursus thibetanus*, Annexe I), 23 grams, on a passenger disembarking from Singapore.⁶

INDIA

May 9, 2019

Dras, Kargil District, Ladakh Division, Jammu and Kashmir State, India

Published on Twitter, the video only lasts 8 seconds, but it shocked the public. It shows a Himalayan brown bear (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*, Appendix II) on a sheer cliff, trying to flee a group of men throwing stones at him. The bear loses his balance and falls several dozen meters into a river, as the men cheer. Following the outrage on line, the authorities have started an investigation to identify the killers.⁷



June 5, 2019

Sogathoray, Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Locals found a sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) dying near the village. The forest rangers called a veterinarian, but she did not survive. She appears to have been poisoned.⁸



INDONESIA

April 13, 2019

West Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

Five arrests. The suspects are believed to be involved in the trade of Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I). Their suppliers, who poach in the subdistrict of Johan Pahlawan, are wanted in turn.⁹



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May 2019

Sultan Syarif Kasim II International Airport, Pekanbaru City, Riau Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

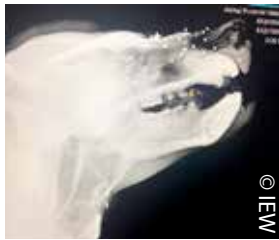
Seizure of 172 teeth pulled from the remains of 43 Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I). They were packed 4 by 4 in plastic bags inside of a cardboard box that was supposed to contain food, picked up from Pekanbaru by a courier company and bound for Jakarta. The identification of teeth was carried out by a laboratory in Bogor. "It is clear that this is a mass murder," they said at the BKSDA headquarters in the province.¹⁰

IRAN

May 2, 2019

Dalahu County, Kermanshah Province, Iran

The brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was found lying in the middle of the road. Witnesses thought he had been killed in a collision but the post-mortem X-rays showed several bullets in the head and body.¹¹



MALAYSIA

June 6, 2019

Desa Pandan, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Despite the large number of captive wild animals in Kuala Lumpur, including gibbons and lorises, it is rare to see a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) in an apartment crack open window, look carefully outside, or even try to escape from his unfortunate situation. A team from Perhilitan quickly arrived on the scene to take possession of the bear and question its owner, who said without further details that she welcomed him into her home after finding him wounded and abandoned. "Behind the bear cub is a mother bear killed by poachers," reminds Dr. Wong Siew Te, a great expert on the case.¹²

THAILAND



May 12, 2019

Thap Lan National Park, Prachin Buri Province, Thailand

Spotted by a camera in the park, the suspect was tracked and caught by the guards. He pretended to only be a wood collector, but in his backpack there was a dead Malayan sun bear cub (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) aged 3-6 months and ready to be eaten.¹³

May 17, 2019

Nong Don District, Saraburi Province, Thailand

Online trade. A search of the house of Sukchai Chantawong. Seizure of an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) and a shikra (*Accipiter badius*, Appendix II). For one bear cubs, the price of sale was 785 US\$. Investigation is ongoing to find the transporters and the trappers.¹⁴



facebook

VIET NAM

May 30, 2019

Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

The three Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) were growing up in cages. They regularly had their bile punctured. They are now in the Ninh Binh shelter managed by Four Paws. The transfer was not an easy one. The villagers were hostile. It took the intervention of the forest police to free the car of the NGO ENV mediators. The demonstrators had immobilized the car and threatened to set it on fire.¹⁵

June 18, 2019

Dong Ha, Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Nguyen Duc Thinh to 15 months in prison (see "On the Trail", n°22 p. 73) for having offered 8 Malayan sun bear claws (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) for sale online.¹⁶



June 19, 2019

Lang Son Province, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of an adult Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) who was part of the bile breeding and extraction network. He is now in one of the "5 stars" shelters as the NGO ENV is calling them.¹⁷

EUROPE

KOSOVO

May 7, 2019

Kosovo

According to the NGO Four Paws, for which the protection of bears is ranking among the top campaigns, a guard at the Sharr National Park has a bear cub in the basement of a little restaurant which he operated in conjunction with his activities as an agent of the Ministry of the Environment and Territory Management. The Sharr National Park stretches over 532 km². Four Paws is all the more outraged by this persistent situation, as they have created a sanctuary in Pristina in cooperation with the government of Kosovo—a sanctuary for domesticated bears that had been exhibited chained up in restaurants or in public places. 16 hectares are home to 19 ex-domesticated bears who have lost their survival instincts in the wild. The population of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) in the forests of Kosovo has not passed 100. The surface area of the country is 10.908 km².¹⁸

Giraffes

Giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) are listed under CITES Appendix II since 26 November 2019.

AFRICA

KENYA

June 2019

Kajiado County, South of Kenya

Interception at night of 3 motorcyclists carrying 300 kg of giraffe meat. She had been captured by a trap. Two of the poachers were sentenced to a fine of 2,000 US\$ or, failing payment, 2 years in prison. The third individual pleads not guilty and his trial has been postponed.¹



June 3, 2019

Bour-Algi Giraffe Sanctuary, Garissa County, Kenya

She had been dragging it around for 3 months. The steel wire of a trap was wrapped tightly around her back right leg. Prognosis is good. The Bour-Algi Sanctuary (125 km²) is polluted with traps. The KWS had recommended the managers that the park be cleaned up permanently.²



Rhinoceroses

The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Eswatini 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°25

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Zimbabwe	41,000	6
	South Africa	30,000	10
		65,000	15
Asia	China	25,425	23

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

April 4, 2019

Oi Jogi Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya

With a snare wrapped around his right leg and cutting to the bone, the rhinoceros was doomed. Put to sleep in 7 minutes with a dose of 4 mg of Etorphine, he lay down and the steel cable was removed. The wound was treated with an antibiotic ointment and covered with green clay. He was awakened with Betamox. The entire operation lasted 20 minutes.¹



June 30, 2019

Lake Nakuru National Park, Nakuru County, Kenya

A white rhinoceros was poached during the night and his horns amputated. Gunshots were heard in the four corners of the park. The poachers' strategy was meant to disperse the rangers. Internal collusion is suspected. The park is one of the most actively monitored in Kenya. It is home to 6 black rhinoceroses and 14 white rhinoceroses. One year ago, a male black rhinoceros was poached.²

RWANDA

June 24, 2019

Akagera National Park, Eastern Province, Rwanda

Five black rhinoceroses were transferred by plane and truck from zoos in Dvůr Králové Safari Park (Czech Republic), Flamingo Land (United Kingdom) and Ree (Denmark). They are 2 to 8 years old, and – after going through the various stages of a one-year acclimation program – are meant to enhance the genetic diversity of the species in the park. African Parks and the EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) promoted this new translocation. In June 2017, 17 black rhinoceroses were transferred by truck from South Africa and an animal keeper was killed during the operation (see “On the Trail” n°17 p. 107).³

ZIMBABWE

May 2019

Chipinga, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

Already in prison for poaching a rhinoceros in Beitbridge in December 2017 (see “On the Trail” n° 20 p. 80), Godknows Mashame has received an additional 10 years for poaching a black rhinoceros in 2011, near the Chipinga lodge.⁴



June 9, 2019

Zimbabwe

A new project, “Now Rhinos Speak,” has been launched by the French Sigfox foundation. The purpose is to collect and manage data on nature. In Zimbabwe, 49 rhinoceroses were - after anesthesia - equipped with sensors that send their GPS coordinates to the ranger station 3 times a day. Electronic tracking is meant to protect the rhinoceroses. The problem is that it could also be used by poachers.⁵

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 2019

Zimbabwe

Arrest and hearing for Brent Johan Lunt, a South African national, and his Zimbabwean accomplices for possession and transport of 4 rhinoceros horns. The total weight of the seizure is 6 kg. The estimated value is 250,000 US\$, or 41,000 US\$ per kilo.⁶



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Beginning of April 2019

National Park Kruger, KaMhushwa and Komatipoort, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Things ended poorly for one of the poachers who broke into the Kruger Park on foot at dawn on April 2. He was trampled by an elephant, according to the elusive information his accomplices gave. The rangers from the Crocodile Bridge section searched on the ground, while an air search was carried out by park aircraft. They finally found the unlucky man's skull and pants – a lion and other scavengers undoubtedly ate his body.⁷

April 1, 2019

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

News briefs from Gauteng

- Fuel and batteries were stolen from a power generator.

- Seizure of 2 rhinoceros horns in a car heading toward the international airport. Value estimated at 34,000 US\$.⁸

GANG

April 3, 2019

Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Jabulani Ndlovu, Forget Ndlovu, and Sikhumbuzo Ndlovu were sentenced to 25 years inside each for poaching at least 13 rhinoceroses in 4 years. They anesthetized their victims to death with a hypodermic rifle and doses of M99, better known as Etorphine or Thiafentanil (see “On the Trail” n° 21 p. 77, n° 19 p. 85, n° 18 p. 70, n° 17 p. 77).⁹



April 13 and 27, 2019

Near Hartebeespoort Dam, North West Province, South Africa

Seizure of 167 horns in a pick-up truck on the road from Centurion to Skeerpoort. Value estimated at 300 million rand, or 30,000 US\$/kg. Petrus Steyn and Clive Melville are residents of Port Elizabeth. They were released on bail for 1,360 US\$ and 6,800 US\$. The NGO Save the Rhino points out that at least 8,300 rhinoceroses have been poached in the past 10 years.¹⁰



Mid April 2019

Near Bedfordview, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A 55-year-old woman has been arrested. She was transporting 2 horns in her car.¹¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 18, 2019

Near Belfast and Komatipoort, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- Court hearing for 2 men and a woman whose car was stopped at a road block in Komatipoort near the border with Mozambique. They were transporting a pair of horns, an illegal weapon and 5 rounds of ammunition.

- Court hearing for a father and his son. Arrested by the Middelburg flying squad, they were carrying a pair of horns. They are allegedly from Mozambique.¹²



April 21, 2019

Matiko Xikaya, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Storming in of the cops in the hideout of 3 men between the ages of 30 and 43. Seizure of a large-calibre firearm, silencer, ammunition, axe and pick-up truck. The canine brigade has not detected any rhino horns but remains on the alert.¹³

April 30, 2019

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Musa Khoza, 23 years old, was sentenced to 22 years in prison for rhinoceros poaching, rebellion and possession of an illegal weapon. The SAPS (South African Police Service) are tracking an accomplice. In September 2016 yet, another of his associates was killed in a clash with rangers.¹⁴



May 3, 2019

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure in a warehouse of a stock of rhinoceros horns worth an estimated 38 million rand (2.6 million US\$). The total weight of the seizure is nearly 40 kg. The cargo was destined for Malaysia.¹⁵



May 9, 2019

Near Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Colleagues found a guard at a rhinoceros ranch covered in cuts and lying in a pool of blood. He was doing rounds after having received an alert regarding an attempted poaching on the territory.¹⁶

May 21, 2019

Johannesburg O. R. Tambo International Airport, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Court hearing for a passenger who was about to take off for the United Arab Emirates with 25 horns, weighing a total of 30 kg.¹⁷



June 3, 2019

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The pastor went mad. Well-known in the parishes of Pretoria, Niculus Mgiba, along with 2 faithful accomplices were the object of a police chase on R40. Rather than complying with, he shot at the SAPS car from his Land Cruiser before ending up in a ditch. The police seized 4 rounds of large-caliber ammunition for big game, a rifle with a silencer, an axe and a knife, unquestionably typical poaching equipment. The 3 men are accused of attempted murder and premeditating to poach in conspiracy.¹⁸



June 27, 2019

Kruger National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Two hiking guides grab the horns of a rhino, the death of which was without apparent violence, right in front of 7 Argentine and South African tourists. After sawing the horns, they had put them in a backpack, pretending to hand them over to their superiors for registration and safekeeping in the park vault, protected from poachers. But they had deviated from the protocol to the point of preparing to sell them for their own profit. Pending trial, Nkuna and Mathebula were released on bail of 1,400 US\$.¹⁹

June 29, 2019

Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

New arrival of an orphan, aged 6 to 8 months.²⁰



End of June 2019

South Africa

Private companies dedicated to the fight against poaching are opposed to the draft regulation amendments that would make it illegal for their guards to carry semi-automatic weapons or wear camouflage uniforms.²¹

NAMIBIA

April 12, 2019

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Li, Li, Pu and Wang, sentenced originally to 11½ years and to 9 years in prison, were sentenced by the appeals court to 20 years in prison. The 4 Chinese citizens had tried to work as an organized gang to smuggle 14 rhinoceros horns and a leopard skin through the Windhoek airport on March 24, 2014 (see "On the Trail" n° 4 p. 66, n° 5 p. 73, n° 6 p. 65, n° 9 p. 62, n°10 p.47.²²



ASIA

CHINA

April 5, 2019

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 82.5 kg of rhinoceros horns in a package from South Africa, on its way to its final destination in Malaysia. The overall value is estimated at 2.1 million US\$, or 25,425 US\$/kg.²³



May 2019

Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport, China

Seizure in a passenger's baggage of a rhinoceros horn weighing 2.88 kg.²⁴



May 13, 2019

Futian Port of Entry, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of a supposed rhinoceros horn and slices, for a total weight of 1.7 kg.²⁵



June 14, 2019

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of a presumed rhinoceros horn and fragments. Total weight: 6.5 kg.²⁶



INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 1 and 14, 2019

Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat and Nagaon Districts, and Gohpur, Biswanath District, Assam State, India

He is the second rhino struck down since the beginning of the year in the national park. The forest rangers discovered the hornless carcass and 5 .303-caliber cartridge cases nearby. Two weeks later, investigators arrest 3 suspects in Gohpur: Ratnakanta Pegu, Dimbeswar Pegu and Mukheswar Kaman.²⁷

April 22, 2019

Fatapukur, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal State, India

The 3 men were transporting a horn weighing over 800 g in a schoolbag when the Forest Department Special Intervention Squad picked them up. One of the traffickers managed to flee, but Bharat Roy (24 years old) and Prasanta Sarkar (24 years old), alias Rasidul Islam – he had identification papers with both names – were arrested. They were on National Highway 31 C, going toward the Siliguri corridor, on the border between Nepal, China and Bhutan. Forest agents estimate that the horn is worth 300,000 rupees (4,330 US\$).²⁸

GANG

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 16, 2019

Silbori, Darrang District, Assam State, India

According to the authorities, Shamsher and Moruz Ali are part of an "organized, armed gang of poachers." They were captured as they were about to enter the Orang National Park with a sharpshooter that they had recruited to kill rhinos. The sharpshooter, Sagar Singha, is a deserter from the 12th battalion of the Assam Rifles, who had come from Arunachal Pradesh. A .303-caliber rifle, a silencer, 11 bullets and a large knife constituted their "work tools."²⁹



REPEATED OFFENSE

June 5, 2019

Jakhalabandha, Nagaon District, Assam State, India

Akhter Ali is no longer on the run. Arrested last May 9 in the Kaziranga National Park, the young man is suspected of having poached a rhino on December 15, 2018; it is also suspected that it was not his first. Taken into custody and held in the rundown facility of the Bagari Forest Division, he escaped on May 13 by pretending that he wanted to go to the toilet. The police picked him up again that night.³⁰

June 10, 2019

Itanagar, Papum Pare District, Arunachal Pradesh State, India

Rijen Pegu has been arrested, accused of poaching a rhino in the Kaziranga National Park (state of Assam). He allegedly sold the horn for 3 million rupees (43,100 US\$). Several cell phones and incriminating documents were seized at his home. The man was discreetly transferred to Assam because the forest administration was afraid that his accomplices would try to free him along the way.³¹

June 14, 2019

Gingia, Biswanath District, Assam State, India

When the police and forest rangers posted at a road block on National Highway 15 ordered them to stop, Hanif Ali and Abdul Sohid abandoned their motorcycle and the bag, and took off running. They were caught a little later in a rice field. Their bag contained two .303-caliber rifles and 2 chargers.³²

June 20, 2019

Orang National Park, Darran District, Assam State, India

Suren Hamaran was arrested near the national park in possession of a .303-caliber rifle and 11 rounds of ammunition, classic rhino-poacher's weapon. His accomplice managed to escape.³³

June 24, 2019

Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagaon District, Assam State, India

In 2017, a female rhino strayed away from the Orang National Park and set up on the Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary on the outskirts of the park. She was seen until September 24, 2018, and then vanished. The forest rangers claimed that she had gone back into the Orang park and they set aside requests for investigation made by wildlife protection advocates. Their hierarchy backed them, all the way up to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. The discovery made this morning has shaken the Assam Forest Department. A team of specialists from the Kaziranga National Park has unearthed the carcass of a rhino with her horn cut off near the Palashtoli lookout post, inside the Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary. The officer in charge at the time, Jitender Kumar, is in an uncomfortable position. But his circle is working in his favor. He apparently has connections with the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and the Prime Minister of Assam.³⁴

GANG

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 26, 2019

Kamar Gaon, Golaghat District, Assam State, India

There is tension in the air among a gang of rhino poachers. Suspected of being an informer for the police, Dhan Bora, alias Manjit Bora, was killed by the boss, Pallab Basumatary. His accomplices apparently threw the corpse – which has not been found – into the Dhansiri River. Basumatary and Harekrishna Doley were arrested at the scene of the crime, but Gautam Doley fled. In his home, police found two .303 rifles, a silencer and 14 rounds of live ammunition. Harekrishna Doley and Gautam Doley have been arrested several times in the past. Gautam Doley's mother is serving a prison sentence for collusion in rhino poaching.³⁵



INDONESIA

April 23, 2019

Bandar Lampung City, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

A. Manap has been sentenced to 2 years in prison and a fine equivalent to 3,521 US\$ for having organized the illegal sale of a Sumatra rhinoceros horn weighing 202 g (see "On the Trail" n° 23 p. 109).³⁶



MALAYSIA

May 27, 2019

Tabin Wildlife Resort, Sabah State, Malaysia

The last male representative of the species on the island of Borneo. He lived in semi-captivity. His name was Tam, and he was about 30 years old. He never managed to impregnate Iman, who also lives in captivity and is now the very last representative of the Sumatra rhinoceroses (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, Appendix I) in Sabah and Sarawak states. There are fewer than 80 specimens left in Indonesia, in Thailand and on the Malaysian peninsula. The species is doomed to extinction.³⁷



NEPAL

May 13, 2019

Chitwan District, Province No. 3, Nepal

For wildlife defense activists, the announcement did not go over well: the Chitwan prison district has selected 36 prisoners doing time for rhino poaching or smuggling animal parts; they plan to grant the prisoners pardons. Those charges are not listed among the “unpardonable crimes” according to the new criminal and civil code. A Nepalese ecologist pointed out that previously pardoned poachers had gone back to their dirty business: “Buddhi Praja, who was released after receiving amnesty, went on to kill 13 rhinos after he was released. Ramsharan BK also returned to rhino poaching.”

In May 2019, there were 645 rhinos in Nepal, including 605 in the Chitwan National Park. The law stipulates that sanctions for the poaching or trading of rhinoceroses or their parts are 5 to 15 years in prison and a fine of up to 1 million rupees (8837 US\$).³⁸

June 26, 2019

Kathmandu, Province No. 3, Nepal

Following a tip, Asta Bahadur Thing and Govinda Prasad Moktan were arrested in a room at the Lal Bahadur Gurung Hotel. They were about to sell a horn for 5.5 million Nepalese rupees (49,445 US\$). The police are trying to determine whether they are also responsible for the poaching.³⁹



VIET NAM

April 9, 2019

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure in a package coming from South Africa of 15 kg of rhinoceros horns cut into pieces and hidden in boxes of biscuits, toothpaste, coffee and powdered milk.⁴⁰



June 14, 2019

Mong Cai, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam. Border with China.

Search of Pham Thi Bich's home. Seizure of 2 horns, 50 cm long, 16 cm diameter at the base, 25 cm long, 14 cm diameter at the base.⁴¹



Rhinoceroses and Elephants

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 1 and 2, 2019

Kruger National Park and near Malelane, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- A former ranger, dismissed in 2014 for undisclosed reasons, has been arrested. Along with an accomplice, he had infiltrated the park with a large-caliber firearm and ammunition, along with survival and poaching equipment.

- Two suspected poachers were arrested thanks to the canine brigade and park aircraft patrol.¹

NAMIBIA

May 13, 2019

Namibia

18 elephants and rhinoceroses poached since the beginning of the year.²

TANZANIA

Beginning of June 2019

Ngorongoro District, Arusha Region, Tanzania

Seizure of an AK-47 in the home of Solomon Letato, a teacher suspected of supplying weapons to poachers and helping them sell rhinoceros horns and elephant tusks.³

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GANG

June 13, 2019

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

Charges brought by the New York State Prosecutor (Southern District) and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) against Moazu Kromah, alias Ayoub, alias Ayuba, alias Kampala Man, Amara Cherif, alias Bamba Issiaka, Mansur Mohamed Surur, alias Mansour and Abdi Hussein Ahmed, alias Abu Khadi, for trafficking horns worth 3.4 million US\$ corresponding to the poaching of about 35 rhinos and for trafficking of elephant tusks worth 4 million US\$ corresponding to the poaching of about 100 elephants. The suspects were exporting or planning to export the horns and tusks hidden in packages officially containing pieces of primitive African art. They were paid by their buyers outside Africa in cash or by international transfer. One of the banks was based in Manhattan. On several occasions, they were foiled by an undercover agent of the American special services only known in the investigation file as C1. On several occasions, C1 has communicated physically with the suspects or by telephone or e-mail to decide on the weight, price, species for rhino horns and shipping and payment terms. The traffickers were able to deliver 7 kg horns. In March 2018, investigators intercepted in the United States of America a parcel containing a black rhino horn and in July 2018, a parcel containing 2 white rhino horns.

In addition, Surur and Ahmed had arranged with C1 for a delivery of 10 kg of heroin. These two Kenyan nationals are on the run. Kromah, a Liberian national, was arrested in Uganda on 12 June 2019 and immediately extradited to the United States of America. Cherif, a Guinean national, was arrested in Senegal on 7 June. His extradition procedure is being examined by the Senegalese courts.⁴



ASIA

CHINA

GANG

May 22, 2019

Fangchenggang and Nanning, Guangxi Province, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China

Interception of a convoy coming from Viet Nam. Seizure of 350 kg of raw ivory. A network in Viet Nam was collaborating with a Chinese network which sent the ivory and also rhinoceros horns to the Fujian province through the Guangxi and Guangdong provinces (1,700 km). Since the beginning of the year, customs in Nanning seized 900 kg of raw and worked ivory.⁵

Elephants

The African elephant, *Loxodonta africana*, is listed in CITES Appendix I, except populations from South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe which are in Appendix II. The Asian elephant, *Elephas maximus*, is listed in Appendix I.

"On the Trail" n°25

Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Mozambique	38	23
	Uganda	730	25
		733	26
	Tanzania	3,500	27
	Zimbabwe	250	32
Asia	Singapore	500	6*
Europe	France	670	165

* Cf. chapter « Pangolins and Elephants »

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

April 10 and 19, 2019

Mwea National Reserve, Embu County and Lol Daiga Wildlife Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

- The elephant had decided to permanently stay in the lake to relieve the pain. His left hind leg had been strangled by the steel wire of a trap for several days. After being lured to the shoreline, he was anaesthetized, freed from the wire, treated and monitored. Favourable prognosis.
- Attempt to rescue an elephant hit by a rifle bullet in the left front thigh to the femur. Favourable prognosis.¹



April 10, 2019
Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

Spotting of an elephant carcass by aerial reconnaissance. A ground team was dispatched on-site. The body was covered with branches, attacked by scavengers and rotting. Metal detectors were deployed to detect possible bullet marks. It is poaching. The tusks have disappeared.²



**April 15 and 17, May 7, 8, 14 and 15, 2019
Samburu and Laikipia Counties, Kenya**

- Shot by a throwing weapon at the bottom of the right front leg. The wound is 4 cm wide and 8 cm deep. Favourable prognosis.



- He was limping. He was anesthetized from a helicopter. He was shot in the right front leg. Wound cleaning. Application of antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and painkillers. Favourable prognosis.

- Wounded in the forehead by a throwing weapon. The tip of the arrow has sunk to a depth of 50 cm. Anaesthesia. Extraction of the weapon. Treatment with hydrogen peroxide and iodine solution. Injection and application of antibiotics and clay. The surgery lasted 30 minutes. Favourable prognosis.

- Anaesthesia from the helicopter. Penetration of the spear up to 30 cm deep near the neck. The weapon was 2 m long. Without the alert from the rangers and the emergency intervention of the vets, the elephant was doomed. Favourable prognosis.

- Extraction of a throwing weapon. Treatment of the deep wound. Favourable prognosis.³

**April 25, 2019
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Ephantus Mbare Gitonga was the only one charged in the attempt to smuggle 1,097 kg of raw ivory from more than 75 elephants poached in Central Africa and ripped off the Burundi's government stocks. Ephantus, who is a clearing agent, is a fan of the hollowed out timber network (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 98). Neither the carriers, nor the customs officers at the port of Mombasa, nor the consignees, nor the shipper have been charged and the court has just decided to acquit Ephantus on the grounds that "the prosecution could not prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused perpetrated the offence". The investigation was interrupted for more than 2 years because of the alleged unavailability of witnesses, lawyers and even judges. This new failure of the police and justice system in Kenya follows the acquittals of Nicholas Maweu John (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 53), Feisal Mohamed Ali and his accomplices (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 88, n°21 p. 82, no. 22, p. 86) and Sammy Ndiririgi Maina, suspected of being involved in the attempted smuggling from the port of Mombasa of a container officially loaded with plastic waste and actually containing 1.5 tonnes of ivory. All these "I acquit" are signs of encouragement and green lights to the bigwigs of trans-African wildlife traffic.⁴



**April 29, 2019
Kibera, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Charging of 4 elite police officers arrested at the end of February 2016 in possession of one 5 kg elephant tusk (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 77).⁵

**Early May 2019
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Rejection by the High Court of the Wanjohi couple's request to lift the seizure of a Range Rover, a Mercedes Benz, real estate assets and bank accounts (107,500 US\$). The Wanjohi couple are involved in ivory and heroin trafficking (see "On the Trail" n°22 p. 86, n°24 p. 69).⁶



**May 10, 14, 20 and 21, 2019
Tsavo East National Park, Kenya**

- Wide Satao, a majestic male elephant was shot by an arrow. The wound had to be widened to remove the tip. Rapid intervention. Favourable prognosis.



- Spotting near a water point of a male elephant calf injured by an arrow on the right flank. Anaesthesia. Widening of the wound to extract the tip. Complete treatment with covering of the wound with green clay at the end. Favourable prognosis.

- Three male elephants from the same herd are injured by throwing weapons. They are deeply embedded in the muscles. They are no longer visible. After anaesthesia, the wounds were widened and the projectiles extracted with forceps. After the usual treatments, the 3 victims were awakened by antidote and calmly stood up a few minutes later. Favourable prognoses.

- Deep injury and infection at the bottom of the left front leg by a multi-strand steel rope used on cranes or winches in cross-country vehicles. It took a hacksaw and 30 minutes to cut it. The rangers' Land Rovers were used to "turn over" the elephant on his left flank and heal 5 throwing weapons open wounds. A new injection of anaesthetics was required. After the wake-up antidote, the survivor stood up and quietly disappeared into the bush. Favourable prognosis.⁷



May 15 and 16, 2019

Kilifi and Mombasa Counties, Mombasa County, Kenya

- Arrest of 2 suspects, Ibrahim Ali and Japhet Bakari, in the act of transporting raw ivory weighing a total of 8.9 kg hidden in maize bags.
- Arrest of 2 suspects, Kazungu Nzae and Chago Katana, in the act of transporting raw ivory weighing a total of 8.5 kg hidden in charcoal bags.⁸



May 20 and 28, 2019

Lemek Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya

Following a throwing weapon wound to the right front leg, the young male limped. Successful surgery. When he woke up, he headed for his family waiting for him nearby.⁹

May 24, 2019

Naibunga Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

Clear fracture of the humerus following a gunshot wound. Total inability to walk. No choice but to finish off this female elephant.¹⁰

May 28, 2019

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

Discovery of a male elephant carcass. Dead for about a week. The trunk was found a few meters from the body. The tusks have disappeared. Two open wounds were found on his left flank.¹¹



June 5, 2019

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

The male elephant was put to sleep by an anaesthetic syringe from the helicopter. He fell after 7 minutes. The trunk was cleared to facilitate breathing and ears sprayed with water throughout the surgery. The wound by throwing weapon on the left flank was treated as usual. Favourable prognosis.¹²



FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 6, 2019

Nakuru, Nakuru County, Kenya

Arrest of a father and his son. They were weighing the tusks in the outskirts of Nakuru before handing them over to a correspondent whose job was to deliver them to Nairobi before the big leap to Asia. The convoy came from Eldoret near the border with Uganda. Nakuru would be a relay city for the east-west networks and many homes are rented to allow tusk groupings and intermediate deliveries.¹³



June 9, 2019

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

The herd of 10 elephants had been attacked a week earlier by throwing weapons after crossing the Mara River. They were approaching community cultures. A subadult female elephant had to be anesthetized. The surgery had to be delayed because of the matriarch's insistence on staying with the sleeping beauty. Finally, she was pushed aside by Land Rover manoeuvres and the arrows could be extracted from the left thigh and right rump. Upon awakening, the elephant joined the herd waiting nearby. Favourable prognosis.¹⁴



June 13, 2019

Meru, Meru County, Kenya

Sentencing of Francis Muriithi to 10 years in prison or a fine of 3 million shillings, or 29,630 US\$ for unlawful possession of a 6.5 kg tusk. Muriithi already has a previous conviction for charcoal trafficking and according to the investigation file, he is the leader of a gang of 5 chaps linked to poaching and ivory trafficking. He has 14 days to appeal.¹⁵



June 25, 2019

Voi, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

Clinton Warunga was sentenced to 5 years in prison for transporting 13.7 kg of raw ivory in October 2018. He says he runs a boda-boda motorcycle business and fell into a trap set by a close friend. To obtain the court's leniency, he pointed out that his family, of which he is the only breadwinner, is in difficulty, if only because every day when he is free, he travels 50 km to fetch the necessary water for the home.¹⁶



June 28, 2019

Near Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Removal of a spear stuck into the head of a nursing female. Favourable prognosis.¹⁷



June 30, 2019

Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, Kenya

The adult male elephant was shot at the base of his trunk and hind legs by 5 throwing weapons. The wounds were cleaned, treated with antibiotics and clay. The vets' prognosis is reasonably optimistic.¹⁸



MALAWI

June 20, 2019

Zomba, Southern Region, Malawi

Sentencing of Faness Dickson to 8 years' imprisonment with hard labour for trying to sell raw ivory (792 g) and 3 elephant femurs.¹⁹



MOZAMBIQUE

Beginning of April 2019

Mozambique

The traps are silent killers. The vets came running across the savanna to the bedside of an elephant calf. His left hind leg was encircled to the bone by a steel wire. Favourable prognosis.²⁰



Mid-April 2019

Maputo Reserve, Maputo Province, Mozambique

The young male, about 12 years old, was put out of pain by the vets of Saving the Survivors in agreement with the reserve's management and the Peace Parks Foundation. Despite the intensive care, he was suffering more and more and hardly moved. His ordeal had lasted since April 17. Saving the Survivors had anaesthetized him from a helicopter and then delivered him from the steel rope of a trap that crushed the flesh to the bone at the bottom of his left hind leg.²¹



April 17, 2019

Pemba, Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique

Fourteen years in prison for Fernando Mohamed.¹⁷ tusks weighing a total of 20 kg were seized last year at home. The elephant had been poached in the Niassa reserve.²²



April 21, 2019

Dondo, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Seizure of 2 tusks, the pair weighing 75 kg. Arrest of 2 middlemen. Their meeting with 4 buyers came to a sudden end when they took off as police officers were approaching. According to them, the starting price for the transaction was 187,500 meticaïs, or about 2,900 US\$, and the their share was set at a modest 10,000 meticaïs or 155 US\$. The adult elephant, almost a super tusker, was poached in Gorongosa National Park.²³

May 27, 2019

Niassa National Reserve, Cabo Delgado and Niassa Provinces, Mozambique

After a long series of bloody poaching cases and massive smugglings in and from the Niassa National Reserve, which stretches across 42,000 km² in the north the country near Tanzania, ANAC (Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação) celebrated the year's beginning free of elephant poaching (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 84, n°7 p. 77, 15 p. 89, n°19 p. 93).²⁴

UGANDA

June 2, 2019

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

A retired national army man now presents himself as a “businessman”. However, he specifies that he is still a reserve officer. He is in pre-trial detention in Kampala central prison due to raw ivory trafficking. He is liable to 5 years’ imprisonment or a fine equivalent to half the value of the 16 tusks weighing a total of 23.5 kg and valued at 64 million shillings, or 730 US\$/kg. He requests his release on bail, emphasizing that he is the sole provider for 3 wives, 11 children and 4 grandchildren.²⁵

June 20, 2019

Atar, Northern Region, Uganda

Another servant of God and the faithful caught in an ivory trade. Pastor Amos Richard Primer, 51, was caught with his hand in the cookie jar. The jar was full of raw ivory (80.06 kg). The value is estimated at 220 million shillings, or 58,700 US\$ and 733 US\$/kg. Primer was accompanied by Ochen, a building contractor.²⁶

TANZANIA

April 1, 2019

Dodoma, Dodoma Region, Tanzania

Arrest in the street of a prison guard carrying 6 tusks weighing a total of 13 kg, the value of which is estimated at 103.5 million shillings, or 44,900 US\$ and 3,500 US\$/kg.²⁷

Beginning of April 2019

Babati, Manyara Region, Tanzania

Sentences of 20 years in prison for:
- Iddy Myombo and Hamis Kidindi for the transport and attempted sale of 2 elephant tusks with a total weight of 67.2 kg and an estimated value of 82.5 million shillings (37,240 US\$ or 590 US\$/kg).
- Vitalis John and Dismas Kendi for the transport and attempted sale of 4 tusks or sections of tusks with a total weight of 18.1 kg and an estimated value of 67 million shillings (30,200 US\$ or 1,670 US\$/kg).²⁸

June 21, 2019

Songea District, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

Sentencing of Maximilian Mwenda and Rashid Migoha (alias Mwendomchanja), both aged 58, to 20 years in prison for having detained and attempted to sell 12 elephant tusks worth an estimated 65,000 US\$ in November 2016. They arrived free at the trial. They left handcuffed.²⁹



ZAMBIA

April 2019

Zimba District, Southern Province, Zambia

Big case in Zambia. Seizure of 241 kg of raw ivory from a poaching campaign in neighbouring countries. 10 elephants died. The focus is on Zimbabwe and Botswana.³⁰

End of May 2019

Chinsali District, Muchinga Province, Zambia

Five years in prison for Clement Mwila and Tedson Mukupa. In June 2018, they had been caught red-handed with 12 kg of raw ivory.³¹



ZIMBABWE

April 8, 2019

Kazangarare, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Sentence of a minor under 18 years of age to 9 years’ imprisonment for having transported and offered for sale at a price of 250 US\$ /kg 2 tusks 87 and 78.5 cm long, the pair weighing just under 9 kg.³²



April 10, 2019

Zimbabwe

At the age of 80, Ron Thomson, professional hunter, claims the death of 5000 elephants, 40 leopards, 60 lions including 6 “man-eaters”, 50 hippos and 800 buffaloes. In the evening of his life, he claims to be a regulator of wildlife and a protector of human populations. He accuses Western NGOs of spreading lies to extract money from public opinion without knowing anything about wildlife management.

In response to an NGO accusing him of being co-responsible for the gradual disappearance of elephants, he replied that he was never attracted to killing and that he had simply done his job. When he shot a “big five”, he would kill him with a single bullet. In his interview with the Independent, he would almost present himself as a pioneer in animal welfare.³³

May 8, 2019

Masunda, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

Bruce Moyana, a 45 year old teacher, was reported by a phone call. Police searched his Nissan Hardbody. Under the driver’s seat, they found an AK47, ammunition and ivory whose weight was not reported. He was released on bail of 200 US\$.³⁴

June 12, 2019

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Acquittal of 3 presumed traffickers. They had been intercepted by a road patrol and a search of their vehicles that resulted in the seizure of 76.7 kilograms of raw ivory. Faunel Luphahla, deserter of the Zimbabwean army, Ndaba Ncube and Innocencia Siwela are doing well while Alos Savanhu, owner of the tusks, remains in prison pending possible release on bail (see "On the Trail" n°24 p. 72).³⁵



June 20, 2019

Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest after surveillance of Peter Phosa, presenting himself as a computer scientist and carrying in the trunk of his car 15 kg of raw ivory. He says he borrowed the vehicle and was the victim of a conspiracy.³⁶

June 21, 2019

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Appearance of Austin Sibanda, Morris Munkombwe, Shingai Sithole, Kemesi Shoko, Tariro Mateyaunga and Phenias Ncube. They are accused of possession in conspiracy of 2 tusks weighing a total of 37 kg. The value is estimated at 9,250 US\$ or 250 US\$/kg. They plead not guilty. They are all living along Hwange Park.³⁷

June 2019

Mana Pools National Park, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

They were armed with axes, knives and...cyanide. The 3 poisonous and silent poachers were apprehended as they were stealthily entering Mana Pools National Park.³⁸



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 9, 2019

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest of 3 men aged 28, 37, and 39. They were trying to sell 2 tusks near a shopping centre for more than 150,000 rand, or 10,200 US\$.³⁹

April 30, 2019

Kuruman, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Riaan Malgas, 33, Albert Mosimanyane, 55, and Mothusi Joel Tshibithi, 38, to a fine of 6,800 US\$ or imprisonment if non-payment. See "On the Trail" n°19 p. 99.⁴⁰



May 25, 2019

Durbanville, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Raid of a vacant house by the bomb squad. Discovery of ammunition, explosives, fire-arms, and 2 elephant tusks. The former occupant of the place, now deceased, had worked in the private armament industry and in a government technology watch agency.⁴¹



June 26, 2019

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest of 2 men. They were trying to sell 4 small tusks in town.⁴²

BOTSWANA

May 7, 2019

Kasane, Chobe District, Botswana. Border with Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Resurgence of Botswana's colonial past. President Masisi offered an elephant stool to his counterparts of Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe at the exceptional meeting of the KAZA (Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area) preceding by a few days the CITES plenary session in Sri Lanka which was finally postponed to Geneva in August due to the Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa attacks (see "On the Trail" n°24).⁴³

June 2019

CT/1 hunting concession, Central District, Botswana

Mass poisoning : 3 elephants, 2 tawny eagles (*Aquila rapax*, Appendix II), 10 cape vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*, Appendix II), 14 lappet-faced vultures (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II), 468 white backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), 17 white headed vultures (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Appendix II) et 28 hooded vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II). The law enforcement team is at the crime scene, working to decontaminate the soil and keep dead bodies out of the reach of wildlife and local populations.⁴⁴



NAMIBIA

April 5, 2019

Ohangwena Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

In the miscellaneous news items section, between an armed robbery, the rapes of minors and suicides of young men, 2 arrests for the transport and sale of an elephant tusk.⁴⁵

April 9, 2019

Tsumeb, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Fine of 30,000 N\$ or 2,040 US\$ or 3 years in prison if failure to pay for Johannes Bokoma Nashikaku for holding and transporting 2 calf's tusks with a combined weight of 3.98 kg. The trafficker's pick-up has permanently become property of the State.⁴⁶



April 30, 2019

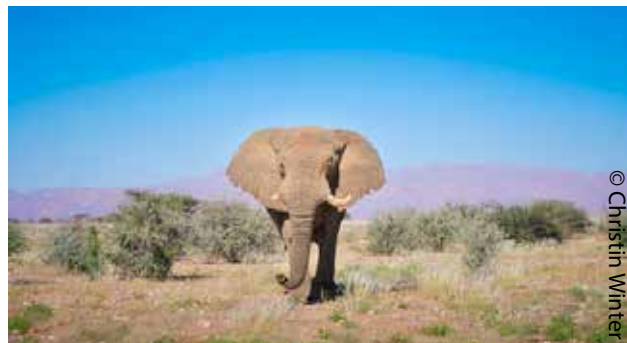
Kopani, Zambezi Region, Namibia. Border with Botswana.

Mathew Mwilima was denied bail after being caught during the night carrying 6 elephant tusks. Three accomplices fled. The elephants were reportedly poached in Botswana and the loot was being transferred to Zambia.⁴⁷

End of June 2019

Omatjete, Erongo Region, Namibia

Voortrekker (Pioneer) was about 40 years old. He was the most famous elephant in Namibia. Not really a super tusker since in undefined times and under unknown circumstances, his right tusk was broken in two. Most visitors to the region dreamed of having seen or made out Voortrekker's silhouette and his 2 large ears in the arid savannah. The license to kill this southern African icon was given to a professional hunter for a sum equal to 8,000 US\$. Voortrekker had supposedly become a nuisance. In these periods of drought, he was accused with his scarce family, of which he was one of the 2 dominant males, of drinking too much water in the Ugab River basin.⁴⁸



WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

April 15, 2019

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

Seizure of 3 tusks. Arrests of 2 traffickers and then a third who had fled and was found in a shed in a very old lady's house.⁴⁹



June 27 and July 18, 2019

Kandi, Alibori Department, Benin

Sentencing of 3 ivory traffickers to 48 months, including a suspended sentence of 24 months, and 36 months in prison. The most severely punished is a member of a village council. They were prosecuted for transporting and marketing 2 tusks.⁵⁰



SENEGAL

April 9, 2019

Blaise Diagne International Airport, Thiès Region, Senegal

The Chinese national recalcitrant to CITES was about to fly to China with 27 freshly carved ivories and 11 jewels made of ebony as a bonus. He works for a well-established Chinese construction company in Dakar.⁵¹

May 15, 2019

Blaise Diagne International Airport, Thiès Region, Senegal

Arrest by CAAT (Anti-Trafficking Airport Task Force) of 2 Chinese nationals who were about to fly to their country with 50 objects made of ivory, ebony (genus *Diospyros*, Appendix II) and African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*, Appendix II) in their luggage. Also found in their suitcases were 200 seahorses (*Hippocampus*), some sea cucumbers and shark fins. The total value of the seizure is estimated at 32 million CFA francs or 3,048 US\$.⁵²



CAMEROON

Beginning of April 2019

Sangmélima, Dja-et-Lobo Department, Cameroon

Seizure of 5 tusks 15 cm long and less than one kilo. They were fresh and stinking. Two arrests at a bar in town. One of the suspects is the son of a retired police officer whose firearm was allegedly used to kill the calves.⁵³

GABON

Beginning of April 2019

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Arrest of Francois Ollame Ondo. The 4 tusks he was carrying had been spotted in a motel room.⁵⁴

Beginning of April 2019

Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Arrests of Serge Bangoula and Fabrice Mounougoudi, alleged elephant poachers. Seizure of 2 Kalashnikov and 114 cartridges. According to the suspects, war weapons were used to kill wild boars and to supply the bushmeat market. This is not the opinion of the NGO Wildlife Conservation Society based in Congo Brazzaville, which rather suspects ivory trafficking between Congo and Gabon.⁵⁵

April 13, 2019

Mayumba, Nyanga Province, Gabon

The offender's identity is unclear. His name is Elvis Jackson and he is a native of Gabon. He quickly admitted that he forged this fake ID in an Internet café. His real name would be Fabrice Biakeu and his country Cameroon. What is certain is that he had accumulated several boxes in his hotel room and that they were filled with 16 tusks cut into 28 sections and 2 elephant calf tusks.⁵⁶

Mid-April 2019

West of Gabon

Six tusks seized, again from elephant calves. One arrest.⁵⁷

May 3, 2019

Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Arrest of Georgelin Becka Mbeng, teacher, Gustave Assoumou, hospital officer and Maxime Owono, fisherman. Seizure of 2 tusks cut into 4 sections and 3 firearms including a caliber .458 used for very large game.⁵⁸



May 4, 2019

Minvoul, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Arrest in a hotel of Issa Moloma, a Burkina Faso national and Sylvain Bilié, a Gabon national. They were about to sell 2 tusks cut in half. They have been accomplices for 30 years. They will be heard by the judge in Oyem and detained in the city's central prison.⁵⁹

May 6, 2019

Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon

The unscrupulous are not nobodies. They are the prefect of the Lower Banio department and his concubine. Eugene Nziengui, 54 years old and Mariette Kogue Moukambi, 46 years old, were surprised Monday morning bargaining with a buyer the sale of 2 tusks of beautiful size that Mariette, driven in an official car by her partner, had bought the day before in Mouila for 200,000 CFA francs or 340 US\$. Release due to procedural error.⁶⁰



May 23, 2019

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

Successive postponements of the trial of Oswald Ndong Nze, released on health grounds. Justice can no longer get its hands on him. In June 2018, he was caught with 2 calf tusks (see "On the Trail" n°21 p. 91).⁶¹

REPEATED OFFENSE

End of May 2019

Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Djamal Hamadou (Habib) to a year in prison for the repeated trafficking of ivory. He had already appeared before the same court for similar acts committed in April 2014 and 2013 (see "On the Trail" n°5 p. 82).⁶²



May 2019

Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Steeve Gandza Gandza and Charles Gaétan, convicted of detaining and transporting raw ivory, to 3 months in prison, including 2 months suspended, and a fine of 500,000 CFA francs (850 US\$) to the benefit of Water and Forests.⁶³



Beginning of June 2019

Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Arrest in a motel of Avomé Delali and Hugues Ndiffio, who are from Togo and Cameroon respectively. They were seeking to sell 4 tusks. According to them, it was Mrs. Moughola Coth Flore who delivered the forbidden goods to them in a bag. Arrested in turn, Flore says she acted on her husband's instructions and was unaware of the contents of the bag.⁶⁴



June 12, 2019

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Arrest in flagrante delicto of Alex Ada Mba, prison guard and elephant shooter in the forest 11 km from Makokou in the Ogooué-Ivindo Province (540 km from Libreville), and his 2 accomplices, Martial Akoré and Michel Axel Ndong Odzaghé.⁶⁵

June 15, 2019

Tchibanga, Nyanga Province, Gabon

Arrest of a Ghanian aged 28 years old. Samuel Adama was transporting a tusk of 22 kg cut into 3 parts. He revealed the name and address of his accomplice. Yves Kevin Mihindou was arrested at his house. This one in turn gave the names and addresses of 2 others. Cédric Moundounga and Lewis Mouketou, aged 31 and 25 respectively, were arrested immediately after.⁶⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 2019

Lambaréné, Moyen-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Ivory family matter. The son broke into his father's room to steal 2 tusks. He got caught in a city hotel while waiting for a buyer. Father and son are in custody.⁶⁷

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

April 4, 2019

Owando, Department of Cuvette, Republic of the Congo

Sentencing of 3 ivory traffickers to 3 years in prison. They are Evoura Vianney and Ngoua Issoko Justin, Congolese citizens, and Kolon Koumaré, Malian citizen. They had been caught red-handed with 6 tusks, illegally carrying an AK47 and its ammunition.⁶⁸



April 26, 2019

Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

One arrest. He was transporting 3 tusks in a backpack from the north of the country and the border with Gabon.⁶⁹

CHAD

April 23, 2019

South-west of Chad

Discovery of a decapitated elephant gunned down by a Kalashnikov, in the basin of the river Chari, which flows into Lake Chad. The NGO SOS Elephant, directed by Stephanie Vergnialt, regrets that for the past 3 months the anti-poaching brigades have not been paid.⁷⁰

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 2, 2019

Seattle and Snohomish, State of Washington, United States of America

First indictment for violation of the Washington Animal Trafficking Act, which since 2016 prohibits the sale, purchase, and trade of parts of elephants, rhinos, tigers, lions, leopards, cheetahs, pangolins, sharks and rays.

A US Fish and Wildlife undercover investigator responded to Craigslist ads posted by Donald Rooney, 71, selling "wooden" netsukes for 35 US\$ each. The meeting took place in the dark in Rooney's pseudo-home. However, there was enough light for the detective to see all around shelves full of statuettes and ornaments made of white ivory. After a 20 minutes chat, she wanted to take pictures to document a friend in Japan who might be interested in buying the collection. She then bought 3 figurines in cash for 300 US\$. Genetic analyses proved that it was African elephant ivory. In the end, 1,600 ivory objects were seized from Mr. Rooney's shelves. Trial is upcoming.⁷¹



CHINA



HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

April, May and June 2019

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Railway Station, Hong Kong, China

- Seizures of 10 worked ivories, necklaces, pendants and rings. Total weight: 108 g. One of the boxes used for transport has instructions in French.⁷²



- A bracelet in the hands of a passenger returning from South Africa (78 g).⁷³

- A presumed ivory bracelet (16 g) and necklace.⁷⁴

- Seizure of a presumed ivory bracelet, necklace, beads and a pendant from the belongings of 3 passengers.⁷⁵

- Seizure of 2 ivory bracelets on 2 passengers.⁷⁶



CHONGQING MUNICIPALITY

April 22, 2019

Chongqing-Jiangbei National Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure on a Chinese passenger coming from Yangon, Myanmar, of ivory bracelets of a total weight of 85g.⁷⁷

May 27 and 28, 2019

Chongqing-Jiangbei International Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

And another 2 bracelets, one on a passenger departing for Hong Kong, the other on a passenger departing for Malaysia.⁷⁸

FUJIAN PROVINCE

May 2019

Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China

- Seizure of a bracelet on a passenger coming from Hong Kong.⁷⁹
- Seizure of 3 pendants and a bracelet. The passengers were coming from Hong Kong.⁸⁰



GUANGDONG PROVINCE

Early 2019

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure since the beginning of the year, at an undetermined date, of a parcel from Japan containing 13 worked ivories officially described as "models" weighing a total of more than 4.5 kg.⁸¹



April 2019

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of ivory miniatures.⁸²



Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of 876 alleged ivory pearls in plastic bags in an express parcel from Hong Kong.⁸³



Shekou Port, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of a bracelet at the exit of the Taiziwan cruise terminal.⁸⁴

Shenzhen Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure of an engraved manuscripts scroll.⁸⁵



Jieyang Chaoshan International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of an alleged ivory necklace (65g) on a passenger disembarking from the Lanmei Airlines flight L980 coming from Viet Nam. Two days after, genetic analyses confirmed that it was recent elephant ivory.⁸⁶
- Seizures of 2 ivory necklaces in the bags of a Chinese and a Thai traveller coming from Bangkok. The genetic analyses prove that they are recent elephant ivories that cannot be assimilated to antiquities.⁸⁷

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure of an ivory plate with the words "lucky treasure" on the front and an engraved dragon on the back.⁸⁸
- Seizure of 7,746 t of raw and worked ivory in the first 4 months of the year in Guangdong province. The import of ivory has been banned in mainland China since 2015 and since 2017, it has been prohibited to work and sell ivory.⁸⁹

May 2019

Fuzhou, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of 350 kg of raw ivory divided into 81 tusks sections and of the 3 vehicles used to support the traffic.⁹⁰

June 2019

Futian Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure of ivory necklaces on several passengers coming from Hong Kong.⁹¹

Huanggang Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure of 2 bracelets. Under x-rays, ivory appears fluorescent green. "I didn't know it was forbidden to carry ivory," says one of the offenders.⁹²

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure in the suitcases of 4 passengers coming from Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, via Doha, Qatar, of 18 worked ivories of a total weight of 581 g.⁹³



GUANGXI PROVINCE

June 2019

Dongxing Border Post, Guangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

- Seizure by the port customs of 2 ivory necklaces and a Buddha effigy from 2 passengers. Since the beginning of the year, 232 worked ivories of a total weight of 7.6 kg have been intercepted by the port customs.⁹⁴
- Seizure of 6 worked ivories including 2 effigies of Buddha. Total weight : 244 g.⁹⁵

JIANGSU PROVINCE

April 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

- Seizure by customs of 2 necklaces, of a cube and of 4 seals of elephant ivory on passengers coming from Bangkok, Singapore and Japan.⁹⁶



Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China

- Seizure of presumed ivory pendants, necklaces, beads, statuettes, and bracelets. Total weight : 380g.⁹⁷

May 28, 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 2 worked ivories (13 and 51g) on a Chinese passenger coming from Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and rosewood jewellery on a passenger who came from Taipei, Taiwan.⁹⁸

June 15, 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 46 pearls and 2 bracelets made of ivory.⁹⁹

JIANGXI PROVINCE

April 20 and 22, 2019

Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, China

Seizure of a Buddha pendant and of 2 ivory bracelets.¹⁰⁰

JILIN PROVINCE

May 27, 2019

Changchun, Jilin Province, China

Seizure of a carved tusk (1.13 kg) coming from Estonia in a postal parcel.¹⁰¹



LIAONING PROVINCE

LIAONING

May 2019

Port of Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

- Another ivory bracelet at the disembarking of a passenger ship coming from Incheon, South Korea.¹⁰²

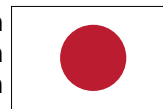
- New seizure of an ivory bracelet in the port.¹⁰³

June 2019

Port of Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of an ivory bracelet (10g) at the disembarking of a passenger ship connecting Incheon, South Korea, and Dalian.¹⁰⁴

- Seizure by port customs of an ivory bracelet in the luggage of a cruise ship passenger coming from Fukuoka, Japan.¹⁰⁵



Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of 3 ivory necklaces with a total weight of 158g in the luggage of a passenger.¹⁰⁶

Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of elephant ivory in a package coming from Japan (1.7 kg).¹⁰⁷



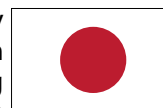
SHANDONG PROVINCE

May 2019

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of 66 pieces of carved ivory and 6 red corals (*Corallium rubrum*) in the luggage of a passenger coming from Japan. A second step in the operation led to the seizure of 14 additional pieces of carved ivory in a shop run by the trafficker.¹⁰⁸

- Seizure of several ivory painting scrolls in a postal package coming from Japan.¹⁰⁹



Yucheng, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of 6 fans with ivory blades and handles in a parcel from the United Kingdom.¹¹⁰



Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of an ivory bracelet on a Chinese passenger disembarking from an airplane coming from Fukuoka, Japan.¹¹¹



Yucheng, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure in a parcel from Japan of an ivory painting scroll (39 g).¹¹²



June 26, 2019

Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 283 g of worked ivories in the form of chopsticks, bracelets, pendants and beads.¹¹³

MUNICIPALITY OF SHANGHAI

April 7 and 8, 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure of 62 worked ivories on 2 Chinese passengers coming from Ethiopia.¹¹⁴



May 2019

Municipality of Shanghai, China

- Seizure of 3 worked ivories from abroad. 552g in total.¹¹⁵

Shanghai Station, Jing'An District, Municipality of Shanghai, China

- Seizure of 25 worked ivories in the luggage of several female passengers arriving by train from Hong Kong—bracelets, rings, necklaces, and figurines.

- Seizure of ivory necklaces on a Kowloon-Shanghai train.¹¹⁶

SICHUAN PROVINCE

Beginning of 2019

Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

246 seizures during the first 3 months of the year. 20 kg of raw and worked ivory in total.¹¹⁷

April 27, 2019

Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China



Seizure in a private home of several hundred pieces of worked ivory : cutlery, necklaces, bracelets, for a total weight of 25 kg and a value close to a million yuan, or 148,000 US\$ and nearly 6,000 US\$ per kg.¹¹⁸

YUNNAN PROVINCE

April 2019

Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.

- Seizure of 4 worked ivories with a total weight of 125 g.¹¹⁹

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan Province, China

- Seizure of 7 alleged ivory bracelets with a total weight of 96.6 g in the cabin luggage of 2 passengers.¹²⁰

Overall seizure by airport customs between January and May 2019 of 221 worked ivories with a total weight of 7.3 kg.¹²¹

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

April 24, 2019

Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Repeated seizures of ivory jewellery.¹²²



May 2019

Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 3 worked ivories weighing a total of 67 g in a parcel from Cambodia.¹²³

June 2019

Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of several worked ivories with a total weight of 240 g.¹²⁴

TIBET

May 16, 2019

Gyirong County, Autonomous Region of Tibet, China. Border with Nepal.

Seizure of 20 alleged ivory balls. Total weight: 152 g.¹²⁵

INDIA

April 3, 2019

Sirumugai, Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu State, India

A male aged approximately 10 years was electrocuted by an illegal fence protecting a banana plantation. Like many others, Nazar Ali planted his banana farm on land squatted along the banks of the Bhavanisagar Dam. Before the Forest Department agents arrived, he quickly took down the fence and threw the electric wire in the lake. An autopsy of the elephant has been requested. Environmental activists have put out a reminder that illegal plantations around the lake are a scourge and that in June 2018, the Madras High Court ordered the state of Tamil Nadu to dismantle all of the electric fences along a 20-km distance on the embankment. The fences were dismantled. But this year, the illegal plantations reappeared, and there was no reaction from the administration.¹²⁶



April 4, 2019

Pallangala, Kodagu District, Karnataka State, India

A bullet perforated the lung of a young male, aged 7 to 8. He dragged himself away over a distance of 50 m and then succumbed.

The Forest Department has their radar set on a fugitive suspect. He apparently modified his ammunition to increase its effectiveness at short range.¹²⁷

April 4 and 11, 2019

Gaimukh, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

The Crime Branch Unit-5 first captured Sachin Ramchandra Chougule and Pravin Ramesh Shere in the evening as they transported a bag containing a tusk weighing one pound. They hoped to sell it for 500,000 rupees (7,200 US\$). During the interrogation described as "intensive" by the Times of India, they gave the name of their supplier. Ganesh (!) Dhere was arrested on April 11. Dhere was allegedly just another middleman. Now, the police want to dismantle the entire rig.¹²⁸

April 12, 2019

Kheroni, Karbi Anglong District, Assam State, India

Another elephant poisoned. This one was found in a sugar cane field. He was part of a herd of elephants that made their way into a densely-populated area. The human population in Assam is growing (+17% between 2001 and 2011) and human-elephant conflicts are increasing.¹²⁹



May 15, 2019

Narla Forest, Kalahandi District, Odisha State, India

The carcass of an elephant was found on May 7, without his tusks. The Forest Department investigation led to Ishwar Bhoi, Samel Majhi and Sindura Majhi, who were arrested. They admitted that they had cut off the tusks and hidden them in the forest.¹³⁰

May 17, 2019

Veerapandi, Theni District, Tamil Nadu State, India

On July 29, 2016, R. Rajendran, alias Senga, and 2 accomplices set a homemade bomb (*avuttukkai* in tamil) hidden in a fruit in the Chinnathadagam Forest Reserve. An elephant calf died in the explosion after taking the bait. The 3 men were arrested one month later, but Rajendran managed to escape. Intelligence information enabled the forest rangers to arrest him again as he waited for a bus.¹³¹

May 29, 2019

Pasunapuram, Erode District, Tamil Nadu State, India

A 12-year-old elephant died after touching a fence that was illegally hooked up to a medium-voltage power supply line. Rajendran, owner of the field that was rented to a corn-growing farmer, was brought in for questioning by forest agents.¹³²



May 30, 2019

Kadayanallur, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Subbaiah was arrested. The farmer is responsible for the death, on May 28, of an elephant calf electrocuted by an illegal electric fence installed around his mango and coconut plantation. The little elephant, between one and three years old, was part of a herd that was often foraging on agricultural land. According to the farmers, the animals have already dug up 25 coconut trees and damaged over 50 mango trees. Electric fences are only authorized if they are powered by solar panels; but Subbaiah only had 2 solar panels, and their batteries were empty. He made up for it by hooking his fence up to an electric and deadly power line.¹³³



May 31, 2019

Gochha Reserve Forest, Nayagarh District, Odisha State, India

On May 28, villagers found the carcass of a 5-year-old male in the forest with his tusks cut off. The incident highlighted the lack of vigilance from the forest rangers in the reserve. According to villagers around the reserve, no rangers have been seen for months. Poachers have an open reign. Worse yet, some people accuse the forest rangers of collusion with the poachers. Rangers Kailash Pradhan and Biswajit Samantaray were suspended today for “dereliction of duty”.¹³⁴

June 1, 2019

Gandhi Nagar, Thoothukudi District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Four teams of forest rangers are actively looking for the tusks of a 20-year-old male cut off his carcass after he died from what appears to be a “digestive disease”. The nearby villagers are being questioned.¹³⁵

June 1, 2019

Matikhola, Dhemaji District, Assam State, India

Bulu Saikia was hiding a piece of ivory in his home. It weighed 2.8 kg and he wanted to sell it. The Golaghat police got wind and raided his house. Saikia allegedly got the ivory from a trafficker of animal parts. The Forest Department contacted the Kaziranga National Park to see if an elephant had been poached recently or found dead without his tusks.¹³⁶

June 2, 2019

Bhutiachang, Udalguri District, Assam State, India

Yet another victim to add to the list of elephants electrocuted by farm fences. This one died during the night, and someone then came and cut off the tip of his trunk for obscure reasons, possibly related to some sort of sorcery. In the district, forest degradation and the fragmentation of migrating corridors are increasing the number of conflicts between farmers and elephants.¹³⁷



June 5, 2019

Sajanagad, Balasore District, Odisha State, India

The decaying corpse of a 40-year-old male was found by a forest ranger patrol in the Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary. The elephant had been poached and his tusks robbed about 10 days earlier.¹³⁸

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 17, 2019

Hindol, Dhenkanal District, Odisha State, India

The same thing happens over and over – to avoid wearing themselves out in the forest looking for game, poachers set up stripped electric cables near villages and wait for animals to be electrocuted. But on June 12, a 25-year-old male elephant was killed. The Forest Department investigation revealed that Biswanath Samal was using electric traps to hunt boars and hares. He has now been arrested and admitted his crime. He even added that he had burned his own leg with an electric shock.¹³⁹



FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 17 and 25, 2019

Tinsukia, Tinsukia District, and Gauhati, Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam State, India

The intense drought and record temperatures that occurred in northern India this year brought to light the deplorable living conditions of elephants in temples and the traffic involved in exhibiting them during religious celebrations. The case of 4 elephants “rented” by the state of Assam to the Jagannath temple (located in Jamalpur, in the state of Gujarat) so they could parade during Rath Yatra festivities, mobilized wildlife activists and revealed that certain members of the administration were involved with wildlife traffickers. It was the transport authorization issued on June 17 by the Forest Department that triggered it all. A heat wave with temperatures as high as 50°C in some areas was crushing India at the time. The 4 elephants were scheduled to make a 4-day trip covering over 3000 km in a train car attached to the end of a passenger train. The Indian NGOs Voice of Asian Elephants Society and Avinava Prayash lodged an appeal to get the authorization cancelled. They explained that elephants do not perspire, need large quantities of water to cool off and that the current temperatures would turn their trip into an excruciating ordeal. A hearing at the Gauhati High Court was set for June 25. The national press picked up the story and began to investigate. Very quickly the “domestic” origin of the 4 elephants was contested: they did not appear in the official list of 905 captive elephants registered in Assam as of 12/30/2018. In fact, they were captured in the wild last January. One of them even has a scar from a poorly treated gunshot wound to his leg. The profile of the middlemen between the animals’ “owners” and the temple darkens the picture even more. Imran Siddiqui, alias Imran Khan, and Hukumdar Khan, alias Munna Khan, paid villagers to catch young elephants in the forest. Siddiqui’s father is a well-known poacher who has allegedly exported at least 12 elephants to the states of Bihar, Gujarat and Kerala. Recognizing the corroborating unfavorable evidence and the legally questionable documents presented at the hearing, the Gauhati High Court, in all its wisdom, cancelled the transport authorization.¹⁴⁰

June 18, 2019

Kurichiad, Wayanad District, Kerala State, India

In Kerala alone, he is the 16th elephant to die in the same way since the beginning of the year. A 25-year-old male was found electrocuted by a fence surrounding a plantain banana plantation 200 m from the edge of the forest.¹⁴¹



June 24, 2019

Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, Karnataka State, India

No one was convinced by the story Basavaraja told the police. He supposedly found a blue bag containing the tusks hidden in the bushes on his farmland 3 months ago, and decided then to come looking for customers in Bangalore. Basavaraja lives near Denkanikottai in Tamil Nadu, not far from the border with Karnataka.¹⁴²

June 26, 2019

Pune, Pune District, Maharashtra State, India

Aditya Khandge, Hrushikesh Gaikwad, Aniket Astekar and Amit Piska arrived in town to find a buyer for 2 tusks. The police were expecting them.¹⁴³

INDONESIA

April 28, 2019

Pati Regency, Central Java Province, Island of Java, Indonesia

Three Facebook ivory vendors are locked up. Seizure of 19 tusks or pieces of tusk, 20-30 cm long, of 53 ivory bracelets, 53 ivory rings, 4 ivory necklaces, 175 ivory cigarette-smokers, 17 Malayan sun bear claws (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), and 7 deer antlers (Cervidae family).¹⁴⁴

facebook



JAPAN

April 2019

Japan

A joint investigation by the EIA (Environmental Investigation Agency) and the JTEF (Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund) shows that among 303 stores in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and other cities that sell customized ivory seals, 70 are willing to sell them to foreign buyers and 3 to ship them outside Japan upon request. The myth of Japan as a self-consumer continues to crack.¹⁴⁵



MALAYSIA

April 30, 2019

Port Dickson, State of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Xavier Jayakumar, the Minister of Water, Land and Natural Resources, accompanied by agents from his services, threw into an industrial incinerator nearly 4 tons of ivory seized between 2011 and 2017 in the form of raw tusks, jewellery, chopsticks and statuettes, all estimated today at 13.26 million ringgits, or 3.2 million US\$ (816 US\$/kg). Malaysia has acquired the bad reputation to be a favoured ivory transit point between Africa and China. "Seized ivory is burned to ensure that it will not be stolen and put back on the black market," confirms the Minister.¹⁴⁶



June 4, 2019

Kampung Sri Timur, State of Johor, Malaysia

Poisoning of 3 elephants aged about 18, 20 and 22 years in the buffer zone of the Lenggong Forest Reserve. The fate of the tusks is not mentioned. Negotiations are underway to force the Malaysian Palm Oil Council to install electric fences around the plantations.¹⁴⁷



NEPAL

May 2, 2019

Suryabinayak, Bhaktapur District, Province No. 3, Nepal

Rupesh Khadka and Bhaskar Poudel were arrested in possession of an elephant calf's tusk weighing 250 g.¹⁴⁸

June 27, 2019

Ranakali Community Forest, Jhapa District, Province No. 1, Nepal

Like in India, wild elephants living in Nepal are victims of the extension of farmland and the fragmentation of their habitat. Like in India, the deadly technique consisting of installing electric lines around fields is wreaking havoc. Today, a 3-year-old male, 4.87 m long and 2.43 m tall, succumbed. He was part of a herd of 10 elephants who had wandered near the corn plantation.¹⁴⁹



SRI LANKA

April 11, 2019

Somawathiya National Park, North Central and Eastern Provinces, Sri Lanka

He was in his twenties and about 2.4 metres high. He was shot in the head. The fate of the tusks is not mentioned.¹⁵⁰

May 29, 2019

Mahapitiya, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

An elephant riddled with bullets was stuck in a rice field. Despite the care he received on the spot, he died. He was about 20 years old. A religious ceremony was held at the crime scene.¹⁵¹

June 25, 2019

Imaduwa, Galle, Southern Province, Sri Lanka

Detention of a 58-year-old man from whom 4 elephant tusks and 2 firearms were seized.¹⁵²

June 25, 2019

Sri Lanka

Charges brought against the Deputy Director of Wildlife Protection Upali Pathmasiri and 7 employees. They are suspected of having organized the capture of 40 wild elephants over the past 10 years and of having sold them to public figures for the equivalent of about 125,000 US\$ each. The population of wild elephants in Sri Lanka is said to be at 7500 individuals.¹⁵³

Domestic elephants, see "On the Trail" n°5 p. 97-98, n°6 p. 91-92, n°7 p. 91, n°8 p. 87, n°9 p. 86, n°11 p. 85, n°12 p. 95, n°13 p. 95, n°15 p. 103, n°17 p. 103-104, n°18 p. 105, n°19 p. 112.

THAILAND

April 10, 2019

Thailand

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in agreement with the Ministry of Trade, intends to lift the ban on the export of live elephants that has been in place since ten years. Exports must comply with the standards of the World Association of Zoos and CITES regulations. This new trend is based on an alleged increase in the wild elephant population at a rate of 7% per year and is in conflict with CITES decisions taken in Geneva in August 2019 banning international trade in live elephants apart from exceptional circumstances.¹⁵⁴

VIET NAM

April 7, 2019

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure in the luggage of Dinh Thi Tuyet Mai, disembarking from flight BL171 from Osaka, Japan, of 28 statuettes weighing from 71 g to 2,796 g and inspired by religion or poetry.¹⁵⁵



April 24, 2019

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

Attempted bringing in of 2 tusks, weighing a total of 10 kg, painted black, wrapped in foil and hidden in a polystyrene box containing dried seafood products. Genetic analysis by the Institute of Tropical Biology is proving that it is in fact the ivory of *Loxodonta Africana*. One arrest. The man aged 37 arrived from Africa via Dubai.¹⁵⁶



© Tien phong

May 24, 2019

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Fine of 100 million dongs or 4,270 US\$ against the owner of a second-hand goods store, among which ivory pendants, bracelets and brooches of unknown origin. Additional fine of 70 million dongs or 3,000 US\$ for illegal advertising.¹⁵⁷



June 5, 2019

Thuong, Tu Son, Bac Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of wristbands, necklaces and other worked presumed-ivories weighing a total of 6 kg in a craft shop run by Mrs Ltt. Thuong, near the city of Tu Son, nicknamed "the capital of white ivory". The thorough investigation of a team of journalists has proven that this nickname is not usurped.

To prove that the ivory is not fake, sellers use several schemes. They throw chopsticks into the air and ensure that when they fall down they will not break. They display the items under halogen lamps and describe Schreger's lines as evidence of the authenticity of ivory. "If it is fake, you will be refunded," they assure the buyers not yet convinced, in the secret of a small shed at the back of the store of which shop windows and shelves are full of incense sticks and statuettes made of jade, marble and other minerals. Bracelets sell for 50-400 US\$, combs for 130 US\$, a pair of chopsticks for 85 US\$, statuettes for 1,700 US\$ and a ring, the loss leader, for 8 US\$.¹⁵⁸



© Anh Tuc - Police

June 6, 2019

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Hard blow for business. Seizure of ivory statuettes weighing a total of 4.4 kg and 2 arrests thanks to ENV's spotters.¹⁵⁹



June 27, 2019

Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure in 2 steps of 207 kg of ivory in the form of 29 tusks and fragments of tusks. Arrest of Pham Quyet.¹⁶⁰



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EUROPE

SPAIN

Beginning of April 2019

Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain

Seizure of 26 worked ivories sold on the Internet by 3 individuals, 2 of whom present themselves as antique dealers. The items were sold between 68 and 1,900 €. ¹⁶¹

Beginning of April 2019

Valence, Valencian Community, Spain

Elephant's foot stools are a must from Western Europe's colonial past (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 89, n°20 p. 109, n°24 p. 79). New seizure. The stool was sold on the Internet. Arrest of a 41-year-old man. ¹⁶²



End of April 2019

Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Seizure of an elephant's foot turned into an umbrella holder. ¹⁶³



© Agents Rurals

FRANCE

May 28, 2019

Saint-Martin-le-Vinoux, Department of Isère, France

German artillery rockets and shells from the Second World War, about 20 shotguns, handguns, 7,500 cartridges, 48,000 € in cash hidden in a refrigerator and an elephant tusk, this is the detail of the loot seized by customs officers in Lyon and Grenoble from an 85-year-old gunsmith claiming to be retired and suspected of supplying weapons to the mob in the Rhône-Alpes region. ¹⁶⁴



© Fce Bleu Isere

May 31, 2019

Domats, Department of Yonne, France

Seizure of ivory items of questionable origin with a total weight of 7kg. The current price of a raw ivory kilo in France is around 600 € (670 US\$). The suspect was betrayed by his Internet business. Intervention by the ONCFS (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune sauvage) and the Gendarmes of Saint-Valerien. ¹⁶⁵

SWITZERLAND

April 15, 2019

Switzerland

Switzerland, an ivory sieve? There is a heated controversy between the Tanzanian General Prosecutor's Office and the Swiss authorities. In July 2015, 3 Chinese people coming from Dar es Salaam were intercepted in Zurich airport before taking a flight to Beijing (see "On the Trail" n°10 p. 67). They got away with it with a fine of 3,200 US\$. In their suitcases, there was 262 kg of raw ivory corresponding to the poaching of at least 40 elephants. The Tanzanian authorities were informed about the seizure one month afterward. "If the traffickers had been extradited to Tanzania, they would have been sentenced to 20 years in prison," wrote the Attorney General of Tanzania.

The Federal Office for Food Safety and Veterinary Affairs recognizes a missed opportunity. "We learn from our mistakes." "The proof is that in January of this year, we put eel traffickers in prison" (see "On the Trail" n°23 p. 18) and the Office's spokesman recalls that last year, 2 members of the Dar es Salaam prosecutor's office came to Switzerland to meet the police at Zurich airport and take samples of the seizure.

The 3 Chinese traffickers were not just carriers. Aged 21 to 37, they claimed to be businessmen and had the means to be. They were the ones who bought the ivory from a Sino-Tanzanian network. Four employees of Dar es Salaam Airport are now under investigation. They helped the 3 Chinese traffickers to leave Tanzania safely. Their trial will take place in the coming months.¹⁶⁶



Other Mammals

AFRICA

ETHIOPIA

April 14-21, 2019

Gibe Sheleko National Park, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, Ethiopia

Unexplained death of 28 hippopotamuses (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II). The park was established in 2011. It houses more than 200 hippopotamuses. The total population is estimated to be around 100,000 individuals. The semi-aquatic mammals are threatened by the loss of their habitat, pollution, infectious diseases and poaching. The ivory from their teeth is prized as a replacement for elephant ivory. In Namibia, more than 200 hippopotamuses were victims of an anthrax outbreak. In Zambia, the species is in danger of a culling plan by approved hunters. 1,000 individuals over 5 years. (see "On The Trail" n°21 p. 72).¹

KENYA

April 4, 2019

Close to Machakos, Machakos County, Kenya

Rescue of a zebra (*Equus quagga*) attacked by villagers. Anaesthesia, cleaning and disinfection of wounds. Truck transfer to the ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute) protected area near the road between Nairobi and Mombasa. Wake-up by antidote, favourable prognosis.²



May 14, 2019

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Rescue of a waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*) at the Voi Wildlife Lodge near a water point. Reported by a tourist, he was strangled by the cable of a trap, away from his herd. After the treatment, he ran away.³

May 17, 2019

Oloisukut Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

An arrow in the back of her left knee. She was limping, she had been in pain for 2 days. Intervention by the KWS and the DSWT (David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust). Prognosis is good.⁴



MALAWI

June 8 and 27, 2019

Chitipa District, Rumphi, Northern Region, Malawi

Sentencing of a 45-year-old woman to 5 years in prison for transporting common eland meat (*Taurotragus oryx*) and ammunition near Nyika National Park. The prosecutor requested a dissuasive sentence even though the defendant is a first-time offender.⁵



NAMIBIA

OPERATION THUNDERBALL

June 2019

Namibia

Seizure in a truck intercepted at a roadside checkpoint of 6 dead steenboks (*Raphicerus campestris*).⁶

AMERICA

BOLIVIA

April 20, 2019

La Paz, Department of La Paz, Bolivia. Border with Brazil.

The body of a marsh deer (*Blastocerus dichotomus*, Appendix I) was in the cargo bed of a pick-up truck. The species is in danger of extinction. Its poaching is punishable by one to 6 years in prison.⁷

BRAZIL

April 8, 2019

Soure, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure on a farm of more than 1,300 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). It was distributed to charities.⁸

April 24, 2019

Luís Correia, State of Piauí, Brazil

The silky anteater (*Cyclops didactylus*) was found in a backpack that the owner discarded as the police approached. He was not injured and showed no signs of abuse. His capture could have been recent. The silky anteaters are subservient to the ceiba (*Ceiba pentandra*) of the forests of Mexico and Bolivia. The seeds of the ceiba are of the same silky tone as their fur. The ideal camouflage is useful to the world's smallest ant eater (300 g in adulthood) whose natural predators are the harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*, Appendix I) and the spectacled owl (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*, Appendix II), both of them have excellent vision.⁹



End of May 2019

Esmeralda, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Poaching outbreak in fields and plantations. Discovery of a slaughtered female capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). She was in gestation. The military police had been alerted by the owners.¹⁰

CANADA

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 17, 2019

Saskatchewan Province, Canada

Sentencing of Gerald Freese to a fine of 3,000 Canadian dollars (2,450 US\$) and a ban on hunting for 3 years for poaching an elk (*Cervus elaphus*). The individual is a persistently recidivist. In his poaching bag, he already had an elk in 2007 and a bull moose (*Alces alces*) in 2017.¹¹



ECUADOR

May 8, 2019

River Port of Pompeya, Orellana Province, Ecuador

Seizure in a bus of 11 kg of white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) meat, that was turned over to the El Coca zoo.¹²

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 3, 2019

Chinook, State of Montana, United States of America

Sentencing of Cameron Dow Overcast to 36 months in prison, including 6 months suspended sentence, and 9,000 US\$ in damages for poaching 2 elk (*Cervus elaphus*). He is also convicted of poaching fish and birds. He usually leaves the carcasses to rot in the open. After 30 days in prison, the judgment gives him the possibility to leave on the condition that he undergoes treatment against poaching addiction.¹³



MEXICO

Beginning of June 2019

Tamasopo, San Luis Potosí State, Mexico

Seizure of a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III, Guatemala) butchered in a private home.¹⁴

PERU

Mid May 2019

Andaray District, Department of Arequipa, Peru

Seizure on a farm of a taruca, the vernacular name for the north Andean deer (*Hippocamelus antisensis*, Appendix I). He is 2 months old and was captured on the plateau after his mother was poached. At least that is the scenario constructed by agents from the Serfor (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) in Arequipa. He was raised in the company of 2 dogs, and fed pet food from bags or boxes. "He is already dependent and impregnated by human habits; he will spend his entire life in a zoo," declared the Serfor regretfully.¹⁵

ASIA

CHINA

April 2019

Autonomous Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure of 2 deer antlers (Cervidae family) in a postal parcel.¹⁶

April 2019 and June 21, 2019

Futian Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure of 2 suspected sika deer antlers (*Cervus nippon*).¹⁷
- Seizure of 85 sika deer antlers in a package from abroad (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 111).¹⁸



May 2019

Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.

Perverse effect of the ban on importing elephant ivory. Seizure in a workshop of 1,660 kg of hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II).¹⁹

May 23, 2019

Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang Province, China

Heilongjiang

Sentencing of Yan to 10 years in prison for attempting to smuggle 88 horns of saiga (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) with the complicity of a Russian railwayman. Seizure of 100,000 yuan (14,900 US\$) of his financial assets.²⁰



INDIA

May 12, 2019

Adilabad District, Telangana State, India

The rangers in the Karjelly forest perimeter were on a routine patrol when they were alerted to 2 men drive by on a motorcycle. They pursued the suspects and a few kilometers down the road, they found a bag containing a four-horned antelope (*Tetracerus quadricornis*, Appendix III) that the poachers had just hidden in some dry grass. Bibbera Bapu Rao and Routu Tirupati were arrested shortly afterwards.²¹



INDONESIA

April 28, 2019

Koto Malintang, Agam Regency, West Sumatran Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

Caught in the act of cutting up a barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*). The day before, the suspect had set a trap right where he was caught cutting up his prey.²²

IRAN

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 16 and May 5, 2019

Savadkuh County and Salas-e Babajani County, Mazandaran Province, Iran

-Arrest of a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) poacher. He was fined 2,380 US\$ pending the criminal trial. His accomplice fled to the mountains.
-Seizure of 3 carcasses of wild goats, whole or skinned. Arrest of 2 poachers who were trading meat. One of them is a repeat offender.²³



April 27, 2019

Savadkuh County, Mazandaran Province, Iran

Three shots rang out in Chakrat Mountain. After following a suspect car, police forces found a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) still warm in the cargo bed of the pick-up and 10 wild goats skinned and stored in a freezer in the suspect's house. Poachers face 3 months to 3 years in prison and a criminal fine of 1,200 US\$. For now, they coped an administrative fine equal to 2,900 US\$.²⁴



NEPAL

May 16, 2019

Gongabu, Kathmandu District, Province No. 3, Nepal

Police raid in a restaurant. Seizure of a red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I) skin. Rup Bahadur Budha arrested.²⁵

PAKISTAN

May 2, 2019

Tharparkar District, Sindh Province, Pakistan

Arrest by residents of the village of Kharo Junejo of 5 poachers chasing Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III). They were then handed over to the authorities. After paying a fine of 1,062 US\$, they were released and their vehicles and weapons were returned to them, much to the displeasure of the villagers.²⁶



THAILAND

April 4, 2019

Phu Phan National Park, Provinces of Sakon Nakhon and Kalasin, Thailand

Arrest of 2 poachers caught in the act of transporting a Reeve's muntjac carcass (*Muntiacus reevesi*) inside the park.²⁷

April 24, 2019

Subdistrict of Sam Ruean, District of Bang Pa-in, Province of Ayutthaya, Thailand

Seizure of a dead Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) from a local public works contractor. He says he bought him from a hunter for 8,400 baht (264 US\$). He skinned him with the help of his employees. Claiming to have not known that the species was protected by the anti-poaching law, he was released on bail.²⁸

EUROPE

ITALY

June 2, 2019

Colli Berici, Vicenza Province, Veneto Region, Italy

New poaching of a European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) decapitated in order to sell his antlers (see "On the Trail" n°23 p. 138).²⁹

UNITED KINGDOM

April 5, 2019

London, England, United Kingdom

Conviction of Landrose Developments, a real estate developer, to a fine of 18,820£ (24,700 US\$) for knowingly harming a bat colony (genus *Pipistrellus*) by destroying its habitat without offering and implementing compensatory measures (see "On the Trail" n°19 p. 120, n°20 p. 114, n°21 p. 107).³⁰



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

From June 28 to July 6, 2019

Maria Island, State of Tasmania, Australia

A prohibited area, Maria Island is closed to tourists from June 28 to July 6 due to controlled marsupial sampling. This means shooting on sight 500 kangaroos and wallabies (sub-family Macropodinae) considered to be in excess and endangering island ecosystems.³¹

Multi-Species

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 7, 2019

Kruger National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Collapse of an electrical line inside the park in the middle of the night. Electrocution of an elephant, a giraffe and a vulture. The technicians of Eskom (a South African electricity production and distribution company) are on site. The power was cut off to allow the bodies to be cleared and the elephant's tusks to be legally extracted.¹



June 2, 2019

Madaka Game Ranch, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

20 poachers swarmed heavily armed and accompanied by numbered dogs into the hunting reserve. The clash was violent. A guard from the reserve was transported to the hospital in a state of absolute emergency. The livestock farmers in the area came to the rescue of Izak Kirsten, ranch's director, and his team. Six invaders have been halted. Two cars were seized. Several hunting dogs were abandoned on site by the fleeing poachers. Some of them were wounded by bullets (dog hunting in South Africa, see "On the Trail" n°21 p. 108).²

CAMEROON

April 17, 2019

Nki National Park, East Region, Cameroon

"The appetite of poachers in the park is limitless despite our efforts to deter them," says Jean Siroma, the park manager. The Central African and Congolese rebels and deserters take advantage of the permeability of the borders between Cameroon, Congo and Central Africa to shoot down genets (*Genetta servalina*), water guibs (*Tragelaphus spekii*) with Kalashnikovs in the park and traffic with the local populations and international networks. The Nki Natural Park covers more than 3,000 km² and it is also home to elephants (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 98).³



COTE D'IVOIRE

May 29, 2019

Bouna, Zanzan District, Côte d'Ivoire

Sentencing of Hien Bissointé, 44 years old and father of 30 children, to 6 months in prison for poaching in Comoé National Park. Bissointé could not afford to buy an ox to honour his father's funeral and went to the park with several of his children to help himself collecting some bushmeat. The clan in the middle of an organized gang poaching action was surrounded by an OIPR (Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves) patrol. Bissointé senior was stopped, his children fled. In court, the patriarch had pleaded clemency in virtue of the affliction that weighed down him. Comoé Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is home to many plant species, 135 mammal species, 35 amphibian species and 500 bird species, including the Denham bustard (*Neotis denhami*, Appendix II) and the yellow-headed hornbill (*Ceratogymna elata*).⁴



GUINEA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 7, 2019

Kissidougou, Faranah Region, Guinea

The 2 Touré brothers were caught in the act of transporting and selling 60 skins of python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), civet, crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), duiker and harnessed bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*). They face 1 to 5 years in prison and a fine of 10 to 50 million Guinean francs (1,090 US\$ to 5,448 US\$). Pending trial, they are in Kissidougou's prison.⁵

June 25, 2019

Labé, Labé Region, Guinea

Disbelief or outrage among stakeholders ranging from the NGO GALF (Guinée Application de la Loi Faunique) to the National Director of Waters and Forests to the CITES focal point after Abdoulaye Baldé's lenient conviction for killing or at least transporting several leopard and lion skins, 11 python skin fragments (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and ratel skins (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III in Botswana) in the new Moyen Bafing National Park (PNMB). Baldé was given a one-year suspended prison sentence. He was facing 5 years in prison. He only did one month in detention under remand. He was arrested in the act on May 25.

For his part, Guinean President Alpha Condé is planning to build a hydroelectric power plant in the heart of the park, with a reservoir covering 264 km², which would represent a disaster for the environment and for the inhabitants of villages upstream and downstream. The national park of Moyen Bafing has an area of 6,426 km². It is home to West African chimpanzees that have suffered a decline of more than 80% in the last 20 years.⁶

MALAWI

REPEATED OFFENSE

Beginning of May 2019 Malawi

Chain arrest of Chinese nationals.

- Seven of them plus a Malawian citizen in possession of pangolin scales, rhinoceros horns, worked ivories, hippopotamus teeth and illegal weapons. At the time of the arrest, Mr. Li Hao Yaun and Ms. Qin Zhang on bail after being arrested in December 2017 for their involvement in ivory trafficking.
- Qiang Cheng and Mr. Shine He were arrested. They were in possession of pangolin scales, ammunition and explosives.
- In addition, 2 nationals were also arrested for illegal possession of pangolin scales.⁷



MOZAMBIQUE

June 2019

Mozambique

On the occasion of the 8th anniversary of ANAC (Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação), its director, Mateus Muthemba, announced that this year the protected areas will benefit from the "reinforcement" of about 3,000 animals from neighbouring countries. The import of elephants, lions, buffaloes, zebras and impalas is mentioned. Other specimens will be distributed between protected areas and hunting reserves. To mark the anniversary, a number of school trips were organized in the Maputo Special Reserve.⁸

NAMIBIA

Beginning of May 2019

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

"On the Trail " n°20 p.115 had mentioned this prosperous Chinese pensioner who lived in a fashionable neighbourhood of the capital, in the middle of several illegal trophies. Ruan Lai You, 80 years old, pleaded guilty. He acknowledges having possessed a firearm without a licence and having held trophies of leopards and cheetahs without a certificate of origin. As for the worked ivories, he claims to have bought them in Côte d'Ivoire, and to have acquired the rhino horn after a legal hunting trip. He has lived in Namibia for more than 15 years and ran a store in the capital's Chinatown. He was sentenced to a fine of 11,000 US\$ or 9 years in prison if non-payment. The judge also ordered the restitution of the bail of 180,000 Namibian dollars (11,941 US\$) he had paid to obtain his release, after 2 days of police custody.⁹



May 23, 2019

Otjimbingwe and Karibib Districts, Erongo Region, Namibia

Seizure of 2 oryx carcasses (genus *Oryx*), valued at 700 US\$, and 2 bags of smoked zebra meat (genus *Equus*). Arrest of 3 men, one Angolan without a residence permit and 2 nationals. The trio poaches with dogs, traps and assegais.

The bushmeat trade is accelerating, new farmers accessing land ownership are participating in the traffic. "At this rate, our grandchildren will not know what wildlife is," says Butzi Kuhne, head of anti-poaching in Karibib district. Initially, Tavalu, 40, Katambo, 42 and Kamati, 26, were denied bail.¹⁰

June 13, 2019

Namibia

Announcement by the Minister of Information and confirmation by the Ministry of Environment spokesperson of the auction of 28 elephants, 60 giraffes (genus *Giraffa*), 500 to 600 African buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*), 150 springboks (*Antidorcas marsupialis*), 65 antelopes (genus *Oryx*), 35 elands (genus *Taurotragus*), 16 kudus (genus *Tragelaphus*), 20 impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*) and 16 wildebeests (genus *Connochaetes*). Elephants offered for sale come from Khaudum National Park, giraffes from Waterberg Plateau National Park, oryx from Hardap Game Reserve. The sale is officially justified by the drought and the inadequacy of the plant cover to the herbivore population. The expected proceeds of the sale are 1.2 million US\$.¹¹

SENEGAL

April 23, 2019

Dakar, Dakar Region, Senegal

The defendant was taken to the central police station. He was transporting a wide variety of wildlife: Rüppell's vulture heads (*Gyps rueppellii*, Appendix II), hooves and horns of armadillos (*Orycteropus afer*) and gazelles and 3 male and female lion masks (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II). There's black magic and charlatanism in the air.¹²



TANZANIA

June 2019

Tanzania

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania is winning the fight against poaching. Its intensity is said to have gone down 70% in several years. However, much remains to be done to prevent networks from evacuating huge and underground stocks of tusks and scales abroad for cash. Efforts against poaching aim to protect the tourist industry, 90% of which is based on hunting or wildlife viewing.¹³

June 3, 2019

Manyoni District, Singida Region, Tanzania

Sentencing of 2 men to a total of 60 and 80 years in prison each for having poached 3 elephants and 1 giraffe (genus *Giraffa*) between 2016 and 2017, for trading their trophies, for using their weapons in circumstances prohibited by law and for using a prohibited weapon. All sentences are concurrent and the convicted should remain in prison for about 20 years.¹⁴



TUNISIA

From June 20 to June 26, 2019

Tunisia

Seizures of 100,000 packs of cigarettes, 10 t of fuel, 14,000 boxes of medicines, 7 t of Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) and 20 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) worth an estimated 3,000 US\$ per specimen in vehicles coming from Libya.¹⁵

ZIMBABWE

End of April 2019

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Never Ndlovu was sentenced to 27 years in prison. At his home, the police coming for a bicycle robbery found almost by chance a lion pelisse (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) whose head protruded from underneath the bed and then lion teeth and 3 paws, a python skin (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) 3.5 m long, 4 kg of raw ivory and 5 traps. Never claimed without convincing the court that he had recovered all these remains day after day from dead animals when he was leading his meagre grazing herd in the national park. All this, he said, was intended to take care of his mother Georgina, his entourage and himself. All this paraphernalia is valued by local units at around 50,000 US\$.¹⁶



June 25, 2019

Zimbabwe

At the Africa Union-United Nations Wildlife Economy Summit, President Mnangagwa offers to "give" Angola lions, elephants and African buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*) to restore the scale of the wildlife decimated by the civil war and says Zimbabwe is working with Angola to raise funds to neutralize abandoned landmines on the Angolese ground.¹⁷

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid-April 2019

Buenos Aires, Argentina

They wanted to get the skin of the animals. Seizure in 3 clandestine shops of scarves, blankets, rugs made of skins of coypus (*Myocastor coypus*), viscachas (Chinchillidae family), foxes, chinchillas (genus *Chinchilla*) and other species. Arrest of the tenants.¹⁸



April 26, 2019

Comandante Luis Piedrabuena, Santa Cruz Province, Argentina

Vehicle search at the intersection of National Road 3 and Provincial Road 288. Seizure of 3 dead rheas (*Rhea* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), 2 firearms and ammunition. Three arrests. The remains were burnt.¹⁹

May 25, 2019

Unquillo, Córdoba Province, Argentina

Seizure in a private home of monkeys, snakes and birds, both live and stuffed, as well as cages and traps.²⁰

May 31, 2019

Charata, Chaco Province, Argentina

Seizure of a puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) approximately one year old, and 2 peccaries (*Tayassuidae* family, Appendix I or II) aged 20 to 30 years.²¹



BOLIVIA

Beginning of April 2019

Cochabamba, Cochabamba Department, Bolivia

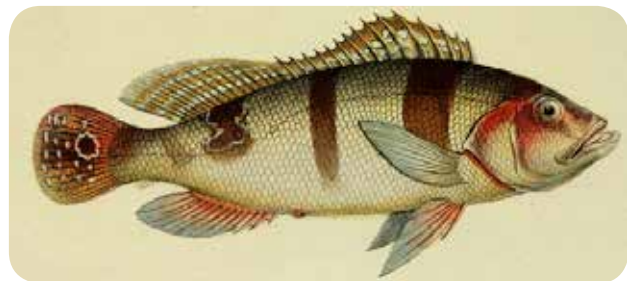
Seizure on a bus of 3 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix II) and one capuchin monkey (*Sapajus* spp. synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II) in poor condition following a luggage compartment journey between Santa Cruz and Cochabamba. Two arrests, including a minor.²²

BRAZIL

From March 26 to April 5, 2019

State of Amazonas, Brazil

Raid in the port—Barcelos is 400 km upstream from Manaus—and observation mission on the Rios Negro, Aracá and Demeni. Seizures of 300 kg of butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*), a carnivorous fish also found in French Guyana who can reach up to 75 cm long, 297 freshwater turtles, who were released into the Rio Negro, and illegally cut wood.²³



From April 2 to April 16, 2019

Rorainópolis, State of Roraima, Brazil

Joint operation of CIPA (Compagnie Indépendante de la Police Environnementale) and Ibama. Fight against arson and deforestation. Seizures in the middle of the jungle of 240 logs, several chainsaws and 2 bulldozers, 8 rifles, 143 ammunition and about 100 kg of tapir meat (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II) and other poached game. Only one arrest.²⁴

April 9, 2019

Veranópolis, Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil

Seizure in a cellar of a marmoset (*Mico* spp., Appendix II) and a red-spectacled Amazon (*Amazona pretrei*, Appendix I) with his wings cut.²⁵

April 10, 2019

Jacupiranga, São Paulo State, Brazil

Seizure of a dismembered toucan (*Ramphastidae* family) and a butchered capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), along with ammunition and call-birds in a hunting cabin.²⁶

OPERATION RETIRADA (FIGHT AGAINST LOOTING)

April 10, 11 and 12, 2019

São Francisco de Paula, Jaquirana and Cambará do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of 27 kg of fish, 17 kg of armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family) and iguana-meat, 4 green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), one hooded siskin (*Spinus magellanicus*) and 210 m of nets.²⁷

April 14, 2019

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

Seizures of 720 kg of meat from wild animals including deer and peccaries, 83 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and one live baby tapir (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II). The meat, turtles and tapir were to be sold on the city's markets. The turtles will be released into a river thanks to the cooperation of the Navy. Two arrests. The 2 men claimed they want to buy cassava flour in Guajará, in the state of Amazonas. Lacking cassava, wholesalers would have instead offered bushmeat and pets to sell on the markets. The meat was purchased for the equivalent of 2 US\$/kg, turtles for 0.3 US\$ each and the baby tapir for 74 US\$.²⁸



April 14 and 16, 2019

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

Seizure of 94 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* ou *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), a young tapir (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II), 745 kg of wild meat, measuring scales, and cutting, packaging and freezing equipment inside of a truck and a house.²⁹

April 18, 2019

São Paulo, São Paulo State, Brazil

Seizure of 542 animals in the luggage compartment of a bus on the line coming into São Paulo from Senhor do Bonfim (over 2000 km). Many were dead. Others nearly dead. One falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) managed to escape. A number of birds had lost their feathers. Travel conditions had been horrible. Three arrests. The survivors were taken to the CRAS (Centro de Recuperação de Animais Silvestres).³⁰

April 23, 2019

Eldorado do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil

An arrest on BR-290. Seizure of 158 birds and 116 turtles.³¹

May 9, 2019

Boa Vista, State of Roraima, Brazil

Seizure of 9 turtles, including red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) and yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) a dead collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), a chainsaw and a car at kilometre 489 of the BR-174 highway. The passengers fled.³²

May 21, 2019

Santarém, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure in the holds of a ship coming from Manaus of 6 t of salted arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 2.5 t of caiman meat (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II) and 300 bags of Brazilian nuts. Arrest of the captain. He was released on bail equal to 10 legal minimum wages.³³

OPERATION « URUTAU »

“Urutau”, potoos in English, are nocturnal birds well known for their camouflage abilities.

May 23, 2019

São Paulo State, Brazil

An organized gang has been disbanded. On Internet, they were selling tufted capuchins (*Cebus apella*, synonym of *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II), golden parakeets (*Guaruba guarouba*, Appendix I), blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), toco toucans (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) and blue-fronted parrots (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). Fourteen arraignments for wildlife trafficking. The network had branches in the states of São Paulo, Goiânia, Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais and Pará.³⁴

May 26, 2019

Jacupiranga, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure in an abandoned house of coati giblets (genus *Nasua*), nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), possums (genus *Didelphis*), 9 firearms, ammunition, nets and traps. The poachers are on the run.³⁵



May 29, 2019

Salvador, Bahia State, Brazil

Seizure in the home of an individual: 5 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), 3 teguises (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II), 3 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 7 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 3 cardinal tanagers (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), 2 violaceous euphonias (*Euphonia violacea*), one paroaria (genus *Parousia*), 2 rabbits, 5 guinea pigs (*Cavia porcellus*), 200 mice and firearms. Suspicion of widespread trafficking. The mice were for the boas.³⁶



Beginning of June 2019

Barra do Garças and Novo Santo Antônio, Mato Grosso State, Brazil

Joint operation with the Ibama, the military police and the Ministry of the Environment. Seizure of 510 kg of fish, including 224 kg of arapaoma (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 18 turtles, one boat, 87 fishing rods, hundreds of hooks, one pick-up truck. Arraignment of approximately 50 people, most of whom do not live in Mato Grosso. Poachers would be linked with restaurants.³⁷

Mid-June 2019

Tumucumaque Mountains National Park, State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizure by the military police and the Chico Mendes Institute of 350 kg of meat from crocodiles (Alligatoridae family), pacas (*Cuniculus paca*), capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), hoccas (subfamily Cracinae), turtles, 150 kg of meat from fish, firearms, ammunition and nets.³⁸



Mid June 2019

Santa Maria Madalena, Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil

Seizure in a private home of 6 animals in a freezer, including 2 armadillos (*Dasypodidae* family) and a large American opossum (genus *Didelphis*), 12 live birds, and some slingshots and traps.³⁹

June 21, 2019

Araguatins, Tocantins State, Brazil

Three pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), an armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family), a toucan (*Ramphastidae* family) and an undulated tinamou (*Crypturellus undulatus*), all found dead in the back of a truck. 5 poachers arrested.⁴⁰



COLOMBIA

Mid April 2019

Bolívar Department, Colombia

- Macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix II) stolen from the Isla Barú bird sanctuary. The Aviario Nacional is set up on the Isla Barú. The veterinarians and animal keepers help birds seized in people's homes or in pet shops learn or relearn to live in the wild. In the final phases of the process, the birds live in semi-liberty and wise-guys come by boat and capture them with very little trouble, then make a big profit selling them on the pet bird market. The number of thefts increases as Easter celebrations approach. Holy Week is also dangerous for iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) who take advantage of the relative protection of the location to reproduce. Poachers slice their bellies open and take their eggs. The eggs are then sold to connoisseurs for 500 pesos, or 0.15 US\$ each along the side of the road. Iguana eggs are supposedly good for your health and aphrodisiac.

- Seizure at a road block on the road from Turbaco to Cartagena of 60 Colombian sliders (*Trachemys callirostris*), 30 were alive and 30 had been butchered, and 3 sloths (*Folivora* sub-order).⁴¹

May 23, 2019

Metropolitan Area of Bogotá, Colombia

Seizures of 4 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) in a cage suspended from a pole and 3 wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) at the Salitre bus station in the Usaquén district. Arrest of a foreign woman.⁴²

Beginning of June 2019

Cesar Department, Colombia

Releases into protected wild-life environments after weeks or months of health care and re-adaptation to life in the wild: 3 ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), 5 red howlers (*Alouatta seniculus*, Appendix II), 4 common caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II), 3 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 130 wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II), 38 Colombian sliders (*Trachemys callirostris*), 30 Colombian wood turtles (*Rhinoclemys melanosterna*), 10 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 3 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 2 yellow-backed orioles (*Icterus chrysater*), a greyish saltator (*Saltator caeruleus*), a new world oriol (genus *Icterus*), a common blackbird (*Turdus merula*). They had all been seized and had been destined for the pet market.⁴³



ECUADOR

April 16, 2019

Orellana Province, Ecuador

Sentencing of the owner of a handicraft shop to a fine of 1,970 US\$ for selling 8 strips of oncilla skin (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I) and one red brocket skin strip (*Mazama americana*). On the same day, the Minister of the Environment announced that as part of the "Tradition and Conservation" campaign, 3,181 decorations made of wax palm (*Ceroxylon quindiuense*) leaves and seeds along with feathers weighing a total of 1,170 kg were seized on markets and at churches across the country and in particular in Chimborazo province. Wax palms are essential for feeding spectacled bears, parrots, toucans and thousands of rodent and insect species (see also page 29).⁴⁴



April 19, 2019

Near El Coca, Orellana Province, Ecuador

Seizure on a bus near the Sumaco Napo Galeras national park of 18 kg of meat of collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras) and armadillo (Dasypodidae family). One arrest.⁴⁵

End of June 2019

Rumichaca International Bridge, Carchi Province, Ecuador. Border with Colombia.

Following an anonymous tip, 20 common leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*), originated from the Middle East, along with 6 poison frogs, 7 centipedes and 52 tarantulas were found in a dump. They could have been sold for between 80 and 100 US\$ on the pet market. They were turned over to the Quito vivarium.⁴⁶



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 17, 2019

Laredo, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Sentencing of Cody Morganthaler, Edelmiro Martinez and Eduardo Lopez to a 5,000 US\$ fine and of Inocente Sanchez to a 2,500 US\$ fine, plus a year's probation for both of them for having killed an aoudad (*Ammotragus lervia*, Appendix II), a blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal), an addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*, Appendix I), and a mouflon (*Ovis orientalis orientalis*) from a helicopter in violation of the Airborne Hunting Act. The facts occurred while flying over Laredo Hunting Resort with the approval of Martinez, director of the hunting reserve full of exotic animals.⁴⁷



FRANCE (FRENCH GUYANA)

May 29, 2019

Macouria, Department of French Guyana, France

Stirred seizure by the ONCFS assisted by a dozen gendarmes of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), a monkey (order Primates, Appendix I or II), 2 wild ducks (Anatidae family) and a pit viper (*Bothrops bilineatus*). High members of the territorial hunting organisation came to the rescue of the traffickers.⁴⁸

GUATEMALA

April 13, 2019

Palín, Escuintla Department and Pasaco, Jutiapa Department, Guatemala

- **OPERATION VERANO SEGURO.** Seizure by the PNC (Policía Nacional Civil) in the early hours of the day of about 10 Atlantic sailfish (*Istiophorus albigans*). Three arrests.



- **OPERATION JAGUAR NOCTURNO.** Seizure by agents of the Diprona (División de Protección a la Naturaleza) of 2 caimans (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II), 8 black-bellied whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*, Appendix III in Honduras), 84 blue crabs (*Callinectes sapidus*), 1,000 pustulose arks (*Anadara tuberculosa*) and 3 raccoons (genus *Procyon*). Three arrests.⁴⁹

MEXICO

April 5, 2019

Guadalupe, State of Nuevo León, Mexico

Seizure of a green conure (*Aratinga holochlora*, Appendix II), a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), 2 Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II in Mexico), a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III) and 2 raccoons.⁵⁰

Beginning of April 2019

State of Nuevo León, Mexico

Seizures of 2 Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I or II), a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), a green conure (*Aratinga holochlora*, Appendix II), a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala) and 2 raccoons (genus *Procyon*). The deer and crocodiles were transferred to the La Pastora Zoo.⁵¹

April 15, 2019

Guadalajara, State of Jalisco, Mexico

Seizure on a parcel service platform of 2 packages on the way to Mexico containing 30 veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II) that were still alive but very maltreated, various



parts (antlers, skin, skull) of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*).⁵²

April 24, 2019

Hermosillo, State of Sonora, Mexico

Judicial sequestration of 3 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), an African lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I), a Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I), a lemur and 23 desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*, Appendix II). The operator of the Sonora Ecological Centre did not have documentation at the time of the inspection proving the legal origin of the animals nor a management plan to ensure the safety of visitors. In this zoo, a tiger hurt a child. Fine of 1,000 US\$ and bank attachment equal to 11,000 US\$.⁵³



End of April 2019

Apodaca, Nuevo León State, Mexico

- A Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I or II) was voluntarily handing over to national parks and forests agents.
- A rattlesnake (genus *Crotalus*) was rescued on the road and immediately transferred to an appropriate habitat.

- A tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) was seized from private property and transferred to the La Pastora zoo in Guadalupe.⁵⁴



May 15, 2019

Altamira, Tamaulipas State, Mexico

Voluntarily handing over to PROFEPA agents and firefighters: one Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), one boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) and 3 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala).⁵⁵

PANAMA

Beginning of May 2019

David District, Chiriqui Province, Panama

An anonymous tip led to the seizure of a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), 13 red-masked parakeets (*Aratinga erythrogenys*, Appendix II), a yellow-headed Amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), 4 red-vented parrots (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II), 2 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), 2 white-faced capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II), a red-backed squirrel monkey (*Saimiri oerstedii*, Appendix I) and 4 spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix I or II).⁵⁶

PARAGUAY

OPERATION HOLY WEEK

Mid-April 2019

Benjamín Aceval, Presidente Hayes Department, Paraguay

Seizure and destruction of meat of caiman (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II), rhea (*Rhea* spp., Appendix I or II), capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*).⁵⁷

OPERATION HOLY WEEK

April 17, 2019

Itacurubí del Rosario, San Pedro Department, Paraguay

Seizures in vehicles and a freezer of 2 Chacoan peccaries (*Catagonus wagneri*, Appendix I) and armadillos (Dasypodidae family).⁵⁸

PERU

Beginning of May 2019

Puno, Juliaca, Department of Puno, Peru

- Seizure during the traditional Alasitas fair of 4 puna rhea feather dusters (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I), 2 Bolivian hairy armadillos (*Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II) and 2 taxidermized toads (genus *Bufo*).



- Seizure of 45 kg of Palo Santo (*Bursera graveolens*), or "sacred wood" of which hydrolat is used in traditional medicine to boost digestion, treat muscle and joint pain, bronchitis, asthma and other respiratory problems. It is also said to heal the mind and fight stress.⁵⁹

Mid-May 2019

Cajamarca, Department of Cajamarca, Peru

Seizure after the search of a private home of an amazon (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II) and a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II).⁶⁰

ASIA

CHINA

April 2019

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 9 crocodile skin bracelets (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), 180 g each, 2 giant clams pearls necklaces (Tridacninae, Appendix II) of 50 and 52 g and 9 red sandalwood statuettes (*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Appendix II).⁶¹

April 2019

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 160 juvenile reptiles: common wall geckos (*Tarentola mauritanica*), lizards and snakes bought in the Mong Kok pet market in Hong Kong. The smuggler says he was instructed by his children and their classmates to make a group purchase.⁶²



Tarentola mauritanica

April 1, 2019

Dandong, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure in a parcel from France of 2 ivory necklaces (98 g) and a hawksbill turtle shell bracelet (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) (10 g).⁶³



April 2 and 8, 2019

Qingdao and Nanning, Shandong and Guangxi Provinces, China



Seizure of ivories (21 kg), 1.83 kg of rhinoceros horns, of 4 skins, of 10.9 kg of tiger bones and teeth, 9 vials of bear bile (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and 24.73 kg of pangolin scales. Fourteen arrests.⁶⁴

April 24, 2019

Erenhot, Inner Mongolia Region, China. Border with Mongolia.

Seizure of one vial of bear fat (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and 3 vials of honey badger fat (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III in Botswana).⁶⁵



May 8 and 10, 2019

Guilin, Guangxi Province, China

Seizures of 8 worked ivories, 173 g of rhinoceros horn items, 2 skeletons of François' langurs (*Trachypithecus francoisi*, Appendix II) and 968 g of pangolin scales.⁶⁶



May 2019

Municipality of Chongqing, China

Seizure from international postal parcels and a passenger's luggage of 59 ivory items and 13 giant clam pearls items (Tridacninae, Appendix II) and other items made of sea turtle (Appendix I) shell and red coral (*Corallium rubrum*). In March, customs also intercepted 14 antelope horns.⁶⁷



May 16, 2019

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, Hong-Kong, China

In one day, seizure in the luggage of 7 passengers of bracelets, ivory necklaces, red coral jewellery (*Corallium rubrum*), an agarwood necklace and rosewood beads.⁶⁸



May 30, 2019

Tianjin Municipality, China

Tianjin customs balance sheet since the beginning of the year: 135 worked ivories weighing a total of 24.7 kg, sperm whale teeth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), live cobras (genus *Naja*).⁶⁹

From June 1 to June 15, 2019

Nanning, Guangxi Province, China



Seizures in 15 days of 4 parcels containing 2 worked ivories (46.5 g), pangolin scales (859.2 g), tiger bones (548.5 g), and 4 rhinoceros horn cups (165 g). Police hearing of 4 suspects.⁷⁰



June 2, 2019

**Mohan Border Post, Yunnan Province, China.
Border with Laos.**

Seizure of 780 g of impressed tortoise shells (*Manouria impressa*, Appendix II), Malayan porcupine stomachs (*Hystrix brachyura*) and parts of elk (*Cervus elaphus*).⁷¹

June 6, 2019

Dandong, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure by highway customs in the luggage of tourists entering the country from South Korea through the Dalian port of 29 vials of bear bile (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and 84 boxes of Angong Niu Huang pills containing extracts of preputial glands of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II).⁷²



June 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Three-in-one. The traveller departing for Taipei had in his luggage an erhu, a traditional drum made of sandalwood (*Dalbergia* spp., Appendix I or II), python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and hawksbill turtle scales (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I).⁷³

June 20, 2019

Changsha Huanghua International Airport, Hunan Province, China

Seized on a Chinese passenger coming from South Africa, via Hong Kong, of 290 g of pangolin scales and 160 g of tiger bones.⁷⁴



June 2019

Nanning, Guangxi Province, China

Customs track record since the beginning of the year: 80,000 dried seahorses, 3,422 *Pegasus laternarius* fish, 42.2 kg of tiger bones, 611 pangolins and 873.71 kg of ivory. Value: 15.6 million US\$. Previous report: "On the Trail" n°23 p. 156.⁷⁵

From January to June, 2019

Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China

Since the beginning of the year, seizures of 69 worked ivories (1.8 kg in total), 7 pieces of red coral jewellery (*Corallium rubrum*), 3 giant clams (Tridacninae, Appendix II), all coming from Africa, Japan and South Asia.⁷⁶

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

April 17, 2019

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

The General Directorate of Airports hands over to the Ministry of Environment sandalwood items, raw ivory sometimes painted in black, worked ivory, rhino and gazelle horns (a total of 2,272 pieces with a total weight of 1,346 kg) seized over the past several months on flights from Africa or Europe to Asia.⁷⁷



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INDIA

April 7 and 8, 2019

Bhopal, Bhopal District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

In-depth search of the home of Ashwini Sharma, former advisor to the State Prime Minister. For 2 days, income tax officers searched his apartment on Platinum Plaza, and they found things: bottles of illegal alcohol, 5 firearms, 6 skins and trophies of protected species, including a tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III), sambar (*Rusa unicolor*) and a spotted deer (*Axis axis*). The seized animal parts were sent to the Forest Department, who asked Ashwini Sharma to provide the official documents proving that he had acquired them legally. He tried to pass the buck, saying that they were with the tax administration. On April 14, the Forest Department gave him an ultimatum: if Ashwini Sharma did not produce the documents within 24 hours, charges would be pressed against him. The raid was part of a vast operation launch by the federal administration to fight against the network of corruption and money laundering involving individuals close to Kamal Nath, the state Prime Minister.⁷⁸



April 16, 2019

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

An motorist found Ajay and Lakhadnath's attitude suspicious as they stood waiting at the Sector 51 Metro station with a cloth bag and 2 monkeys. He notified the police, who discovered that the bag contained a healthy 3-foot-long brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) in a box. The 2 suspects were arrested. The 2 primates and the snake are scheduled to be released.⁷⁹

Devmurti, Jalna District, Maharashtra State, India

Rajendra Dattu Jadhav, an animal-loving farmer, put a plastic barrel cut in half on his land and filled it with water for wild animals who were parched by the severe drought. For several days, various species came to drink. But this morning, he discovered a disaster: 6 deer, a blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III), 9 of his goats and one of his cows lay on the ground near the container. The Forest Department was informed and came to take samples of the water and the animals' organs. Rajendra Dattu Jadhav's involvement has been excluded, since the domestic animals were his own. Vengeance from someone in the village would appear to be the cause of the poisoning.⁸⁰



April 30, 2019

Sathanuru Forest, Ramanagara District, Karnataka State, India

Shivappa (30 years old) and his accomplice are small-time poachers. Equipped with a flashlight and a homemade rifle, they had gone into the forest at 1 a.m., but had left their bicycles at the edge of the woods. A ranger patrol came across the 2 bikes and tracked the 2 men. They found Shivappa who had a small Indian civet (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III) and 2 black-naped hares (*Lepus nigricollis*). His accomplice managed to flee and is now wanted.⁸¹

May 13, 2019

Morbi, Rajkot District, Gujarat State, India

A Forest Department raid in the back offices of religious article vendors around the Kuber temple led to the arrest of Dhimant Dave, Rajesh Mehta and Aashish Shukla who were selling 83 black corals (*Antipatharia* spp., Appendix II) and the organs of Bengal lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I). During their interrogation, they admitted to having purchased them in Dwarka (Devbhoomi Dwarka district) for between 50 and 75 rupees a piece (0.70 to 1.07 US\$) in order to sell them for between 250 and 300 rupees each (3.60 to 4.30 US\$).⁸²

GANG

May 17, 2019

Bhopal, Bhopal District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Yang Chen Lachun has appealed to the leniency of the Madhya Pradesh High Court. She wants to be freed on bail. There is a mandate for her arrest for collusion in poaching, as the wife of Jaiy Tamang, a poacher who has been wanted since February 2016 for killing a tiger who was wearing a radio-collar in the Satpura Tiger Reserve. He also killed hundreds of pangolins, smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*, Appendix II) and turtles in Madhya Pradesh. Jaiy Tamang is part of an international



gang of poachers that includes Indians, Burmese and Chinese. He was arrested in 2015 (see "On the Trail" n° 11 p.48) but was quickly freed on bail, and has since disappeared. Identified for the last time in 2016 in Lhasa, in Tibet, his file has been turned over to Interpol who have issued a red notice on him.⁸³

May 17, 2019

Thane, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

Samir – or Shantaram – Jadhav appears to be connected to a vast network working at a nationwide scale. Arrested following intelligence received by the local police, he was transporting a bag containing a tiger skin, a leopard skin, a crocodile skin and 2 elephant tusks. The skins came from animals who were less than 3 years old. The entire batch is estimated to be worth 4,500,000 rupees (64,440 US\$) on the local black market, 286,400 US\$ internationally. Investigators assume that given the diversity of the species transported, the animals probably came from several Indian states. Jadhav is allegedly a delivery man in charge of supplying the cities of Mumbai and Thane. His cell phone contains pictures of many other skins, alive animals and antiques. The investigation has only just begun.⁸⁴



OPERATION THUNDERBALL

GANG

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 1, 2019

Belghoria Expressway, Kolkata District, West Bengal State, India

A high-speed chase at 2 a.m. between an SUV, WCCB vehicles and Forest Department vehicles. Wasim Rahman, Wajid Ali and Md Gulam Gaus were nabbed in the end. They were transporting an Asiatic lion cub (*Panthera leo persica*, Appendix I) aged 3 months, 2 white-headed langurs (*Trachypithecus poliocephalus*, Appendix II) and a Javan lutung (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II). All alive, the animals were wrapped in 4 closed plastic bags. The 3 men were coming from Bongaon, near the border with Bangladesh. They are relays in an international trafficking network. The animals were to be delivered somewhere in western India, perhaps to a private "zoo."

The *Trachypithecus poliocephalus* were captured on the island of Cat Ba in Viet Nam, even though the animal is in critical risk of extinction. There are barely 70 specimens left in the wild.

As for the lion cub, the conclusion of the DNA analysis, dated 25 July and transmitted to the Forest Department, identifies an Asiatic lion club. He was smuggled from Bangladesh and is said to be making for the United Kingdom.

The 3 men under prosecution were freed on bail.⁸⁵

June 3, 2019

Indore, Indore District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

A judicial twist for Raju Sagar. To attract clients to his juice shop, he collected animals that had been illegally imported.

- On May 4, a joint raid, organized by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the police and the Forest Department, led to the seizure of 134 mammals and birds of 25 different species, including a small South American monkey, a marmoset (*Cebidae* family, Appendix I or II), a fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*) from North America, a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) from Africa and macaws (*Psittacidae* family, Appendix I or II) from South America. The animals had been sent to the city zoo.

- On June 3, the court decided to grant temporary custody to Raju Sagar, until his trial. His menagerie was returned to him today and the animals went back to their cages, considered to be sub-standard and inhospitable by specialists.⁸⁶

June 15 and 16, 2019

Mumbai, Mumbai District / Kurla, Govandi and Santacruz, Mumbai Suburban District, Maharashtra State, India

A major operation against animal trafficking on municipal markets, involving the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), the Forest Department and the police. Agents inspected market stands and shops 2 days in a row and seized over 250 birds and mammals. The total value is estimated at over 10 million rupees (143,670 US\$). Six people were arrested. Among the animals seized, there was a sifaka (*Indriidae* spp., Appendix I), a velvet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) from Africa, an Indian civet (*Viverra zibetha* or *Viverricula indica*, Appendix III), a sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II), a roseate cockatoo (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II) from Australia, a flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, Appendix II), a green conure (*Psittacara holochlorus*), other parrots from Africa and Myanmar, a cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), and ducks...⁸⁷



Indriidae spp.

June 25, 2019

Hyderabad, Hyderabad District, Telangana State, India

A raid on the Murgi Chowk market. In 15 different pet shops, inspectors seized 34 protected bird species, including barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II), Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II), Eurasian eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), spotted owls (*Athene brama*, Appendix II), greater coucals (*Centropus sinensis*), rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and spotted doves (*Spilopelia chinensis*). One stand also had a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III) for sale, an animal that lives in rural parts of Telangana, the Andhra Pradesh estuaries and forest areas around cities. All of the animals were put into quarantine at the Nehru Zoological Park, until it is decided where they will go.⁸⁸

End of June 2019

Bijni, Chirang District, Assam State, India

Stiff sentences for Somnath Kisku and Dhojen Tudu, 2 members of the Santal tribe who were caught by forest rangers on February 9, 2017 with 3 hares, 2 mongooses (*Herpestes* spp., Appendix III), one bulbul (*Pycnonotidea* family), one dove (*Colombidae* family) and a barbet (*Megalaimidae* family) that they poached in the Manas National Park. The District tribunal sentenced them to 7 years in prison and a fine of 50,000 rupees (450 US\$) each.⁸⁹



INDONESIA

April 1, 2019

Bakauheni, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

Seizure in the port, inside 2 vehicles, of 25 kg of pangolin scales and skins of reticulated pythons (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II).⁹⁰



April 4, 2019

Parepare Port, Parepare City, South Sulawesi Province, Island of Sulawesi, Indonesia

Seizure in the port of 3 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and 5 civets (Viverridae family) from Kalimantan. Wildlife traffic is active between the islands of Borneo and Sulawesi. By March, 42 sunbirds (Nectariniidae family), one greater green leafbird (*Chloropsis sonnerati*) and 13 parrots had been seized on the same port.⁹¹



Chloropsis sonnerati

April 4, 2019

Lamandau, Lamandau Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Island of Borneo, Indonesia

Seizure of 3 pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and 2 cobras (genus *Naja*). Voluntary handing-over of a hawk (*Accipiter* spp., Appendix II) and a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I).⁹²

May 11, 2019

Tanjung Perak Port, Surabaya City, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Five a.m. seizure during the disembarking of *KM Dharma Kartika III* of 400 birds including true parrots (order Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II), cockatoos (Cacatuidae, Appendix I or II), black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), falcons (Falconidae, Appendix I or II), Asian koel (*Eudynamis scolopacea*) and streaked weavers (*Ploceus manyar*), 6 monitors lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and 2 snakes. Two arrests. The 2 transporters would have only received the equivalent of 14 US\$ each. The animals were trapped on Celebes Island and around Makassar. They were to be sold via social networks.⁹³

May 23, 2019

Ngurah Rai International Airport, Denpasar, Bali Province, Island of Bali, Indonesia

Seizure of 4 baby common otters (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I) and 10 scorpions (order Scorpiones) from the bags of a Russian passenger, Roman Tomarev, about to board a Korean Air flight.⁹⁴



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May 29, 2019

Tuntang District, Semarang Regency, Central Java Province, Island of Java, Indonesia

Seizure of a live pangolin, a pangolin tail, 28.6 kg of scales, 898 Malayan softshell turtles (*Dogania subplana*, Appendix II) and a deer trophy (genus *Cervus*). The meat of a pangolin is valued by local authorities at the equivalent of 1,113 US\$ per kg and the scales at 2,782 US\$ per kg.⁹⁵



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June 20, 2019

Kebumen, Jepara, Kudus and Rembang Regencies, Central Java Province, Island of Java, Indonesia

Dismantling of a network that was thriving on Facebook. Seizure of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), 2 cockatoos (Cacatuidae, Appendix I or II), a black parrot (*Coracopsis nigra*, Appendix II), 2 black-headed parrots (*Pionites melanocephalus*, Appendix II), 15 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), 6 million rupees in cash (425 US\$) and 2 bank accounts. The poaching was carried out by the villagers, and the logistics by the fishermen.⁹⁶

facebook

IRAN

May 17, 2019

Rigan County, Kerman Province, Iran

Arrest at home of a poacher of wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I or II), wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) urials (*Ovis aries*) and jackals (genus *Canis*). Seizure of several weapons.⁹⁷

ISRAEL

May 10 and 12, 2019

Golan Heights, Israel. Border with Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Arrest by Israeli police of a Bedouin from the village of Tuba Zangariya suspected of poisoning 20 vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II), a fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and 2 jackals (genus *Canis*) by spraying pesticides on a cow carcass. In 20 years, vultures have practically disappeared from the Golan Heights. 130 in 1998, a few dozen before this collective poisoning. Israel has annexed 1200 km² of the Golan Heights that belonged to Syria. This appropriation has not been recognized by the international community. 18,000 Syrians live in the occupied Golan. They cohabit with 20,000 Israeli settlers (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.32).⁹⁸



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MALAYSIA

April 6, 2019

Parit Unas, State of Johor, Malaysia

Surveillance on the quays of the fishing port of a boat coming from Indonesia with 3 men on board. Unloading of 4 packages. Transfer to a vehicle that is chased down and stopped by the police. In the 4 boxes there were 9 animals, all juveniles. Two orangutans (including a suckling one worth 44,000 US\$), 6 gibbons (*Hylobatidae*, Appendix I) and an Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India).⁹⁹

April 15 and May 15, 2019

Kuala Terengganu and Tanjung Mentong Tasik Kenyir National Park, State of Terengganu, Malaysia

Arrest of 2 Vietnamese suspects aged 25 and 29 in possession of claws and teeth of tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), bears (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II), and wild boars (*Sus scrofa*), traps, machetes, and axes. Seizure of 2 leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 3 Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), and 12 wild boars (*Sus scrofa*).

The tigers are endangered in Malaysia too. According to a study conducted between 2010 and 2013, there are about 250 to 340 left. Hoang Van Viet and Nguyen Van Thiet pleaded guilty. They were each sentenced to 2 years in prison and a crushing and unprecedented fine of 1.56 million Malaysian rupees (382,120 US\$). They will have to serve an additional 16 years in prison if they do not pay the fine.

In March 2019, another Vietnamese national was sentenced to 6 years in prison and a 400,000 Malaysian rupees fine (98,333 US\$) for illegally possessing a whole tiger skin, a fragment of tiger skin, a leopard claw and 150 g of tiger meat.

In August 2017, Tran Van Sang, also a Vietnamese national, was sentenced to 19 years in prison and 850,000 Malaysian rupees (208,210 US\$) for poaching tigers, leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), clouded panthers (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I), Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) and sambars.¹⁰⁰



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May 29, 2019

Serikin, Sri Aman and Bintulu, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Seized by Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) of pangolin meat, slow loris meat (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), turtle eggs (order Testudines), bats (order Chiroptera) and squirrels (*Sciuridae* family).¹⁰¹



June 25, 2019

Sibu Airport, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

A package bound for Kuala Lumpur containing 31.9 kg of pangolin scales and 2 kg of swallow nests was seized at a parcel service platform. The airport customs director estimates that in the countries with higher rates, that are Viet Nam and China, the value of the scales ranges from 3,000 US\$ to 4,830 US\$ per kg. Sarawak's airport customs main targets are cigarettes, narcotics, alcohol, fireworks and wildlife.¹⁰²



NEPAL

May 1, 2019

Suryabinayak, Bhaktapur District, Province No. 3, Nepal

Ananda Tamang, Manoj Karki, Narendra Tamang, Ratna Bahadur Majhi and Bishnu Bahadur Majhi were arrested in possession of an feline skin that "resembles a leopard" and 2 gallbladders "that seem to be from bears."¹⁰³

PHILIPPINES

April 8, 2019

Mati, Province of Davao Oriental, Philippines

Seizure in a warehouse at the port of Mati of 450 live animals intended for international trade, most of them from Indonesian Papua and Papua New Guinea, including monitor lizards, 24 red-and-blue lories (*Eos histrio*, Appendix I), 20 palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I), Pesquet's parrot (*Psittrichas fulgidus*, Appendix II), eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), black-capped lories (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), long-beaked echidnas (*Zaglossus bruijini*, Appendix II - picture below). Two arrests. The New Guinea echidna is an oviparous mammal measuring up to 90 cm. It feeds on earthworms and lives at high altitudes (between 1,300 and 4,000 m). It is threatened by hunting and deforestation.¹⁰⁴



May 30, 2019

Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Manila, Greater Manila Province, Philippines



Seizures by postal customs of 2 parcels containing 100 live tarantulas from Poland and Malaysia and declared as "toys", one parcel from Indonesia containing 71 stingray skins and 3 parcels containing one camel



skin and 2 trophies of moose (*Alces alces*) and foxes from the United Arab Emirates, Norway and France respectively. Tarantulas in Manila see also p. 37.¹⁰⁵

THAILAND

May 10, 2019

Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Housing by the WFFT of a northern pig-tailed macaque, and a small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II), both sick. Otters sell on the internet for between 60 and 150 US\$.¹⁰⁶

May 17, 2019

Don Muang International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Wankasat Phromthong, 31, had 2 master keys, actually 2 full Thai army uniforms that he wore from time to time in order to obtain passes, rebates, suspicious donations and sign bad checks. He liked to be there when his fake peers gathered and his last achievement, 2 days before his arrest, was to attend the 87th birthday of former Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh at the Royal Thai Army Club. Despite his fine presence and his art of camouflage, he could not prevent the Crime Suppression Division (CSD) from infiltrating his home and getting their hands on 6 tusks, a leopard skin rug (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), a Temminck's cat rug (*Catopuma temminckii*, Appendix I) and, highlight of the show, a shrunken lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II).¹⁰⁷



May 22, 2019

Sai Yok National Park, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.

Arrest in the national park 3 km from the border with Myanmar of Satu, 26 years old, claiming to be a soldier of the KNU (Karen National Union) and also hoping to benefit from the leniency of the Thai rangers. In fact, he was a seasoned poacher engaged in commercial activities. He had just killed macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) and a binturong (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India) with 2 accomplices who fled. In their bivouac, they were going to smoke the meat before selling it in their village. Three firearms were seized.¹⁰⁸

May 23, 2019

Sam Khwai Phuak, Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand

Seizure at the house of a Facebooker of 3 black giant squirrels (*Ratufa bicolor*, Appendix II), 3 Prevost's squirrels (*Callosciurus prevostii*), 3 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II), one hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) and 11 cages. He was selling each giant squirrel for 1,571 US\$.¹⁰⁹

facebook



June 11, 2019

Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand

An additional year in prison for Premchai Karnasuta, a public works magnate, for trying to buy the silence of the rangers when his poaching bivouac with a number of multi-species trophies was discovered (see "On the Trail" n°20 p.126-127, n°23 p. 134, n°24 p. 90). Karnasuta appealed and was again released on bail of 200,000 baht, or 6,290 US\$.¹¹⁰



VIET NAM

April 22, 2019

Tay Son, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in 3 vehicles close to the border with Laos on the 8A highway of a live pangolin of 4 kg, 17 turtles and 410 kg of rosewood.¹¹¹



April 24, 2019

Huong Son District, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Rescues by the police and by the NGO Save Vietnam's Wildlife of a pangolin and 16 softshell turtles (Trionychidae family) of various species that were held in cages.¹¹²



May 8, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Major victory for ENV. Through pedagogy and the use of Decree 157, which reinforces sanctions for the detention of wild animals and abuse, the NGO has obtained from all schools in Ho Chi Minh City a commitment to hand over all living specimens in their possession to the rightful owner.¹¹³

May 17, 2019

Thai Nguyen Province, Viet Nam

An Asian black bear owner (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) who made a name for himself as a friend of the entire species was behind the façade a formidable and hands-on wildlife trafficker. In his home, the cops opened the freezers and discovered a 200 kg tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a Temminck's cat (*Catopuma temminckii*, Appendix I), 3 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), a batch of paws from his friends the black bears, 19 turtles, 80 kg of bones from species not yet identified, 50 kg of tiger guts and unknown wild meat. The man is in prison, and his 2 black bears in the hospital.¹¹⁴



May 31, 2019

Ha Long, Province de Quang Ninh, Viet Nam

For some reason, the car with registration number 14B-012 appeared suspicious to the patrol that was monitoring the NH18. Spot on! Inside, in addition to the driver Vu Duc Thiep, there were 147 hostages: big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I), south Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II) and pangolins that were on their way to China from Nghe An province 295 km away.¹¹⁵



June 13, 2019

Dien Chau District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Rescue of a masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India), 3 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), and 2 leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II). The masked palm civet was hurt by a trap. Intensive care at the Cuc Phuong shelter.¹¹⁶

EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-April 2019

Talavera de la Reina and El Carpio de Tajo, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

Search by the Guardia Civil after several months of investigation of a clandestine workshop specializing in the manufacture, doctoring and marketing of firearms. Seizure of the gear and machine tools, 10,000 € in cash, 63 trophies including 5 European roe deer heads (*Capreolus capreolus*). Two arrests.¹¹⁷

Mid June 2019

Vigo, Pontevedra Province, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

Seizure in 4 private homes of a stuffed Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I) and a stuffed hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), 2 pieces of carved ivory, the shell of a common tortoise (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) transformed into a musical instrument and a sawfish rostrum.¹¹⁹



FRANCE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 1, 2019

Department of Moselle and Brignoles, Department of Var, France

The wildlife scammer was selling some Madagascar lemurs without delivering them and for good reason, because these primates are almost extinct and in CITES Appendix I. At his house in the Var and at his mother's house of in Moselle, teams from OCLAESP (Office central de lutte contre les atteintes à l'environnement et à la santé publique) seized a tiger cub (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 9 snakes including 2 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), 4 sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), and a toucan (Ramphastidae family) alive and waiting to be delivered to a taxidermist. Following, the ONCFS (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune sauvage) seized 6 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), 2 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II), and a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) from the same places.¹²⁰



May 3, 2019

Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain



© FFW



Weber Foundation, based in Barcelona. The ZOOXXI would not be a disproportionate zoo. Its true greatness would depend on the intensity and the quality of efforts made to help keeping wild animals in their habitats.¹¹⁸

May 18, 2019

**Bagnoles-de-l'Orne-Normandie,
Department of Orne, France**

Seizures by an ONCFS team of worked ivories, a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), sawfish rostrums (*Pristidae* spp., Appendix I), stuffed owls and herons and sea turtle shells (*Cheloniidae* spp., Appendix I), from 9 stands at the Andaines Fair, one of the largest yard sale of the region.¹²¹



ITALY

May 21, 2019

**Scafati, Province of Salerno, Campania Region,
Italy**

Seizure in a pet shop and at the manager's home of a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), 3 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II), 2 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and 5 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*).¹²²

June 3, 2019

**Palermo, Province of Palermo, Sicily Region,
Italy**

He sold pets door-to-door. In his van, the carabinieri seized 8 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), 75 tortoises (*Testudinidae*, Appendix I or II), 8 parrots including a ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*), 400 goldfish (*Carassius auratus*), 2 squirrels (*Sciurus vulgaris*), 5 hamsters (sub-family *Cricetinae*) and 27 rabbits (*Leporidae* family).¹²³

OPERATION BIARMICUS (lanner falcon)

June 26, 2019

**Provinces of Enna, Ragusa, Syracuse, Palermo,
Sicily region and Province of Avellino, Campania
Region, Italy**

30 carabinieri specialized in the enforcement of the CITES combed the bottom of the Italian boot and seized from various robbers 31 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II), 5 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), 1 lanner falcon (*Falco biarmicus*, Appendix II), 1 Tibet owl (*Athene noctua*, Appendix II), 5 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), 3 common barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), 7 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 3 northern ravens (*Corvus corax*) and 1 carrion crow (*Corvus corone*) but also traps, slings and fake CITES certificates.

Armed with binoculars and telescopes, falcon looters watch the eggs hatch and the chicks grow up for weeks before stealing them armed with ropes and harnesses.¹²⁴

NORWAY

April 10, 2019

Norway

A bill in view to ban fur farming by February 2025. The mink and arctic fox breeders joined within Norges Pelsdyrslag denounce "a historical betrayal" (see "On the Trail" n°18 p. 111). Russia and China are the main buyers.¹²⁵

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

May 24, 2019

Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

Downfall of a repeat offender. Keerthi Eswaran, the taxidermist of Indian origin (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 107) already sentenced in 2017 to a 10 months suspended



prison sentence, was again caught in the act. He was preparing to ship to the United States of America a baboon skull (*Papio* spp., Appendix II), wedge-tailed eagle claws (*Aquila audax*, Appendix II), magpie goose skulls (*Anseranas semipalmata*) and ibis skulls (*Threskiornithidae* family). In his home, police found frozen parts of animals and other parts rotting in buckets. At the time of the search, its website offered 600 wildlife "items", bones, tails, jaws and of course skulls of Chinese softshell turtles (*Pelodiscus sinensis*), king colobus (*Colobus polykomos*, Appendix II), crocodiles (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II), ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), red-tailed black cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*, Appendix II), wombats (*Vombatidae* family), chipmunks (*Tamias*), orange-footed scrubfowls (*Megapodius reinwardt*). The bad news is that he will be eligible for freedom on parole in June 2020 and has announced that when released, he will return with his wife and children to India where the exercise of his "morbid passion" as described by the judges may be more difficult to spot than in Australia.¹²⁶



Wombats



Anseranas semipalmata

Donkeys

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.

KENYA

AFRICA

July 5, 2019

Kenya

The KALRO (Kenya Agricultural Livestock and Research Organization) report is leaving no doubt. If slaughtering continues along the current trend, Kenyan donkeys, currently used as school buses, farming assistants, water-carriers and ambulances, and as such, treated in the immense majority of cases with the consideration and recognition that they deserve, will be eradicated by 2023. Between April 2016 and December 2018, 301,977 donkeys were officially slaughtered. The annual slaughtering rate is 4 times higher than the donkey population growth rate. Those 300,000-plus victims led to the export of 2209 t of skins and 16,543 t of meat. The KALRO report highlights several incoherent points. The number of rounds of ammunition purchased by the slaughter houses to kill the donkeys before butchering them is 5 times inferior to the total number of donkeys who go into the slaughter houses alive and come out dead. The sales figures for skin and meat exports to China, as declared with the KRA (Kenya Revenue Authority) are grossly under-estimated. There are two reasons for this dissimulation: to reduce taxes in relation to turnover and to remain constantly at a loss so that the heinous donkey traffic does not appear to be a profitable (and short-lived) goose that lays the golden eggs. The KALRO report raises suspicions, given the differing donkey skin colors, that there are illegal imports from neighboring countries going through the Kenyan slaughter houses. Kenyan donkeys, see especially "On the Trail" n° 16 p.109.¹

NIGERIA

May 2019

Lagos State, Nigeria

Seizure of 2 containers full of donkey skins intended for the Chinese market. The exact location of the seizure was not disclosed so as not to affect the in-progress investigation. Aliyu Mohammed, one of the federal customs officials, thinks that the donkey meat was sold to local populations as beef. To prevent the extinction of domestic donkeys in the country, customs are targeting smuggling channels (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 112, n°18 p. 122, n°20 p. 130). They estimate the commercial value of the cargo at nearly 50 million US\$.

At the same time, the bill on the prohibition of the export of donkey skins is being examined by the Nigerian National Assembly and is causing controversy. Not surprisingly, the Association of tanners, sellers and exporters of donkey skins, which also represents the interests of slaughterhouses, is against it. The benefits for the country's trade balance and 5-year revenues of 500 million US\$ are highlighted, provided that efforts are made to develop donkey breeding.

The promoters of the bill point out that donkeys are an essential mode of transport in the north of the country, and that in some cases, they are even used as ambulances. They point out that the purchase price of a donkey went from 50 US\$ to 425 US\$ because of Chinese pressure, and that donkeys are more and more often being stolen to be slaughtered and skinned. The Ministry of Agriculture would support the bill. It is recalled that the gestation period is one year and ends with a single birth. Dr. Alabi Olaniran, Director of Veterinary Services at the same Ministry, says that if nothing is done in an urgent time frame, Nigeria will lose all its donkeys and their disappearance will pose huge logistical, agricultural and economic problems. Article 4 of the bill states that anyone who exceeds the export ban will be liable to 10 years in prison.²



AMERICA

BRAZIL

Mid April 2019

Bahia State, Brazil

Despite the Itapetinga slaughter house being closed, the craze for ejiao continues to strike down donkeys. The Fórum Nacional de Proteção e Defesa Animal and the Frente Nacional de Defesa dos Jumentos reported a group of about one thousand emaciated donkeys, most of whom are victims of hyperlipidemia. Livestock conservation has been entrusted to 2 NGOs. Other farms secretly hold donkeys that have been stolen or purchased from pounds, in order to illegally slaughter them and export their skins labeled as cattle skins.³

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°25 : chapter Donkeys, Brazil, reference 3.

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), Bureau of Customs at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Charlotte County Sheriff's Office, Chinese Customs, CITES, Commission Européenne, Department of Environmental Affairs (South Africa), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Malawi, Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation of Thailand, Ditpolair Korpolaairud Baharkam Polri, Douanes françaises, Dutch Customs, Europol, Gendarmerie Nationale française, Government of Botswana, Government of Canada, Hong Kong Customs, Hong Kong Government, Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis (IBAMA), Interpol, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Lusaka Agreement Task Force, Metropolitan Police, Ministère de la Transition écologique et solidaire (France), Ministerio del Ambiente, Ecuador, Ministry of Environment and Tourism Namibia, Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism of Botswana, National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU), Nevada Department of Wildlife, New South Wales 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), Procuraduria Federal de Protección al Ambiente (PROFEPA - Mexico), Russian Customs, Sashastra Seema Bal, Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre (SERFOR - Peru), Singapore Customs, South African National Parks (SANParks), South African Police Service (SAPS), Sri Lanka Navy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UK Government, UNESCO, United States Department of Justice, Victoria Government, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB - India).

Non Governmental Organizations

African Parks Network, Animaldiversity.org, Amboseli Trust for Elephants, ANCE Togo, Anti- Poaching Abalone Western Cape APUCT, Bhejane Trust, Big Life Foundation, Born Free Foundation, Borneo Rhino Alliance, Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, Catalogue of Life (Species 2000 ITIS), Centre for Orangutan Protection, Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), Community Against Abalone Poaching - CAAP, Conservation Action Trust, Conservation Justice, Conservation Lower Zambezi, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (The), EAGLE Network, Education For Nature - Vietnam (ENV), Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Fondation Franz Weber, Four Paws, Game Rangers Association of Africa, Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP-UNEP), International Animal Rescue (IAR), International Anti Poaching Foundation, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Iran's Environment and Wildlife Watch (IEW), Last Great Ape organization (LAGA), Lwiro Primates, Orangutan Information Centre, Oulanga na nyamba, Outraged SA Citizens Against Poaching, PALF Congo, Pams Foundation Tanzania, Peace Parks Foundation, Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), Robin des Bois, Save The Elephants, Save the Tiger India, Save Vietnam's Wildlife, Saving the Survivors, Sea Life Trust, Sea Shepherd, SOS Eléphants, Species Survival Network, Stop Illegal Fishing, Thailand Animal Rights Alliance, The Elite AntiPoaching Units And Combat Trackers, Tikki Hywood Foundation, Traffic, Vulture Conservation Foundation, WARA, Wildlife Alliance, Wildlife At Risk (WAR), Wildlife Direct, Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT), Wildlife Trust of India. (...)

Medias

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