

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
n°26. Events from the 1st July to the 30th September, 2019
Published on April 30, 2020

Original version in French





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

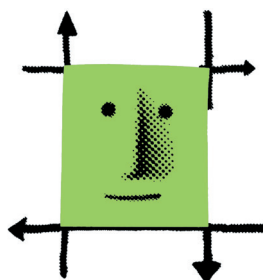
"On the Trail" highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new modus operandi of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. "On the Trail" gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling.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

Previous issues in English

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

Previous issues in French

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



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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

BOTSWANA

August 25, 2019

Moremi Game Reserve, Okavango Delta, Botswana

A patrol is alerted by gunfire. A female rhino is dying. She's accompanied by a calf. The patrol hides and shoots at the 2 poachers approaching the crime scene heavily armed. Their bodies are taken to the morgue at Maun hospital.



For 5 years, a diplomatic conflict has been brewing between Namibia and Botswana. Namibia blames the Botswanan army for shooting poachers on sight in the cross-border area of the Okavango Delta. At least 40 Namibian nationals are said to have died as a result of the unwritten "shoot to kill" doctrine.¹

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

July 17, 2019

Near Kahuzi-Biega National Park, South-Kivu and North-Kivu Provinces, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Intensification of clashes between Pygmies and the national park guards (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.4). A gorilla protection patrol fell into a trap. The Pygmies were armed with machetes, bows and arrows. Thirteen guards were wounded. One of the seriously injured guard had the fingers of one hand severed. One dead, Lwaboshi Simba, and one wounded were deplored in the opposite camp. The measures prohibiting Pygmies from entering the park have recently been reinforced to prevent clearing and poaching.²



August 2, 2019

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

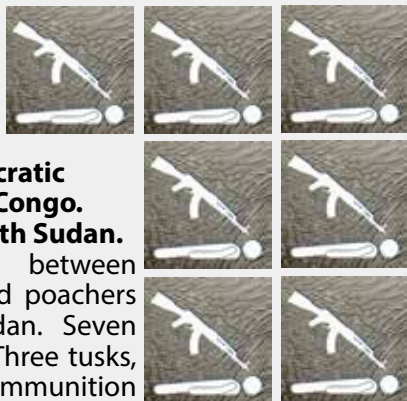
A ranger dead in an attack on a guard post by a group of Mai-Mai (see "On the Trail" n°2 p.32, n°12 p.103, n°15 p.111, n°18 p.96, n°21 p.50). The park is home to 13 gorilla families.³



August 21, 2019

Garamba National Park, Haut-Uele Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with South Sudan.

Deadly clash between armed forces and poachers from South Sudan. Seven poachers killed. Three tusks, 180 rounds of ammunition and several AK47s recovered at the scene.⁴

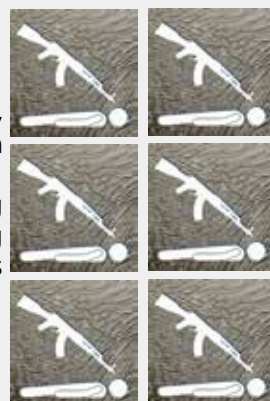


ZIMBABWE

July 28, 2019

Bubye Valley Conservancy, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Heavy toll in the hunting reserve since the beginning of the year. Six poachers killed, one paralysed.⁵



ASIA

CAMBODIA

September 9, 2019

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

The sentencing of Penh, Vaha, and Vannith for life imprisonment, 30 years and 2 years in prison, comes for having killed 3 members of an anti-poaching patrol, Tern Soknai, a ranger, Sek Vathana, a police officer, and Thol Kna, a member of the Wildlife Conservation Society. These murders were conducted in the Keo Seima sanctuary on the edge of the border in Viet Nam. In a dense forest, the patrol fell across a group of Vietnamese woodcutters (see "On the Trail" no.20 p.121). One of them known as Chin called to the rescue Penh, who at the moment of the events was in charge of a Cambodian border post and had made a financial arrangement with the Vietnamese loggers guaranteeing them security and impunity. Penh rushed to the scene with his 2 accomplices and an AK47. Facing the honesty of the patrol that refused to close their eyes and to return the chainsaw and other equipment to the loggers, he fired on sight and shot down the 3 nature conservationists with several bursts.⁶



Tern Soknai

INDIA

September 28, 2019

Orang National Park, Darrang District, State of Assam, India

Forest guards and police knew that a group of poachers had entered the park. They found them around 3:15 a.m. and a gunfight ensued. In the morning, a patrol discovered a man lying wounded along with a .303 rifle, a silencer, 5 rounds of ammunition and an axe. The poacher died while being transported to the hospital. His 3 or 4 accomplices were able to escape.^{6 bis}



KAZAKHSTAN

July 23, 2019

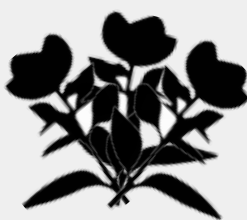
Aqmola Region, Kazakhstan

Death of ecoguard Kanych Nourtazinov in a car chase across the steppe with an all-terrain vehicle whose occupants were shooting at saigas (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). The poachers switched targets and fired at the law enforcement vehicle. Mr Nourtazinov's partner was shot in the shoulder. He survived.



Kanych Nourtazinov

This is the second time since the beginning of the year that saiga protectors have died on duty. According to the Kazakh wildlife protection service, a kilo of saiga horns sells for 150,000 tenges (395 US\$) in Almaty and no less than 1.5 million tenges (3,950 US\$) in China. The annual demand for saiga horns by the Chinese market is estimated at 8 t per year. On the basis of an average weight per horn of 80 g, the annual harvest from the Russian and Kazakh populations of saiga would be close to 100,000 individuals. Only males have horns.⁷



PHILIPPINES

September 4, 2019

El Nido, Palawan Province, Philippines

Bienvinido "Toto" Veguilla Jr's patrol was on a surveillance mission at the El Nido-Taytay forest when they came across loggers in action. The loggers fled. The patrol seized their abandoned chainsaw, but in the evening they were ambushed. The loggers were back. At least 5 men went after Veguilla and killed him with axes. The rest of the patrol managed to escape. 52-year-old Veguilla's death is the 18th since 2001 in Palawan province. Illegal land clearing goes hand in hand with animal poaching. The DENR's Biodiversity Bureau (DENR-BMB) and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) reckon that the country's wildlife traffickers make one billion US\$ per year.⁸



Bienvinido « Toto » Veguilla Jr

EUROPE

ROMANIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 13, 2019

Iasi, Iasi County, Nord-Est Development Region, Romania

Răducu Gorcioaia, forest ranger, is fatally hit in the head by a 17-year-old boy who was busy felling trees with his brother and father in the protected Todosoia forest. Romsilva, the national administration in charge of forest management and protection, says 10 forest rangers have been assaulted since the beginning of the year.⁹



Răducu Gorcioaia

Seahorses and Pipefishes

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

ASIA

CHINA

July 4, 2019

Luohu District,
Shenzhen, Guangdong
Province, China

Seizure of 69 dried pipefishes (genus *Syngnathus*).
20 cm long.¹



Corythoichthys flavofasciatus

August 5, 2019

Quanzhou Jinjiang International Airport, Fujian
Province, China

Failed attempt to bring in 311 dried seahorses.²



August 5, 2019

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

500 g !³

August 8, 2019

Mohan Border Post, Mengla County, Yunnan
Province, China. Border with Laos.

2,981 g in the car's toolbox !⁴

GANG

August 25, 2019

Jinping and Hekou, Honghe County, Yunnan
Province, China

The police had been tipped off anonymously in the beginning of July. The raid on a herbalist's shop was successful: 102,085 dried seahorses estimated by the authorities at around 17 million US\$ or about 170 US\$ per seahorses. Seven arrests.⁵

September 17, 2019

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 5.52 kg of seahorses and pipefishes.⁶

September 2019

Guangxi and Guangdong Provinces, China

- Seizure of 35,000 dried seahorses in a flat in Dongxing, a city on the border with Viet Nam.
- Consequent seizure of 65,000 dried seahorses thanks to information collected in Dongxing (picture below). Two arrests.⁷



Corals

ASIA

CHINA

August 3, 2019

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

Seizure in the luggage of a man and a woman of 24 live corals.¹

September 4, 2019

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 9 stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II).²

September 13 and 16, 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Suzhou and Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizures of agarwood and red coral jewellery (*Corallium rubrum*).³

EUROPE

SPAIN

September 9, 2019

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

Seizure of a 2 kg branch of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) from a vehicle at the arrival of the *Almariya* car-ferry from Nador, Morocco.⁴



FRANCE

July 18, 2019

Bonifacio, Department of Corse du Sud, France

The inspection of an Italian fishing vessel by a French customs speedboat resulted in the seizure of 2.2 kg of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*).⁵



Stylophora pistillata

ITALY

July 23, 2019

Livorno, Livorno Province, Tuscany Region, Italy

A Chinese expatriate doesn't move without his endangered species. Seizure of a 455g stony coral (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) in a container filled with furniture coming from Hong Kong. 5,000 € fine.⁶



End of July 2019

Palermo Province, Sicily Region, Italy

Seizures in tourist shops of organ-pipe corals (Tubiporidae family, Appendix II) and stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II). 12 kg in total.⁷

September 23, 2019

Ancona, Ancona Province, Marche Region, Italy

Seizure of 278 kg of corals of the species *Acropora humilis* (Appendix II), *Pocillopora eydouxi* (Appendix II) and *Stylophora pistillata* (Appendix II) in a lorry at the arrival of a car-ferry from Greece. The driver is Greek, the cargo bound for France (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.6).⁸

NETHERLANDS

July 2019

Amsterdam-Schiphol International Airport, North Holland Province, The Netherlands

Customs officers seized organ-pipe coral (*Tubipora musica*, Appendix II), blue coral (*Heliopora coerulea*, Appendix II) and red coral (*Corallium rubrum*). It did not have CITES documents.⁹

Abalones

Haliotis spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 5, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Late evening arrest of 4 men shucking fresh abalone in seedy premises.¹

July 2019

Western Cape Province, South Africa

Zorba, the dog of Dark Water Ops - a private anti-poaching organization - quickly found the plastic bag hidden by poachers at the bottom of a crack. It contained 143 fresh abalones.²

July 2019

Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 600 abalones and diving equipment by Dark Water Ops.³

July 16, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Discovery in a shed of a clandestine workshop to shuck, cook and dry abalones. Seizure of 19,032 dry abalones, 5,064 fresh abalones, a few precious stones, a Mercedes van, a Chevrolet, and 179,680 rand in cash or 12,700 US\$. Four arrests.⁴

July 18, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Between domestic violence, illegal weapons possession, car thefts, drunk driving and trafficking in adulterated alcohol, the Cape Town police are overwhelmed, especially as they are fighting against the trafficking of abalone: 20 kg seized on Ocean View. Value: 3,500 US\$ or 175 US\$/kg.⁵

July 25, 2019

Western Cape Province, South Africa

22 years old. 9,500 US\$ worth of abalones in his car intercepted by a mobile squad.⁶

August 2, 2019

Ruyterwacht, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seaside and roadside sale of abalones and Cape rock lobsters. Reported by the volunteers of the MAPU (Marine Anti-Poaching Unit), the coastal lookouts. The police took the local distribution enthusiast to the police station.⁷

August 4, 2019

Melkbosstrand, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The police, alerted by coastal lookouts, caught a suspect hidden in the dunes and watching over 400 abalones collected in the early morning by a dozen divers. He was waiting for a suitable time to join a shucking and drying workshop.⁸

August 6, 2019

Hermanus, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Zhengiang Wu and David Jonas operated a drying workshop in a residential building. Agents of the DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) and the Hawks arrested them and seized over 255,000 US\$ worth of abalone from racks and pans.⁹

August 8, 2019

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

Raid on Raats Street after an anonymous phone call. The seizure equals nearly 80,000 US\$, plus gas bottles, a cooking pot, a freezer and racks. Two "foreigners" were arrested.¹⁰

August 10, 2019

Macassar, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The van intrigued K9. Seizure of 7,000 US\$ worth of abalones in plastic bags.¹¹

August 10, 15 and 16, 2019

Pearly Beach, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Eight inflatable dinghies or other RIBs, 3 bags of abalone and 6 suspects including 4 divers.¹²

August 20, 2019

Pearly Beach, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A pickup truck, diving equipment, 6 men and 1,095 abalones.¹³

August 22, 2019

Somerset West, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Nineteen bags. Driver arrested.¹⁴

August 29, 2019

Panorama, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of fresh and dried abalones worth 125,000 US\$, various cooking equipment and a vehicle. Two arrests.¹⁵

Beginning of September 2019

Kraaifontein, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

5,000 abalones, nearly 200,000 US\$.¹⁶



Beginning of September 2019, Kraaifontein



September 12 and 17, 2019, Somerset West



September 25, 2019, Cape Town



September 25, 2019, Vincent



July 2019



July 16, 2019, Cape Town



September 21, 2019, Sandbaai



August 29, 2019, Panorama, Cape Town



September 5, 2019

Velani Crescent, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

936 abalones seized at a South African Police Service (SAPS) officer's house. Value equal to 21,500 US\$ or approximately 23 US\$ per abalone.¹⁷

September 6, 2019

Caledon, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The stolen Nissan with the fake license plates was overflowing with abalones. The driver took off. He was caught a few hours later.¹⁸

September 12 and 17, 2019

Somerset West, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Two-stages arrest of 5 MORT (Major Offences Reaction Team) officers. They were arrested by the Anti-Corruption Unit. They are accused of having intercepted a minibus full of abalones on its way to Cape Town on the night of July 21. So far so good. It went wrong when they ousted the driver, forcing him to remain silent and one of them, followed by the others in the police car, drove home to unload the abalones.¹⁹

September 21, 2019

Sandbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

RBT (Random Breath Testing) on the R43: 109 abalones in the trunk of a Nissan.²⁰

September 25, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Another big case uncovered by the Hawks. It's all there: fresh and dried. 118,000 US\$ of abalone. Racks, cooking pots, fans, multiple plugs, hobs, foul smell, 2 suspects.²¹

REPEATED OFFENSE

September 25, 2019

Vincent, East London, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

A house in a quiet neighborhood was searched around 2:30 in the morning. Shifu Fang, 34 years old, was arrested. His mother, who was present at the time, was not taken in. Seizure of approximately 120 kg of good-sized abalones. Fang was found guilty once before, in 2015, for illegally catching lobsters; he was released on bail for 30,000 rand (2000 US\$) a few days later. He is married to a South African, but his visa expires in December 2020. According to a Traffic report, poachers have caught nearly 100 million abalones since 2000. The annual traffic is estimated at 20,000 t – 20 times more than the legal fishing limit – and represents approximately 900 million rand, or 59 million US\$.²²

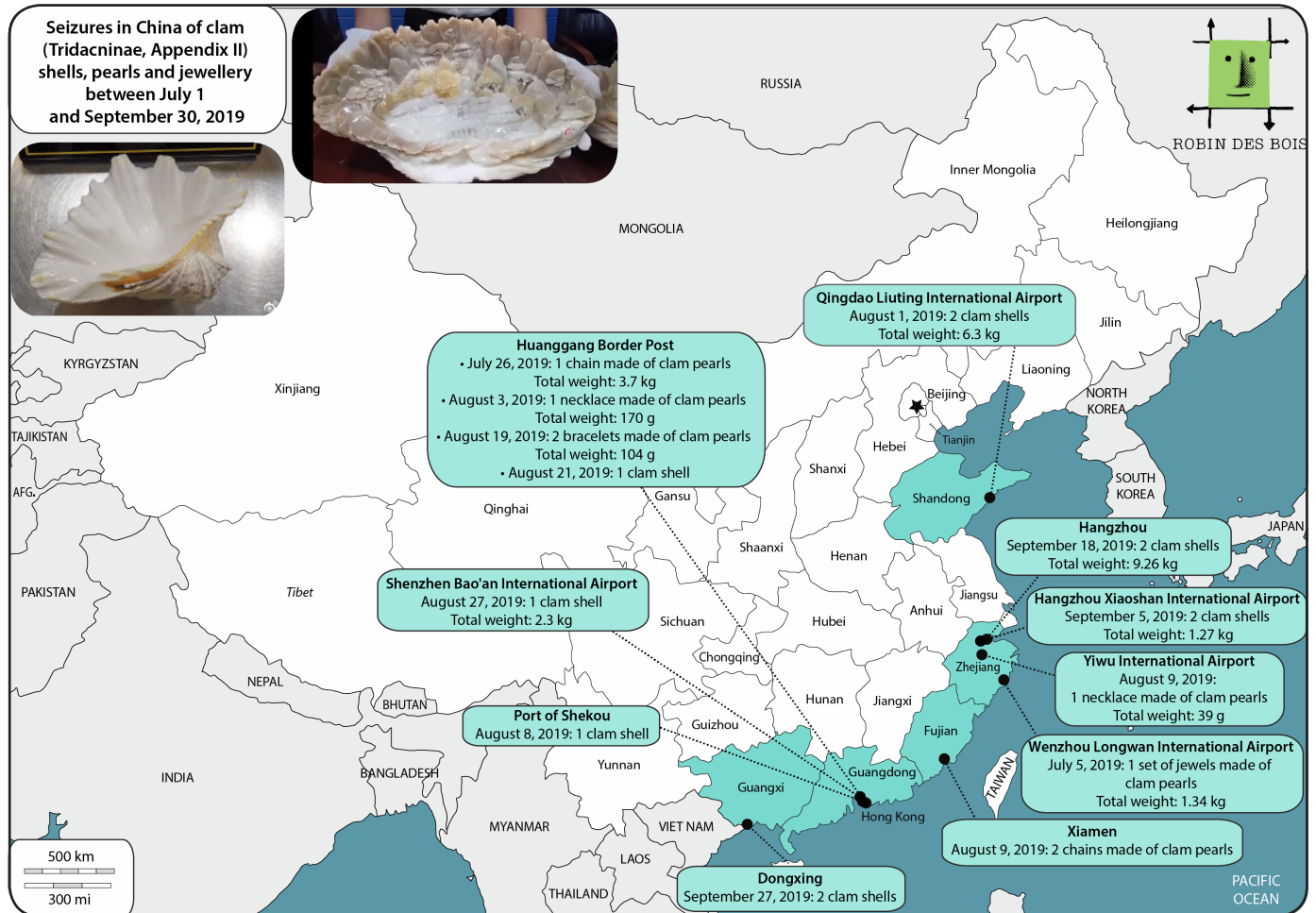


July 2019, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Clams, Nautilus, Conches ...

ASIA

CHINA



September 29, 2019 Futian Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a nautilus shell (*Nautilus* spp., Appendix II). 12 kg.¹



SRI LANKA

July 15, 2019 Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The Navy and the ADF (Assistant Directorate of Fisheries) continue to do their job despite all opposition: seizure of undersized 3,212 conch shells (genus *Strombus*).²



THAILAND

July 3, 2019 Hat Chao Mai National Park, Trang Province, Thailand

A South Korean actress is now famous for capturing giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) and eating flesh in front of the cameras of "Law of the Jungle", a reality show that has been in vogue in Seoul for the past ten years.³

EUROPE

ITALY

REPEATED OFFENSE

July 4, 2019

Formia, Latina Province, Lazio Region, Italy

Fifty kilos of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*) and scuba diving suits seized on board a boat returning to port with all lights off. Feeling trapped by the Coast Guard, the crew threw their nightly loot overboard. It was recovered by an anti-poaching diver. Five arrests.⁴

July 6, 2019

Torre Castiglione, Porto Cesareo, Lecce Province, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of one kilo of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*), piolets and other rock-destroying tools. An arrest.⁵

August 4, 2019

Porto Azzurro, Island of Elba, Livorno Province, Tuscany Region, Italy

Seizure on the beach of a noble pen shell (*Pinna nobilis*) extracted from the seabed by holiday-makers and emptied of its flesh and organs. The noble pen shell is in great danger because of poaching. It is threatened at the Mediterranean scale. In addition, it has been weakened for 4 years by a fatal parasite lodged in its digestive gland.⁶

Barnacles

EUROPE

FRANCE

August 20, 2019

Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys, Department of Morbihan, France

Seizure of 110 kg of barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*), approximately 2,200 specimens, as 3 Spanish poachers were unloading their loot, chisels and neoprene suits. In Spain, barnacles retail for 200 € and more per kilo. The barnacle is a very slow-growing crustacean of which fishing spots are supervised in its Breton range, which extends from the Crozon peninsula in Finistère to Belle-Île in the south. It lives in the rifts of rocks battered by waves and winds.¹



Pollicipes pollicipes

Sea Cucumbers



Holothuria forskali

See "A Sea Cucumber Ending" in "On the Trail" n°4, p.107. *Isostichopus fuscus* is listed under CITES Appendix III in Ecuador. Three other species are included in Appendix II with entry into force in August 2020.

AMERICA

HONDURAS

Beginning of September 2019

Island of Guanaja, Department of Islas de la Bahía, Honduras

Seizure of 473 kg of sea cucumbers in the workshops of BB Sea Food, a company specialising in seafood packaging.¹

MEXICO

Mid-August 2019

Merida, Yucatán State, Mexico

Firefighters enter a warehouse to extinguish a fire. Successful intervention. After completing their mission, they discover that the facility is being used as a workshop for processing sea cucumbers. A search warrant was issued by the judge and the search of the damaged warehouse and 2 neighbouring warehouses led to the seizure of 3,463 kg of "pepino del mar", a vehicle and various equipment.^{1bis}

ASIA

CHINA

July 7, 2019

Yiwu International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

3.92 kg of dried sea cucumbers in a suitcase.²

July 12, 2019

Man Kam To Border Post, Hong Kong, China

Seizure in the cab of a truck bound for mainland China of 44 kg of dried sea cucumbers estimated at 2,000 US\$/kg.³

End of July 2019

Yinchuan Hedong International Airport, Ningxia Province, China

Seizure of 5.65 kg of dried sea cucumbers. Estimated value of 20,000 yuan, i.e. 2,906 US\$ or 514 US\$/kg. Dried sea cucumbers are suspected by the Chinese veterinary services of carrying bacteria, viruses and harmful insects.⁴



INDIA

August 1, 2019

Therespuram, Tuticorin District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 258 kg of sea cucumbers of the species *Holothuria scabra* on board a boat landed at night on Mettupatti beach. The 2 fishermen had an appointment with an unidentified middleman.⁵

August 22, 2019

Pamban, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure on board a boat of 821 kg of sea cucumbers. The 2 fishermen escaped. This is one of the largest seizures in this infamous district known to be the starting point for smuggling to Sri Lanka.⁶

September 1, 2019

Between Mandapam and Pamban Island, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure at dawn by the Coastal Security Group (CSG) of 500 kg of sea cucumbers on board a fishing vessel. The equipment used and the interrogations of Abdul Rahman and Kadher indicate that they specialize in sea cucumber poaching and work directly for smugglers. The live sea cucumbers were returned to the sea from the Pamban bridge. The boat was seized and the 2 fishermen charged by the Mandapam Forestry Department.⁷

September 22, 2019

Off the coast of Mandapam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Boarding of 2 fishing vessels 3 nautical miles from shore by the CSG. Discovery on board of 200 kg of sea cucumbers. Arrest of 11 seamen who were taken into custody. Still alive, the sea cucumbers were released from the Pamban bridge in the presence of a magistrate.⁸

September 24, 2019

Mandapam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure in a van of 350 kg of cooked sea cucumbers. Two arrests. Sathyamurthy and Lingathan are posing as couriers. They were approaching the beaches of Vedhalai and the cargo was destined to be smuggled by sea to Sri Lanka, the first transit country before shipment to South East Asia or China.⁹

MALAYSIA

September 22, 2019

Billean and Jambongan Islands, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure of 100 kg of sea cucumbers on board 2 Vietnamese vessels fishing in Malaysian waters. The 12 crew members were heard by the court and the vessels detained. This is the fourth incursion in a month by Vietnamese boats in search of sea cucumbers in Malaysian waters off north of the island of Borneo.¹⁰

SRI LANKA

July 17, 2019

Erukkalampiddy, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
1,018.9 kg of dried sea cucumbers. An arrest.¹¹



EUROPE

ITALY

August 13, 2019

San Giorgio, Bari, Metropolitan City of Bari, Apulia Region, Italy

Despite the February 27, 2018 decree prohibiting their capture, sea cucumbers continue to whet the appetite of divers. Seizure of 60 kg by the Coast Guard. One arrest and a 2,000€ fine.¹²



August 20, 2019

Taranto, Taranto Province, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure in a car of 20 kg of sea cucumbers immediately returned to the sea.¹³

Fishes

AMERICA

BRAZIL

July 13 and 23, 2019

São Paulo de Olivença, near Tabatinga, State of Amazonas, Brazil

- Finding in a pirogue leaving for the Colombian city of Leticia of 1,080 kg of dried arapaima flesh (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 1,500 kg of fresh flesh and 2,000 kg of piracatinga (*Calophysus macropterus*). The seizure resulting from illegal fishing in the Amazon basin was donated to charity.

- Another seizure of arapaima (2,100 kg) and piracatinga (6,800 kg) to be sold in Leticia was made in the hold of a cargo and passenger vessel. Arrest of the captain.¹

Tabatinga, see "On the Trail" n°10 p.6, n°17 p.10, n°19 p.10, n°21 p.110, n°24 p.13, n°25 p.14.



Beginning of August 2019

Santo Antônio do Itá, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure on board the *Leyde Layze* of 7.6 t of piracatinga and 5.9 t of salted arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II).²

August 23, 2019

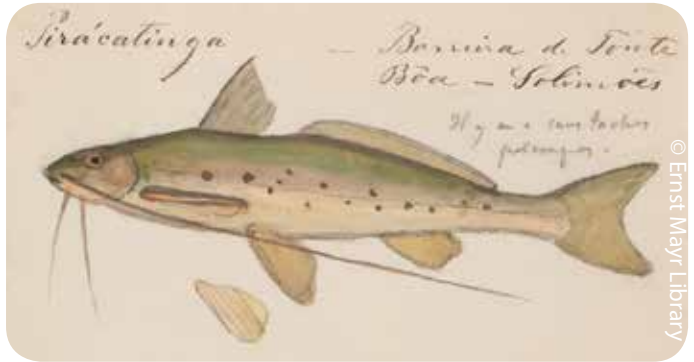
Tefé, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure on the market of one tonne of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). The sellers escaped.³

September 5-14, 2019

Tabatinga, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure on board several vessels sailing on the Solimões towards Colombia of 2,681 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 3,000 kg of piracatinga (*Calophysus macropterus*). The former were given to the diocese of Tabatinga for its good deeds. The latter were dumped because of excessive mercury levels, according to converging information from the veterinary services of Colombia and Brazil.⁴



Calophysus macropterus

September 12, 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure on board a vessel of 4 t of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Arrest and release on bail of the captain.⁵



Mid-September 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure in a vessel of 9 t of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) caught in the Japurá which flows into the Amazon, 70 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 30 kg of white-lipped peccary meat (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II). Arrest of the 2 crew members.⁶

September 27, 2019

Santana, State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizure by the military police of 384 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Fish that were below legal size were donated to charity.⁷



ECUADOR

August 28, 2019 and beginning of September 2019

Off the Galapagos Marine Reserve, Galapagos Province, Ecuador

Boarding by the national navy of 5 vessels registered in Peru fishing at the limit of Ecuadorian waters and crewed by 31 sailors, all Peruvian, except for one Venezuelan. Seizure in the holds of the *Juan Carlos II*, *María Bonita I*, *Paloma I*, *Lariza* and *Angela* of blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*), silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II), shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II), great hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna mokarran*, Appendix II), long-tailed sharks (*Alopias superciliosus*, Appendix II) with or without fins, whole or decapitated, and giant oceanic manta rays (*Manta birostris*, Appendix II) weighing approximately 1,100 kg in total. It is presumed by the San Cristóbal island's judicial authorities that these small boats were used as "beaters" for a mother ship stationed in international waters. The fishermen are in police custody and the boats retained by the Ecuadorian Navy.⁸ Sharks and Galapagos, see "On the Trail" n°10 p.7, n°11 p.6, n°18 p.9-10, n°19 p.11, n°20 p.15, n°23, p.12.

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

September 10, 2019

Department of French Guiana, France

The swim bladder of acoupa weakfish (*Cynoscion acoupa*), a drum fish cousin to the totoaba, is increasingly sought after on the Chinese market. Boarding of a stateless vessel in French territorial waters. Seizure of 45 kg of bladders corresponding to approximately 1,350 kg of acoupas. Once the acoupa is taken and the bladder extracted, the rest is thrown back into the sea.⁹ Acoupa, see "On the Trail" n°19 p.12, n°21 p.12, n°23 p.15.

MEXICO

End of May 2020

Port of Manzanillo, State of Colima, Mexico

Seizure of 10,400 kg of shark fins bound for the Philippines, including 456.5 kg of fins of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II), 2,200 kg of fins of thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp., Appendix II) and Pacific sharpnose shark (*Rhizoprionodon longurio*). Estimated value of smuggling on the local market: 208,000 US\$ or 20 US\$/kg. An official of the export company is prosecuted for biodiversity crime. To be continued.^{9bis}

July 10, 2019

Monterrey International Airport, State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico

Seizure in Terminal B of 90 totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) and 647 sea cucumbers from the luggage of 2 Mexicans and 2 Africans departing for Hong Kong.¹⁰

End of August 2019

Mexico

The report of the Mexican authority to the CITES Secretariat details 2,835 totoabas and parts of totoabas seized in 2017-2018 and 202 swim bladders between January and July 2019. 249 persons were apprehended in 2017, 2018 and the first six months of 2019. Only 33 were sentenced to prison terms or minor fines considering the ongoing extinction of totoabas and vaquitas, both listed in CITES Appendix I, and victims of gillnetting by poachers in the Sea of Cortés.¹¹

ASIA

CHINA

July 31, 2019

Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 9 pelagic thresher fins (*Alopias pelagicus*, Appendix II) in the belongings of a traveller entering the country. On the same day, a sliced pelagic thresher was being sold in a supermarket in southern France.¹²



August 28, 2019

Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of a silky shark fin (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II), 675 g.¹³

September 23, 2019

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 1,430 kg of fins, of which 226 kg were from pelagic threshers (*Alopias pelagicus*, Appendix II).¹⁴

September 28, 2019

Port of Shekou, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in the cruise terminal of 4 kg of fins from great hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna mokarran*, Appendix II), silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II) and smooth hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna zygaena*, Appendix II) in the luggage of a passenger from Solomon Islands.¹⁵

INDIA

August 3, 2019

Semmanchery, Kancheepuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India The largemouth sawfish (*Pristis microdon*, Appendix I) had been spotted a few weeks ago off Chennai. "I don't think they've been seen on the East coast in the last 30-40 years," a specialist applauded. This sighting was short-lived. The rostrum of the favourite animal got tangled in a net. The fishermen supposed to be unaware that the species was not marketable, sold the sawfish on the docks for 5,000 rupees, or 73 US\$.¹⁶

September 25, 2019

Dhamara, Bhadrak District, State of Odisha, India

A "businessman" from Chennai did not hesitate to pay Rs 749,000 (10,450 US\$) to buy a whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II) weighing more than 100 kg brought to port by fishermen who had caught it offshore. The Forestry Department claims to have no information on this sale.¹⁷

SRI LANKA

September 29, 2019

Valaichchenai, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Five sailors in turmoil. They were on board the trawler from which 5 mutilated or beheaded thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp., Appendix II) were seized.¹⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-July 2019

Guernica, Bizkaia Province, Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, Spain

Conviction of the owner and captain of a fishing vessel from Ondarroa to 3 months and 10 days' fine of 6 € per day (approximately 240 €) and simultaneous suspension of their fishing licence for attempting, in 2018, to unload 20 mackerel sharks (*Lamna nasus*, Appendix II) which are banned from fishing in European waters, and for declaring 4,872 kg of blue sharks, compared to the 6,320 kg in the holds (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.15).¹⁹



Beginning of August 2019

Port of A Coruña, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

Seizure at the bottom of the hold of the fishing vessel of a 150 kg swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) with a commercial value of 1,500 US\$. The boss claimed it was a by-catch and that he wanted to keep it on board to feed the crew.²⁰

Mid-September 2019

Tarifa, Cadiz Province, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Seizure of 25 Atlantic bluefin tunas (*Thunnus thynnus*) with a total weight of 1,471 kg. The 25 tunas hung on a buoy one mile from the port. If they are edible, they will be donated to the Campo de Gibraltar Food Bank. Several pleasure boats engage in intensive Atlantic bluefin tuna fishing off Tarifa.²¹

FRANCE

REPEATED OFFENSE

July 4, 2019

Bordeaux, Department of Gironde, France

"Animals are dear to my heart, but you don't send someone to prison for glass eels, I think it's dreadful".

This is how the lawyer for a repeat glass eel (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) trafficker spoke on the stand. This time, in the high-speed road smuggling, he was driving the escort car for the modest sum of 600 €. The van behind contained 840,000 glass eels in 26 boxes. Sentenced to 2 years imprisonment and a fine of 4,000 €.²²



August 24 to 26, 2019

Douarnenez, Department of Finistère, France

Seizure on board 2 Irish gillnetters putting into the port rest of 20 t of albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) and 190 kg of swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) not reported on electronic fishing reports. Longfin tuna is subject to fishing quotas allocated by the European Union. On-board inspections were carried out by French officials and an Irish counterpart. French inspectors will participate in October in reciprocal checks in Irish ports. The captain and the owner are liable to fines of between 22,500 € and 110,000 €.²³

ITALY

August 7, 2019

Port of Torre del Greco, Metropolitan City of Naples, Campania Region, Italy

Seizure in pleasure boats of several Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*).²⁴

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

September 13, 2019

Adelaide, State of South Australia, Australia

Conviction of Van Ho Le to a 540 US\$ fine and to pay legal costs for having attempted to import into Australia from Viet Nam a juvenile Asian arowana (*Scleropages formosus*, Appendix I) believed to bring good luck and selling for more than 200,000 US\$ in China, as an adult when it comes to 90 cm long (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.19).²⁵



© Australian Border Force

Marine Mammals

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

August 23, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Marius Tredoux, a fisherman, was found guilty of cruelty to a baby Cape fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*, Appendix II). He was sentenced to 10 months in prison. However, if over a 3-year probation period, he does not commit any similar crimes, the sentence will be cancelled. During that period, he is forbidden from catching marine or fresh-water fish and from going to the seaside, even to a beach. Nor must he indulge in alcohol or narcotics. In addition, he is under house arrest for 10 months.



Fur seals can travel 80 km per day and dive to depths of up to 200 m. Females come back regularly to the beaches where colonies are established to nurse their young. Despite their massive silhouettes, fur seals are amazingly agile.¹

NAMIBIA

July 1, 2019

Cape Cross, Erongo Region et Atlas Bay, Karas Region, Namibia

The Cape fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*, Appendix II) hunting season has opened on the beaches. The annual culling quota is 6,000 adults and 8,000 cubs just a few months old. The adults are shot by mercenaries, sometimes veterans of civil wars or wars for independence in southern Africa. The pups are knocked unconscious with clubs, then a knife is stabbed into the backs of their heads. Turkey is the largest importer of raw hides. They are transformed into coats or other clothing items, which are then exported to Russia, to Asia or to any other country where the sale of such items is still authorized. There is some ambiguity on the matter. Although Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus have banned the import of furs and other seal products from Canada, they remain open to trade in furs and other products made from fur seal skins.



However, the global clothing market is in decline. Fashion from the fur seals has not caught on in China as much as the sector would have liked, and since 2010, the European Union market is legally closed to all seals and their parts. The United States of America banned their import in 1972. Although the fur seal trade is in decline, the same is not true for adult penises which are dried, ground into powder and sold as aphrodisiacs. The main importers are Hong Kong and continental China. Continental China is also the main importer of oils extracted in melters and used as an invigorating food supplement.

"Namibian Sunshine" is not the sunshine you might dream of. It is Cape fur seal oil that is rich in omega 3 and in cruelty. Fishermen consider Cape fur seals to be rivals and thieves who steal mackerels and sardines. The expats who are at the head of the fish trafficking in Namibia blame them for the depletion of fish stocks, an internationally known refrain that always pays off when addressing local populations and traditional fishermen.

Arctocephalus pusillus, see "On the Trail" n° 14 p. 17, n° 15 p. 10.²



AMERICA

ECUADOR

August 29, 2019

Guayaquil, Guayas Province, Ecuador

Guayaquil is now a "dolphin-free city". Rescate Animal Ecuador, Proyecto Sacha and the Movimiento Animalista Nacional del Ecuador hope that the decision will be extended to the whole country.³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 15, 2019

Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America

Conviction of James Terrance Williams (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.19) to 2 years' probation and a fine of 5,000 US\$ for trafficking in raw walrus tusks (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) sent to Indonesia and returned to Alaska as worked ivories.⁴



ASIA

CHINA

August 2019

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 410 seal skins (Phocidae family). The package came from abroad with transit through Hong Kong.⁵



INDIA

September 25, 2019

Mimisal, South Pudukkudi, Pudukkottai District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Seizure on a boat and release in the water of a juvenile dugong (*Dugong dugon*, Appendix I) (1m40 long, approximately one hundred kilo). Four fishermen were arrested as they were about to land the dugong and sell him. Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar are 2 historical dugong habitats. The seabed in both places is raked and distressed by trawlers and dredges, anchors and propellers, chemical and bacterial pollution from land and shrimp farms. The undersea grasslands are ruined and no longer suffice to feed the dugongs, who deserve their common name "sea cows," although they do not benefit from the same respect due to land cows in the country. Adult dugongs eat 40 to 60 kg of seaweed a day. The OMCAR (Organisation for Marine Conservation, Awareness and Research - Palk Bay Centre) recently handed out 10,000 leaflets to the schools in Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Tuticorin to remind the children and teachers of the usefulness of grasslands at the sea bottom, the existence of the peaceful dugongs and the need to protect them. In Palk Bay, the dugongs, who come up to the water surface every 5 or 6 minutes to breathe, have no natural enemies like sharks and saltwater crocodiles. Along the vast Indian coastline, there are only 240 dugongs left, and most of them are restricted to Tamil Nadu.⁶



Dugong dugon

THAILAND

July 2, 2019

Koh Lanta, Krabi Province, Thailand

The 12 m long beast was a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) stranded on the beach. Already the lower jaw with its 30 or so ivory teeth was severed. Somebody tried hard to tear them out and clean them from tip to root to sell them on the market (see "On the Trail" n°2 p.5 and p.77, n°3 p.76, n°11 p.97 and p.98, n°12 p.12, n°13 p.114, n°17 p.16 and p.117, n°18 p.13, n°20 p.128, n°21 p.14).⁷



September 2, 2019

Thailand

Fishing action targeting a herd of 30 dolphins in Thai waters. The flag of the boat is Malaysian, the crew is Thai. The captain and his chief mate gave the order to bring 4 of them on board to smoke the meat. KNF 777 was on its way to fish for tuna in Malaysian waters.⁸

EUROPE

DENMARK

OPERATION BLOODY FJORDS

Since January 1, 2019

Trongisvágur, Sandavágur, Hvalba, Bour, Sandagerði, Skálabotnur, Fuglafjörður, Leynar, Hvalvík and Vestmanna, Faroe Islands, Denmark

The Faeroese are hungry. The fishing principality of Northern Europe "protects its mackerel" and killed 536 long-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala melas*, Appendix II) and 7 Atlantic white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*, Appendix II) between January 1 and August 2 according to Sea Shepherd.⁹

Sidney Holt
1926 – 2019

If one day Robin des Bois is writing the story of an undefeated, scholarly, ardent and inimitable sperm whale, they will call him Holt.

Sidney crossed over to the other side on December 22, 2019 at the age of 93. He was the first to describe whaling – and sperm whale whaling – as an extractive and mining industry. If the lode is no longer profitable, the men turn away from it, if it's valuable again, they come back to it. Holt's writings and memories will help us get rid of the grenades and harpoons, but we must not hide the fact that with his disappearance, the whales have lost an influential, thunderous and unifying spokesperson.



Tim Holt †, Sidney Holt
and Charlotte Nithart of Robin des Bois at the 66th
International Whaling Commission in Portorož, Slovenia.

NETHERLANDS

September 2019
The Netherlands

Seizure of a whale's intervertebral disc. "Looking for a nice souvenir, the Uruguayan passenger only brought home a fine," the Dutch customs sum up.¹⁰



Various Marine Species

ASIA

CHINA

August 21, 2019
Huanggang Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 12 hawksbill turtle shell bracelets and a clam shell (Tridacninae, Appendix II).¹

August 23, 2019
Hong Kong International Airport, China
Seizure of 180 kg of shark fins and about 100 dried seahorses in the suitcases of 3 passengers from Manila, aged between 21 and 38 years old and acting in conspiracy.²

August 26, 2019
Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

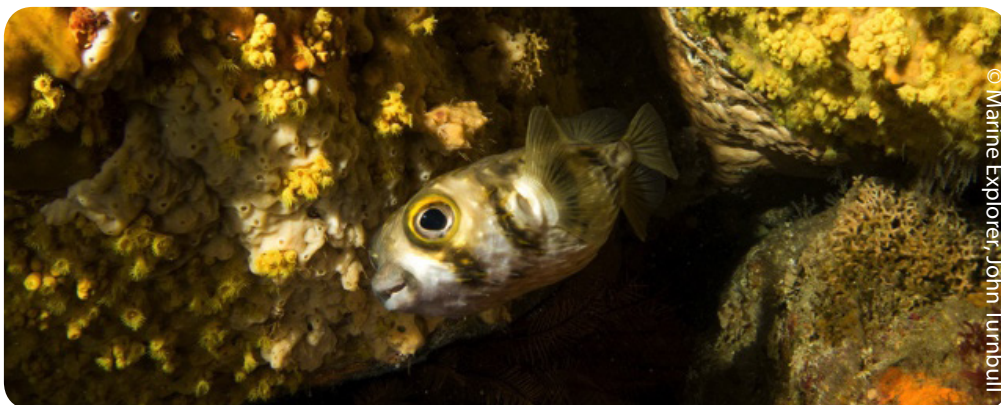
Seizure in the suitcase of a passenger from Taiwan of 3 giant helmets (*Blackcurrant cornuta*) and a stuffed slender-spined porcupine fish (*Diodon nictemerus*, picture below).³

EUROPE

ITALY

August 8, 2019
Bologna International Airport - Borgo Panigale, Bologna Province, Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy

Seizure of 2.2 kg of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II), 4.5 kg of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) and a sea turtle shell (Appendix I) in the belongings of Italian and Chinese passengers from the Dominican Republic, Brazil and China.⁴



Marine Turtles

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

AFRICA

FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

July 25 and August 12, 2019

Department of Mayotte, France

Mission impossible for the agents of the French Biodiversity Agency who are only 7 to monitor all the archipelago beaches. Yet they have managed to stop sea turtle poachers in the north of the Grande Ile. Seizure of 69 kg of meat. A few weeks later, the 2 skinning poachers were sentenced to 8 months in prison possibly adjusted - they left free the court -and the driver to a 3 months suspended prison sentence.¹



KENYA

September 27, 2019

Lamu, Lamu County, Kenya

Harun Seif and Madi Athman were sentenced to a fine of 3 million shillings, or 29,000 US\$ each, or 5 years in prison if they fail to pay, for having captured, killed and butchered a green turtle on Kui Island. The inhabitants of Lamu and its vicinity continue to believe that eating turtle meat and soup brings health benefits. As a cure for impotence and to dope up (masculine) sexuality, it is a classic. Less well-known are the beneficial properties of consuming turtle fat for fishermen who dive for shellfish and sea cucumbers, and for whom it supposedly helps stay longer underwater without breathing.²



AMERICA

COSTA RICA

Beginning of August 2019

Tortuguero, Limón Province, Costa Rica

July - August: arribadas of sea turtles and mass arrival of poachers on the beaches. Seizure by a night patrol of 710 eggs. They were placed under artificial incubation in the Sea Turtle Conservancy's hatchery. Costa Rica authorizes the sale of eggs collected exclusively from the beaches of Santa Cruz Guanacaste. Two arrests.³



Beginning of August 2019

Pococi, Limón Province, Costa Rica

Theft of 107 loggerhead eggs on a beach. One arrest.⁴

September 26, 2019

Puerto Jimenez, Puntarenas Province, Costa Rica

Seizure in a lagoon in Corcovado National Park of 307 olive Ridley turtle eggs, a hundred fish, and 6 fishing nets. Two arrests.⁵

ECUADOR

Mid-July 2019

Canton of Muisne, Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador

Attempt to rescue a male pacific Ridley turtle stranded on a beach surrounded by mangroves. The injuries to the skull, shell and jaw were caused by illegal fishing activities in the mouth of the Río Muisne.⁶

July 29, 2019

Esmeraldas, Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador

15 Pacific Ridley's turtle eggs stolen on the beaches of Las Palmas in the Río Esmeraldas estuary wildlife reserve seized in the hands of 2 teenagers aged 15 and 16.⁷

Beginning of August 2019

Manta, Manabí Province, Ecuador

Rescue of a green turtle. Extraction of the hook lodged in her oesophagus. Prognosis reserved at first. Good news, she was released into the sea in good health in the beginning of September.⁸

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of August 2019

South Padre Island, State of Texas, United States of America

Capture, killing and cutting-up of 2 green turtles on South Padre Island. The flesh was hidden in plastic bags buried in the dunes. Intervention of the Texas game wardens. Identification of the suspects in progress.⁹



September 1, 2019

Satellite Beach, State of Florida, United States of America

Did they want to barbecue the freshly hatched baby turtles? Several small charred corpses were discovered by a walker on the beach among pieces of burnt wood. An investigation has been opened.¹⁰

HONDURAS

August 21, 2019

Department of Gracias a Dios, Honduras

Interception by patrol boats *Miss E. Libya* and *Marissa* of a fishing boat. Seizure of 2 hawksbill turtles and nautilus. Nine arrests.¹¹

MEXICO

August 8, 2019

Mazunte, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Record-breaking. 46,700 Ridley's turtle eggs seized. Four arrests.¹²

August 21, 2019

Salina Cruz, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Seizure of 24,000 eggs of Pacific Ridley turtles on the Morro Mazatán-Salina Cruz coastal road.¹³

September 2, 2019

Villahermosa, State of Tabasco, Mexico

Profepa's (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) rescue of a juvenile green turtle closed in a plastic pan.¹⁴

Beginning of September 2019

Arriaga, State of Chiapas, Mexico

Seizure in a coach of 6 bags with 2,000 loggerhead turtle eggs. They were brought for artificial incubation to the "Tortuguero" camp in Puerto Arista.¹⁵

Beginning of September 2019

Mazatlán, State of Sinaloa, Mexico

Arrest of Miguel N. and Santiago N. They captured and dismembered Pacific Ridley turtles and collected eggs (64) for commercial purposes. A turtle rescued from the butchery was taken to the Mazatlan Aquarium for health examination and recovery treatment.¹⁶

PANAMA

Beginning of August 2019

Tonosí, Los Santos Province, Panama

Theft of 898 turtle eggs in the Isla Cañas Wildlife Reserve.¹⁷

Mid-September 2019

Cambutal, Los Santos Province, Panama

Seizures of 113, 294 and 901 turtle eggs stolen on the beaches of Cambutal, Pacific Ocean.¹⁸

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of August 2019

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure upon landing of a flight from Addis Ababa of 9 combs, 17 bracelets and 2 hawksbill turtle shell fans.¹⁹

INDONESIA

July 5, 2019

Asukweri, Raja Ampat Regency, West Papua Province, Island of New Guinea, Indonesia

Do you want to go for a sea turtle ride? The custom seems to be well-established.²⁰



August 14, 2019

Port of Sintete, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Island of Borneo, Indonesia

Seizure of 1,340 sea turtle eggs on arrival of the *KM Sabuk Nusantara 38*.²¹

MALAYSIA

September 7, 2019

Kuching and Samarahan City, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Seizure on a market of 214 sea turtle eggs in the morning and 438 in the afternoon. The 2 offenders are liable to a maximum fine of 11,855 US\$ and a prison sentence of 5 years.²²

September 17, 2019

Sandakan, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure by the Navy of 4,000 sea turtle eggs. It was 6:20 a.m. "While patrolling the area, our personnel succeeded in thwarting the attempt to smuggle turtle eggs for sale to the public when a green-and-blue boat with two 40hp engines and a Malaysian registration number accelerated but got stuck in the shallow area." "The boat skipper managed to escape."²³

July 22, 2019

Sandakan, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure on board a fishing boat registered in a neighbouring country of 7,000 sea turtle eggs. The crew fled.²⁴

SRI LANKA

OPERATION "NEELA HARITHA SANGRAMAYA" (BLUE SEA AND GREEN EARTH)

July 18, 2019

Silavathurai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 80 kg of turtle meat. The Sri Lanka Navy claims the release of 7,000 seized baby turtles hatched in artificial incubators.²⁵

EUROPE

SPAIN

July 13, 2019

Castelló de la Plana, Province of Castellón, Valencian Country, Spain

A miracle north of Valencia. At 5 a.m., early-morning swimmers discovered 113 loggerhead turtle eggs. The mother had already gone back to the sea. The local police were alerted immediately. Specialists from the stranding network, the Ministry of Ecology, the University of Valencia and the Oceanogràfic Foundation arrived on site quickly and quietly. As a security measure, 81 eggs were delicately transferred to a safe location a few meters from the sea in the Albufera Natural Park, and 32 were placed in artificial incubators at the Oceanogràfic Foundation. The suspense about hatching is unbearable! Ha! On September 10, there were already 9 eggs that had hatched.²⁶

Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

Cumulative quarterly seizures: examples

2,000 Reeves' turtles

(*Mauremys reevesii*, Appendix III in China)

515 Indian star tortoises

(*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II;

Appendix I since November 26, 2019)

532 Greek tortoises

(*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II)

AFRICA

MADAGASCAR

August 15, 2019

Ivato International Airport, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

A group of radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) have been repatriated to Madagascar. They had been transferred by sea to the Comoros in December 2018. The Comoros were the first step before air shipment to Asia. The Comorian customs department searched the smugglers' boat, and 4 Madagascans and 2 Comorians were taken into temporary custody. No information has been communicated on what awaits them.

To get back to their home island, they took an Air Madagascar flight. When they arrived in Ivato, they were taken in by the Turtle Survival Alliance. There were 245 of them when they arrived in the Comoros. Only 222 made it back to Madagascar. 23 died during the transit in the Comoros.¹

Radiated tortoises: see "On the Trail" n° 10 p. 13, p.16, n° 12 p.16, p.17, p.20, n° 13 p.15, p.16, n° 14 p.18, n° 15 p.18, p.20, n° 16 p.102, n° 17 p.19, n° 17 p.21, n° 19 p.19, p.20, n° 20 p.23, n° 21 p.19.

September 9, 2019

Madagascar

A Facebook seller of radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) put on remand. Trafficking was reported by the Voahary Gasy alliance, which gathers some 30 NGOs.²

facebook

MOROCCO

July 29 and September 8, 2019

Tangier, Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima Region, Morocco

- A Moroccan national was sentenced to a fine of 2.4 million dirhams, or over 250,000 US\$, for having attempted to export 120 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) purchased in Casablanca and meant to be sold in France. The fine is not excessive. The legislation calls for a fine equivalent to 2300 US\$ for the transportation, smuggling or attempted sale of a single specimen.

- Seizure before boarding a car-ferry, in a vehicle with French license plates and driven by a Moroccan citizen residing in Marseille (France), of 400 Greek tortoises.³



AMERICA

BOLIVIA

End of August 2019

Nacebe, Department of Pando, Bolivia

Seizure by a navy patrol on board a fishing boat on the Orton, a river in the Amazon basin, of 2 Magdalena river turtles (*Podocnemis lewyana*, Appendix II) and 1,500 eggs.⁴

BRAZIL

August 28, 2019

Itacoatiara, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 10 *Podocnemis* (Appendix II) on board a small boat. The 2 fishermen have vanished.⁵

September 23, 2019

Jaú National Park, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Nightfall seizure on board 2 pirogues of 348 live *Podocnemis* (Appendix II), 2,329 eggs and of tapir meat (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II). The turtles were released into the water. Six arrests.⁶

COLOMBIA

Beginning of August 2019

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure in a pet shop of 8 matamatas (*Chelus fimbriata*).⁷

Mid-August 2019

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure at the El Salitre bus station of 34 wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) captured in the State of Guárico in Venezuela and hauled over 1,000 km to Bogotá. One arrest.⁸

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 2019

State of South Carolina, United States of America

Seizure by the SCDNR (South Carolina Department of Natural Resources) of more than 200 common box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II) caught in the wild and intended for the domestic market. Such large removals could lead the species to extinction. This is why the ecology specialists at Savannah River University will do everything possible to release them.⁹

Terrapene carolina, see "On the Trail" n°6 p.15, n°11 p.12, n°17 p.20, n°19 p.21, n°21 p.20

August 29, 2019

State of Pennsylvania, United States of America

Sentencing of David Sommers to 6 months in prison and 3 years' probation, including 6 months of house arrest. He engaged in the capture of diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II) in the marshes of New Jersey, sold them on the Internet and sent them by mail to Canada or Pennsylvania under false designation (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.21). David Sommers must in addition pay 250,000 US\$ which will be used to compensate, as much as possible, the damage inflicted on the tortoises and their habitats.¹⁰



September 10, 2019

Hampton, State of Virginia, United States of America

Leon Winston received a 30-day suspended sentence and 2 years on probation for having illegally posted the following for sale on Internet: painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta*), common musk turtles (*Sternotherus odoratus*), red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) and yellow-bellied sliders (*Trachemys scripta scripta*), all packed into over-populated aquariums and accompanied when sold by "user's instructions" with completely incorrect information, particularly on water temperature requirements. It was the NGO Peta that called the individual's offhandedness to the attention of the relevant authorities and the state justice department. Winston catches river turtles with nets and it is highly likely that the very lenient sentence will not dissuade him from continuing.¹¹



Terrapene carolina

BANGLADESH

August 23, 2019**Sonaharpara, Dinajpur District, Rangpur Division, Bangladesh**

A team of Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) raided the village following reports of the arrival of turtle smugglers from India. But the criminals managed to get away, leaving behind 48 kg of dried turtle meat. The value of the seizure is estimated at 870,000 takas (10,295 US\$).¹²

CAMBODIA

July 30, 2019**Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia**

Seizure by the WRRT (Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team) of about a hundred Malayan snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys macrocephala*, Appendix II) in a restaurant.¹³

CHINA

August 22, 2019**Luohu Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China**

Seizure in socks of 52 juvenile turtles, Chinese box turtles (*Cuora flavomarginata*, Appendix II), Reeves' turtles (*Mauremys reevesii*, Appendix III) and red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). An arrest.¹⁴

August 26, 2019**Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China**

Seizure of 40 spotted box turtles (*Terrapene nelsoni*, Appendix II) and one Central American river turtle (*Dermatemys mawii*, Appendix II) from Mexico. Two arrests.¹⁵

September 18, 2019**Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China**

The 6 cans of powdered milk each contained a baby African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), a species native to Sahelian Africa. As an adult, it weighs more than 100 kg. The female Chinese passenger came from Addis Ababa.¹⁶

**September 28, 2019****Hong Kong International Airport, China**

Seizure of 57 live turtles, including radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) with an estimated value of over 43,000 US\$, in the luggage of a passenger travelling from the Comoros via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The "goods" were wrapped up in plastic. In addition to the offence of trafficking in protected animals, the 45-year-old man is liable to cruelty to animals.¹⁷

End of September 2019**Gongbei Border Post, Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.**

Seizure of 5 Chinese box turtles (*Cuora flavomarginata*, Appendix II). The range of this species covers Taiwan and Japan.¹⁸



INDIA

July 2, 2019**Panipat, Panipat District, Haryana State, India**

After being informed that a man was expected to deliver some turtles to an intermediary, agents from the Department of Forests and from the Wildlife Crime Unit set a trap at the rendez-vous location. When Vishavbandhu Sharma arrived at the Assandh intersection, carrying a black bag, they intercepted him. The trafficker tried to flee, but was caught. In his bag, agents found 63 turtles in a plastic net surrounded by bottles of cold water: Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II), Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I) and spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I). Vishavbandhu Sharma admitted that he had gotten the turtles in Bareilly, in Uttar Pradesh, and had been trafficking for 4 years. He has allegedly sold nearly 1300 turtles for between 2,000 and 3,000 rupees each (from 28 to 49 US\$). He was held in custody for 14 days. The turtles were released in the Yamuna river.¹⁹

July 18, 2019**Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Five fishermen fishing at night in Ramsagral Tal lake. Seizure of 10 freshwater turtles and 50 fish.²⁰

August 4, 2019**Etawah, Etawah District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Seizure of 7 kg of "calipee", a light yellow gelatinous substance (see "On the Trail" n°20 p.25) collected from softshell turtles (Trionychidae, Appendix I or II) and sought after by gourmets, particularly in West Bengal metropolises. These 7 kg correspond to the capture of about 30 turtles in ponds and rivers around or inside the Chambal Sanctuary. Two arrests including a specially recruited physically disabled person who first transported the loot in his rickshaw and then had to deliver it by train to intermediaries.²¹

August 25, 2019

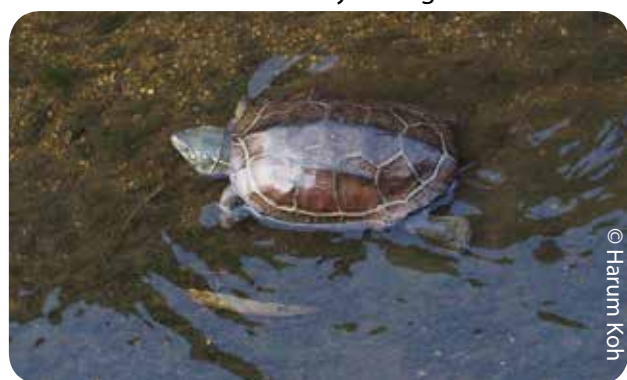
Royapuram, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Children were playing with 41 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) on a playground. Alerted by a woman, firefighters seized the reptiles and turned them over to the Forest Department. An investigation was opened trying to identify who may have abandoned them in the middle of the city.²²

September 5, 2019

Trichy International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 2,000 juvenile Reeves' turtles (*Mauremys reevesii*, Appendix III) stored in 8 boxes in the suitcases of Peer Mohammed Mustafa, an Indian national living in Chennai. He was arriving from Malaysia on a Malindo Air flight. The turtles might be returned to their country of origin.²³



September 8, 2019

Sonepur District, State of Bihar, India

A Government Rail Police (GRP) team conducting a random baggage check on the Lucknow-Barauni Express suddenly noticed a seemingly discarded jute bag in which something was moving. Upon opening it, the officers discovered 230 turtles. They turned the reptiles over to the Forest Department. The value of the bundle is estimated at 400,000 rupees (5,580 US\$).²⁴

GANG

September 16, 2019

Chikkamagaluru, Chikkamagaluru District, State of Karnataka, India

After a month-long investigation, the Forestry Department dismantled a turtle smuggling ring led by Parmesh Nayak, a 17-year-old technology student. During a first raid they caught Eshwar Reddy while he was negotiating the sale of 2 turtles of the species *Melanochelys trijuga* (Appendix II). The second raid led to the arrest of Suresh, Ankush - a real estate agent -, Harsha Gowda, Parmesh Nayak, Darshan and Nagaraj. An Indian softshell turtle (*Nilssonia gangetica*, Appendix I), 2 bicycles and a car were also seized. All the suspects were remanded in custody for 14 days.²⁵

September 23, 2019

Rampur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 35 turtles of an undetermined species. The poacher was transporting them on his bicycle. The turtle trade in Uttar Pradesh mainly involves Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), softshell turtles (Trionychidae family) and roofed turtles (*Pangshura* spp., Appendix I or II), see "On the Trail" n°15 p.19, n°16 p.18, n°17 p.20-21, n°20 p.25, n°23 p.27-28.²⁶

MALAYSIA

September 30, 2019

Batu Paha, State of Johor, Malaysia

Seizures at 2 different locations of 64 Malaysian native *Chitra chitra* turtles (Appendix I), 15 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I) and 474 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) smuggled from India. Three arrests including one Indian national and one member of an Orang Asli tribe.²⁷

VIET NAM

July 2, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Two yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) seized from a street vendor.²⁸

August 23, 2019

Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over of a yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and a yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II).²⁹

September 3, 2019

Cat Tien National Park, Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

"Buy to save" is helping the traffic flourish. In this particular case, the female buyer went all the way. From Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, she drove the 2 yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) to the Cat Tien National Park refuge.³⁰

September 24, 2019

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

Seizure in a pet shop of 2 yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and 3 ricefield turtles (*Malayemys subtrijuga*, Appendix II). They were released in the Binh Chau Nature Reserve.³¹

EUROPE

GERMANY

August 21, 2019

Baden-Baden, State of Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Seizure, in a car driven by a French couple coming from Turkey, of 3 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II). 500 € fine.³²



September 30, 2019

Lippstadt, State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Following the issue of a search warrant, seizure in a private home of 2 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) jailed in a laundry basket and in very poor health. A dead turtle discovered in the garden.³³

SPAIN

**OPERATIONS CELACANTO AND THUNDERBALL
June-July 2019**

Spain

Seizure of 113 radiated turtles (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I).³⁴

**OPERATIONS CELACANTO AND THUNDERBALL
June-July 2019**

Malaga and Almeria Provinces, Autonomous Community of Andalusia and Murcia Region, Spain

Seizure of Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II).³⁵

**OPERATIONS CELACANTO AND THUNDERBALL
June-July 2019**

Barcelona El Prat International Airport, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Seizure of 76 Aldabra giant tortoises shells (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*, Appendix II) with a total estimated value of 114,000 €. They originate from the Seychelles and were introduced into Madagascar, Reunion and Mauritius islands and Tanzania.³⁶

Mid-July 2019

Valladolid, Valladolid Province, Autonomous community of Castile and León, Spain

Three Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) left over because of the summer holidays were wandering in Cerámica Street. After a call to 112, they were recovered and taken to a dedicated accommodation.³⁷

End of September 2019

Port of Almeria, Almería Province, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Seizure of 4 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in the luxury car of a French national on disembarking from a car-ferry from Morocco.³⁸

Snakes

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

August 26, 2019

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Seizure by the NSPCA (National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) of 3 Southern African pythons (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II). They were in a tricky situation in a dark warehouse. They were sharing their cage with live rabbits they were supposed to feed on, but in an unexpected turn of events, the reptiles had been bitten by the rodents and on top of that suffered from dermatitis. Two professional caretakers bathe the 3 individuals every 2 days and apply antibiotic ointments to their wounds. Favourable prognosis.¹

ZIMBABWE

July 2019

Umguza, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Square Mpofu. He was keeping a 1.60 m long Southern African python skin (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II) under his bed.²

ASIA

BANGLADESH

July 31, 2019

Baghpara, Bogra District, Rajshahi Division, Bangladesh

An Indian sand boa (*Gongylophis conicus*, Appendix II), very rare in Bangladesh, only survived thanks to the intervention of Kamrul Hasan Dalim, president of the local administration unit, the parishad. The reptile was found in a field and a group of villagers had begun to beat it to death. Kamrul Hasan Dalim saved it and posted a picture on Facebook. Members of the local NGO TEER spotted the publication and came to get the snake. The injured animal is now being cared for at the TEER facility in coordination with the Department of Forests.³

CHINA

September 8, 2019

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

The X-rays revealed 23 dead *Elaphe davidi* snakes hidden in a box of hair dye inside a package from Taiwan.⁴

INDIA

July 4, 2019

Yeoor, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

An Indian python (*Python molurus molurus*, Appendix I) is treated by a veterinarian of the Wildlife Welfare Association (WWA) for injuries to the lower jaw following being beaten with sticks or stones.⁵

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 9, 2019

Perumbadi, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India

Juhair and Ahmed Suhail and their accomplice Sheikh Amir Shahil were trying to sell 2 fine specimens of sand boas (*Eryx spp.*, Appendix II) each 1.20 m long and weighing 4 kg. They were arrested by the mobile team of the Forest Department. The 2 cars used for transport were seized.⁶

July 10, 2019

Baragaunia, Angul District, State of Odisha, India

According to the elders, a king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) of that size – 3.77 m long – has never been seen in the region. And yet it was killed in the Pandurisuni hills, by a group of 4 or 5 men with home-made rifles, as it was swallowing a monitor lizard. The poachers then took the snake back to the village where it caused a sensation. The Department of Forests was alerted and came to get the cadaver for an autopsy. A few days later, an officer from the forest division declared that the reptile had died after being run over by a vehicle. However, the villagers pointed out that there was a wound on the reptile's head which corresponded to a bullet impact. Political pressure appears to be the cause of the change in the story.⁷



July 22, 2019

Mathura and Vrindavan, Mathura District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The month of Shrawan is a long ordeal for snakes. Several weeks before the tributes and offerings made to Shiva, “charmners” deprive snakes of food and water, and subject them to other esthetic and preventive preparations. That is why mongoose hair was implanted on the head of an Indian rat snake (*Ptyas mucosa*); and to avoid bites, cobras’ fangs are pulled out and their venom glands are sutured, condemning them to a shortened life in captivity.



The snake-charmers’ goal is to attract as many worshippers as possible and to get their snakes to drink a bowl of milk, in exchange for a few coins. A joint initiative between Wildlife SOS and law enforcement agents determined to implement the ban on public display of snakes which has been applicable since 1972 and the federal government notification dating from 2014, led to the seizure on temple stairs of 11 Indian cobras (*Naja naja*, Appendix II), 3 brown sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II), a royal snake (*Spalerosophis diadema*) and an Indian rat snake.⁸

July 22, 2019

Nerul, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of 2 teenagers after pictures on social networks showed them engaging in “weight training exercises” and “spiritual conversations” with an Indian python (*Python molurus molurus*, Appendix I) presumed to have been captured in the forest.⁹

August 3, 2019

Kochi, Ernakulam District, State of Kerala, India

Seizure of a Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) by the Perumbavoor Forest Flying Squad. Two arrests.¹⁰

August 5, 2019

Mumbai, Mumbai City District, State of Maharashtra, India

Scores were settled over an affair involving a brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). Pradeep Surve and 4 accomplices were arrested for the murder of Udaybhan Pal.



- On June 17, 2019, Pal's wife reported him missing. Three days later, she received a demand for ransom for 300,000 rupees, or 4300 US\$.

- On July 25, 2019, Pal's body was found at the bottom of a ravine in the Satara district, 275 km from Mumbai. It turned out that Pal had been paid 2.1 million rupees (30,000 US\$) to deliver an adult brown sand boa to Pradeep Surve. Surve planned to resell it for 10 million rupees (144,000 US\$) to a "business man" in Nashik. The delivery took place as planned, but the snake died before it could be resold to the final buyer. Surve demanded to be reimbursed, but Pal had already spent the money on the purchase of a car. Surve laid a trap for him in an isolated location, near a river, and with the help of 4 accomplices, he assassinated him. Pal was an autorickshaw driver, and Surve is a lottery ticket vendor and a good-luck-snake trafficker.¹¹

MALAYSIA

July 15 or 22, 2019

Senai International Airport, State of Johor, Malaysia

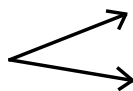
Seizure in an airport shop of 167 items made of python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) worth 40,000 ringgits, or 9,650 US\$. Two species are endemic to the region: the Brongersma's short-tailed python (*Python brongersmai*, Appendix II) and the reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II).¹²

THAILAND

September 4, 2019

Don Muang International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Seizure in 2 postal parcels shipped from Taiwan of 12 live juvenile snakes enclosed in money boxes: one royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), 4 Mexican black kingsnakes (*Lampropeltis getula nigrita*), 3 snakes of the species *Lampropeltis getula californiae* and 4 snakes. The recipient lives in the Chiang Mai Province in northern Thailand. The economic value of the 12 snakes would be 71,500 baht, or 2,346 US\$.¹³



TURKEY

September 11, 2019

Istanbul International Airport, Istanbul Province, Marmara Region, Turkey

Seizure in the bulky luggage belonging to an Indonesian passenger of 93 skins of pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) with a cumulative length of 355 m, trimmed to be cut-up in fashion works and with a raw value estimated by the local authorities at 320,000 lira, i.e. 55,500 US\$ and 156 US\$ per meter.¹⁴

EUROPE

BELGIUM

September 12, 2019

Antwerp, Antwerp Province, Flemish Region, Belgium

Seizure of a 6.5 m-long Burmese python (*Python molurus*, Appendix II) living in an apartment for about 20 years. It was temporarily transferred to the Natuurhulpcentrum in Opglabbeek.¹⁵



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Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation of Thailand

FRANCE

July 30, 2019

Antibes, Department of the Alpes-Maritimes, France

Seizure by the ONCFS (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune sauvage) during a search under the authority of the Grasse public prosecutor's office of several dozen snakes belonging to 14 venomous species including the Eastern green mamba (*Dendroaspis angusticeps*), the Gaboon viper (*Bitis gabonica*), Asian rattlesnakes and cobras (genus *Naja*). The whole apartment was converted into a terrarium. The regional director of the ONCFS reports to AFP that "even zoological parks are holding fewer and fewer of them because they require special protection and security during transport". The snakes were transferred to an undisclosed location.¹⁶



NETHERLANDS

July 2019

The Netherlands

Customs seizure of 3 bags and 2 pairs of shoes made of python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II).¹⁷



UNITED KINGDOM

September 27, 2019

Burnley, Lancashire County, England, United Kingdom

A Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) abandoned in a plastic box labelled "Brasilean rainbow boa £170" (or 190 €) in a supermarket car park. In 2018, the RSPCA collected 700 snakes from the mess that is the pet market.¹⁸

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

September 17, 2019

Frankston, State of Victoria, Australia

Fined 500 A\$ (337 US\$) for having exchanged a Play Station for a milk snake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) via Facebook. This species is native to the North American continent and is likely, according to a state wildlife protection official, to seriously harm local biodiversity.¹⁹



facebook

Sauria

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 15, 2019

Boston, State of Massachusetts, United States of America

Derrick Semedo sentenced to 2 years' probation and 120 hours of community service for having fraudulently imported 20 live monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), *Varanus cumingi*, *Varanus nuchalis* or *Varanus marmoratus* between March and December 2016, and having sold them in Colorado, Connecticut and New Hampshire among other states (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.32).¹



MEXICO

Beginning of August 2019

Tapachula International Airport, State of Chiapas, Mexico

Seizure of 18 grand cayman iguanas (*Cyclura lewisi*, Appendix I) including 2 dead, in the belongings of 2 young men flying to Mexico City. The survivors were transferred to the Miguel Alvarez del Toro Zoo (ZooMAT) in Tuxtla Gutierrez.²



ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of August 2019

Haikou border crossing, Hainan Province, China

Seizure of 6 live juvenile lizards, between 6 and 10 cm in length, in 2 wet and rancid smelling cardboard boxes from Taiwan.³

September 3, 2019

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of 15 African savanna monitors (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II) each 20 cm long in a postal parcel from Taiwan.⁴

September 7, 2019

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

The dog found them suspicious. Customs officials opened them. 80 young green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) discovered inside 2 packages declared as gifts.⁵

September 17, 2019

Quanzhou Jinjiang International Airport, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of 1.663 kg of dried tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II since November 26, 2019), representing approximately 55 specimens.⁶

INDIA

July 7, 2019

Machilipatnam, Krishna District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

Seizure and release of 75 live Bengal monitors (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I). They were sold on the fish market. Eating their meat strengthens the spinal cord and relieves paralysed persons and back pain, no less! The fishmongers sold them for 2,000 rupees each or 30 US\$. They were not prosecuted. They had to learn that the law forbids the sale of monitors, dead or alive.⁷

July 8, 2019

Kharap, Akola District, State of Maharashtra, India

The Forest Department intervened to get out 11 live monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) from the hands of Sulochana Chouhan. Apparently the old lady worked as a “mail box” for poaching products around the village. The operation was put together with help from Jaydeep, alias Bal Kalne, professional snake-catcher, one of those emergency service providers who are called in by residents or administrations to come and catch snakes who have gone astray and ended up in people’s homes or in public places. Kalne has caught and freed several hundred snakes, including 46 Burmese pythons (*Python molurus*, Appendix II). Most of Kalne’s interventions are carried out after floods.⁸

July 9, 2019

Amoboda, Akola District, State of Maharashtra, India

Chetu Kapurlal Pawar arrested by rangers in possession of a live monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II). He was brought to justice the next day.⁹

July 27, 2019

Gurugram, Gurugram District, State of Haryana, India

The phony “Hatha Jodi” scam continues to prosper. The roots of this very rare plant have numerous properties according to Vedic magic. For male Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), this is a catastrophe. When dried, their genitals – the hemipenis – look like the roots, and traffickers take advantage of the resemblance to scam the naïve (see “On the Trail” n° 17, p.24 and n° 18, p.24). This time, 8 monitor lizard hemipenes and 2 shellfish that are protected in India – trochuses (*Trochus niloticus*) – were seized at the home of Anil Kumar Ahlawat, an astrologist who is a fan of Vastu Shastra, Vedic architecture. A team of agents from the Department of Forests and from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), with assistance from

the police and members of the NGO Wildlife Trust of India, first sent a phony customer to see him. A second raid took place in the shop belonging to his accomplice, Daan Veer Bhardwaj, alias Acharya Dan Veer Shastri – also an astrologist – and led to the discovery of 120 additional trochus shells. The 2 men bought the hemipenes in Rajasthan for 1,500 rupees each (21.5 US\$) and easily resold them for 8,700 rupees (125 US\$).¹⁰

August 1, 2019

Ayyampalayam, Dindigul District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Discovery by forest rangers of the body of a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) in a house which owner cannot be found. An investigation has been opened.¹¹

September 3, 2019

South Burgur Forest Reserve, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of monitor lizard meat (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and traps. Two arrests.¹²

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

July 12, 2019

Perth, State of Western Australia, Australia

Two Japanese nationals sentenced to 5 months in prison for attempting to export 13 shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) in the beginning of June 2019. They had been caught red-handed at Perth airport (see “On the Trail” n°25 p. 34).¹³



August 9, 2019

Melbourne, State of Victoria, Australia

A 27-year-old Japanese woman was caught red-handed trying to smuggle 2 common blue-tongued skinks (*Tiliqua scincoides*) and 17 shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*), most of whom had ticks, which suggests that they were caught in the wild (see “On the Trail” n° 25 p. 33). She was sentenced to a fine equivalent to 964 US\$ and 4 months in prison – she is now on her 110th day of preventive detention. Her fine is 10 times less than the value of a single skink on the international black market. Akane Chibana will be required to leave Australia within 24 hours of her release from prison. She convinced the judge that she was just a “small player” in the business. Her trip, lodging and the lizards were allegedly paid for by a traffickers’ syndicate whose managers remain unknown. Chibana had just quit her job because of “stress” and had accepted the transportation as an odd-job and was paid, she claims, 1400 AU\$, or 980 US\$.¹⁴



Crocodilians

AFRICA

ANGOLA AND NAMIBIA

Mid August 2019
Kunene River, Kunene Region, Namibia and Kunene Province, Angola



Suspected poisoning of Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II) in the Kunene river on the Namibian side and the Kunene on the Angolan side. Several crocodile cadavers have been found drifting down the river or washed up on the shores. They are cut up on site and the meat is sold or distributed to villagers, who risk being poisoned in their turn. Some have been found skinned, and hide trafficking is suspected. On his side, an official from the Ministry of the Environment has put forward a hypothesis involving coordinated assegai attacks. A joint enquiry underway by the 2 countries will hopefully shed some light on the case. Obviously, given the sinister events of unknown origin, tourism, its resources and related jobs have taken a toll.¹

BURKINA FASO

July 2019
Zorgho, Central Plateau Region, Burkina Faso
Seizure of 12 crocodile skins. Four arrests.²

NAMIBIA

July 15, 2019
Kongola, Zambezi Region, Namibia
Gift Namai Twayunda, caught in the act of transporting a crocodile skin (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) going to be sold to a Chinese buyer, was denied his release on bail.³

AMERICA

PERU

Beginning of September 2019
Samugari, La Mar Province, Ayacucho Region, Peru

Seizure of 10 common caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) intended to be flayed and turned into leather goods.⁴

ASIA

CHINA

July 2019
Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in a suitcase of a live Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II) purchased in Africa.⁵



September 21, 2019
Fangchenggang, Guangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Arrests in their hideout of 14 Vietnamese and 2 nationals and seizure of 806 juvenile Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) in 158 wooden boxes. Their jaws were bound with adhesive tape. They were totally apathetic as if they had been cramped for a very long time, or were drugged. There was an average of 5 per box. They were taken to a specialized facility. Their fate is unknown. The species is endangered. It has been listed in Appendix I of CITES since 1975. The 806 animals were either going to be eaten or bred clandestinely in Guangdong province. In this case, they would have been slaughtered as adults and their skins turned into luxury leather goods.⁶



INDIA

July 14, 2019

Bhilwale Dam, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Marsh crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I) are reportedly moving to the Bhilwale Dam reservoir. Local communities have been advised to keep domestic animals away from the banks of the reservoir and not to enter under any circumstances. Some villagers report having spotted 8 crocodiles. Not very receptive to the authorities' advice, they killed 3. Two others were captured by a local NGO as a precautionary measure and transferred to a nearby river.⁷



September 16, 2019

Borivali, Mumbai District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure on a bus from Hyderabad (740 km) of 2 marsh crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I) aged approximately 3 months. For 1,500 rupees (20 US\$), the driver wanted to help out a man asking him to take a box to the Mumbai bus station but did not ask what was inside. Two driver's helpers were also put on remand.⁸

EUROPE

GERMANY

August 23, 2019

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

Seizure of a one-meter-long broad-nosed caiman (*Caiman latirostris*, Appendix I) in the suitcase of a Cologne resident arriving from Australia.⁹

SPAIN

OPERATIONS CELACANTO AND THUNDERBALL

June-July 2019

Spain

Seizure of a Nile crocodile skin bag (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II).¹⁰

Various Reptile Species

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 3, 2019

Allegany, State of New York, United States of America

William Engelder, a 71-year-old former biology teacher, has been charged with reckless endangerment, illegal sale of wildlife, possession of a loaded weapon in a vehicle, animal abuse and cruelty, as well as possessing and transporting venomous animals, possessing protected species without a permit and keeping wildlife as pets. At his home, in August 2018, an exceptional seizure of reptiles had been made thanks to an anonymous tip: 17 bog turtles (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*, Appendix I), 2 box turtles (*Terrapene* spp., Appendix I or II), 184 spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II), 28 Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*, Appendix II), 53 wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*, Appendix II), 6 snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III), 2 painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta*), 3 king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) and 6 Gila monsters (*Heloderma suspectum*, Appendix II).¹



From top to bottom: *Glyptemys muhlenbergii*, *Clemmys guttata*, *Emydoidea blandingii* and *Glyptemys insculpta*

July 24, 2019

Naples, State of Florida, United States of America

Warrant search of Christopher Ethier's home. In his bedroom were seized one alligator (*Alligator* spp., Appendix I or II) and 3 baby gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II). Ethier was transferred to the county jail.²

August 8, 2019

Eustis, State of California, United States of America

Exchanges between Reptile Paradise in Florida and Reptiles Paradise in Hong Kong were in full swing. Exchanges of official invoices and regular payments corresponding to shipments of "legal" turtles to China, as well as exchanges of coded emails and under-the-table payments corresponding to the shipment of "illegal" turtles that were discreetly slipped in with the "legals." The US Fish and Wildlife Service was even more surprised by the traffic since Michael Allen Pata, the Florida Paradise operator, was one of their informants for the opaque world of turtle traders. When they discovered his double-dealing after inspecting a package in March 2019, they monitored his illicit trafficking in order to fully understand the workings of the smuggling operations and all of its keywords. They ended up picking up Vincent Cheung, the operator of the Hong Kong Paradise, on Thursday, August 8, when he came to visit his supplier. The smuggling operation concerned mostly Florida box turtles (*Terrapene carolina bauri*, Appendix II), better known as "ear infections" in the digital exchanges between the 2 traffickers, as well as diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II) called "purple colors", spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II) called "small high color cooters", and from time to time, rhinoceros iguanas (*Cyclura cornuta*), listed in CITES Appendix I and sold for 40,000 US\$ per specimen.³

FRANCE (MARTINIQUE)

Mid-August 2019

Fort-de-France, Department of Martinique, France

Seizure of 20 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) native to Guiana, 2 pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and 8 baby caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II) native to South America. The animals sell for between 300 US\$ and 600 US\$ each on the black market. Arrest and release pending trial of 2 suspects in their early 20s.⁴



ASIA

CAMBODIA

July 2019

Cardamom Protected Forest and Tonle Sap Lake, Cambodia

Interception of a truck. Seizure of 57 water monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II) and 50 yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II). The monitors were released in the Cardamom rainforest and the turtles in Tonle Sap Lake (see "On the Trail" n°9 p. 20, n°19 p. 31, p. 126, n°23 p. 153).⁵

September 22, 2019

Stoung District, Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia

Another bus driver mixed up in trafficking. The man reportedly helped load 28 turtles, 82 snakes and 4 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) into the baggage compartment, which amounts to 232 kg of wildlife luggage.⁶

INDIA

July 6, 2019

Pollachi, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Five men were on the hunt. They were tracking Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) and Indian sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). Fines of 25,000 rupees (360 US\$) each.⁷

TAIWAN

July 18, 2019

Taiwan-Taoyuan International Airport, Special Municipality of Taoyuan, Taiwan

Among the 15 packages from Malaysia purportedly containing tropical fish, Customs found one concealing 2 Madagascar tortoises (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I), 21 Asian tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II), 27 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) and 3 crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) including 2 dead. An adult Madagascar tortoise 40 cm long would sell for around 40,000 US\$ on the black market and experts in Taiwan say that a 41 cm long specimen sells for 41,000 US\$. The longest are 44 cm long. The species is reduced to less than 400 individuals on the island of Madagascar. On May 17, 2017, in the luggage of a Malaysian passenger, Taiwanese customs had already seized 3 Madagascar tortoises, 41 cm, 24 cm and 26 cm long.⁸



EUROPE

AUSTRIA

September 8, 2019

Vienne-Schwechat International Airport, Austria

Seizure in the luggage of an Austrian living in Indonesia coming from Manila with transit to Doha, of a shipment of wildlife cargo that he hoped to cash in at the next reptile fair in Hamm, Germany : 2 south-east Philippine spitting cobras (*Naja samarensis*, Appendix II), 18 water monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), 1 Cape coral snake (*Aspidelaps lubricus*), white-lipped tree vipers (*Trimeresurus albolabris*) and mangrove snakes (*Boiga dendrophila*). Because of the venom of some snakes, experts from the Schönbrunn and Klagenfurt Zoos were urgently called to the airport.^{8bis}

SPAIN

OPERATION MOTLEYALI

End of July 2019

Alicante and Valencia Provinces, Valencian Community, Spain

Seizures in 2 pet shops of 133 snakes of various species and 5 turtles: 4 Greek turtles (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) and a Spanish pond turtle (*Mauremys leprosa*). The 138 reptiles were displayed for sale with falsified original documents. Seven arrests.⁹

POLOGNE

September 25, 2019

Korczowa-Krakovets Border Post, Korczowa, Jaroslaw County, Podkarpackie Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

Seizure, on a bus coming from Ukraine and in the belongings of 7 Ukrainians, of 2 sanzinas (*Sanzinia madagascariensis*, Appendix I), 69 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), 18 reticulated pythons (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), 14 boas constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 9 lizards (*Uromastyx* spp., Appendix II), 4 spiny-tailed pygmy monitors (*Varanus acanthurus*, Appendix II) and 5 other reptiles and amphibians with a total estimated value of 50,000 €. Last year, KAS (Krajowej Administracji Skarbowej) thwarted the fraudulent import of 53 live stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II).¹⁰



Amphibians

AMERICA

MEXICO

End of August 2019

Apizaco, State of Tlaxcala, Mexico

Trafficking of 3 axolotls (*Ambystoma mexicanum*, Appendix II) on the public road, 100 pesos a dozen or 5 US\$. To eat or to treat respiratory diseases.



The species is melting away. Its only range in the world is south of Mexico City in the lakes of Texcoco, Zumpangol, Chalco and Xochimilco and the interconnecting canals. Xochimilco would be their last stronghold. Pollution, draining, tilapia invasion and poaching are the main causes of the species' disappearance from the wild. The axolotl is a genus of nocturnal newt close to the tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*). It is rarely more than 30 cm long, has no eyelids, and its flat tail serves as a paddle. It is especially known for its regenerative capacities (see "On the Trail" n°5 p.32, n°19 p.129 and n°24 p.87).¹

ASIA

CHINA

Cf. page 108.

INDIA

July 7, 2019

Rajapathar, Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India

13 bags of tiger frogs (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*, Appendix II) seized on a bus on National Highway 36, bound for Dimapur in the neighbouring state of Nagaland. They are sold on the markets for around Rs 50 or 60 each (0.70 to 0.85 US\$). No arrests.²

Insects, Arachnids and Annelids

AMERICA

BRAZIL

July 24, 2019

Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

The parcel bound for Germany contained 84 tarantulas (Theraphosidae).¹



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CANADA

REPEATED OFFENSE

August 8, 2019

Surrey, British Columbia Province, Canada

More than 2000 insects, spiders and reptiles in one house: an adult black widow and 500 babies (genus *Latrodectus*), 300 other spiders, over 80 adult scorpions and almost 1,400 babies (order Scorpiones), 7 giant centipedes (*Scolopendra gigantea*), several millipedes (*Narceus americanus*), one whip scorpion (order Amblypygi), 3 box turtles (*Terrapene* spp, Appendix I or II) and 3 painted wood turtles (*Rhinoclemmys pulcherrima*). They were evacuated to the Victoria Bug Zoo, the Surrey Animal Resource Centre and the Dewdney Animal Hospital in Maple Ridge but the provincial veterinary services are calling for a full house fumigation. They are sure that insects or spiders have escaped from their boxes and are crawling between skirting boards and sleepers from the basement to the attic, if not in the neighbourhood.²



© CBC

FRANCE (GUYANE)

August 25, 2019

Cayenne-Félix-Éboué International Airport, Department of French Guiana, France

After paying a customs fine of 600 € (660 US\$), the Polish tarantula Theraphosidae dealer walked away free. He was carrying 38 adult tarantulas, about 50 young tarantulas and cocoons each containing about 50 babies. All specimens were released in the best possible way by ONCFS agents.³



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ASIA

INDIA

August 8, 2019

Ajmer, Ajmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

Seizure in a little restaurant belonging to "Bicchu-Baba's" of 10,000 Indian black scorpions (*Heterometrus bengalensis*) and 60 liters of a liquid suspected to be venom. "Bicchu-Baba" was nowhere to be found, but Saleem, his assistant was talkative. For the past 10 years, his boss has been buying scorpions in Ajmer, boiling them in a pressure cooker and then pressing the mixture and selling it as venom. The trade is flourishing – scorpion venom is believed to relieve pain and cure various diseases. A spokesperson from the police pointed out there is very high demand for scorpions weighing over 30 g. "Catching scorpions is not an easy task, and searching and catching a single scorpion can take 6 to 8 hours."⁴ Scorpion catching, see "On the Trail" n° 6 p. 3, n° 13 p. 24.

EUROPE

GERMANY

July 10, 2019

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

Seizure of medicinal leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*, Appendix II) in 2 bottles of water carried by a passenger coming from Turkey. The man thus justifies his trafficking: the application of leeches cures his migraines, he can obtain leeches in Germany at a price of 0.80 € and in Turkey they cost 10 times less.⁶

SPAIN

Mid-July 2019

Xilxes, Castellón Province, Valencian Community, Spain

Raid of the Guardia Civil and careful seizure of more than 400 tarantulas (Theraphosidae) belonging to 49 different species.⁵

Birds

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 17, 2019

Kruger National Park (Vlakteplaas Section), Limpopo Province, South Africa.

As is well known, poachers do not like vultures circling above corpses and alerting rangers. One gang first shot a Cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) and then sprayed the butchered quarters with a concentrated pesticide: 119 vultures were fatally poisoned. Nine suspects armed with large calibres are being heard by the rangers.¹



SPAIN (CANARY ISLANDS)

July 17, 2019

Tenerife-North International Airport, Santa Cruz de Tenerife Province, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain

Alerted by chirping sounds among loose spaghetti, customs found 68 birds, including lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II) and budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), shared in 11 wire crates inside the 2 suitcases of a Colombian passenger awaiting departure on an international flight. He was charged with wildlife trafficking and mistreatment.²

KENYA

August 20, 2019

Near Amboseli National Park, Kenya

Death of 30 vultures (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II) and 2 tawny eagles (*Aquila rapax*, Appendix II) after skinning a poisoned giraffe carcass.³



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Beginning of July 2019

Morón, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

Neighbours informed the NGO Rescatistas Unidos de Zona Oeste of suspicious traffic at 1220 San Martín Street. The NGO informed the municipal police. More than 50 birds including blue jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*), northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), shiny cowbirds (*Molothrus bonariensis*) and doves were seized. No water, nothing to eat, a centimetre of excrement as soil and a dreadful smell. They have all been transferred to the Temaikken Foundation shelter.⁴

July 18, 2019

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Reception at the Temaikken Foundation rewild site of 43 birds seized from markets, pet shops and private homes, including 9 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II), Patagonian conures (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*, Appendix II), parrots (*Pionus* spp, Appendix II), green-cheeked conures (*Pyrrhura molinae*, Appendix II), Nanday conures (*Nandayus nenday*, Appendix II), mitred conures (*Aratinga mitrata*, Appendix II), crested oropendolas (*Psarocolius decumanus*), meadowlarks (genus *Sturnella*), bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*), black-and-rufous warbling finches (*Poospiza nigrorufa*), green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), black-backed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus aureoventri*) and rusty-collared sporophiles (*Sporophila collaris*).⁵

September 11, 2019

Concordia, Entre Rios Province, Argentina

Firefighters quickly called in the local naturalists to the rescue. They had just seized from a private home a ñacurutú, the local name of the great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II), with its wings cut off. After a stopover in the shelter of the NGO Ceydas, it was entrusted to a private reserve in Caragatá.⁶

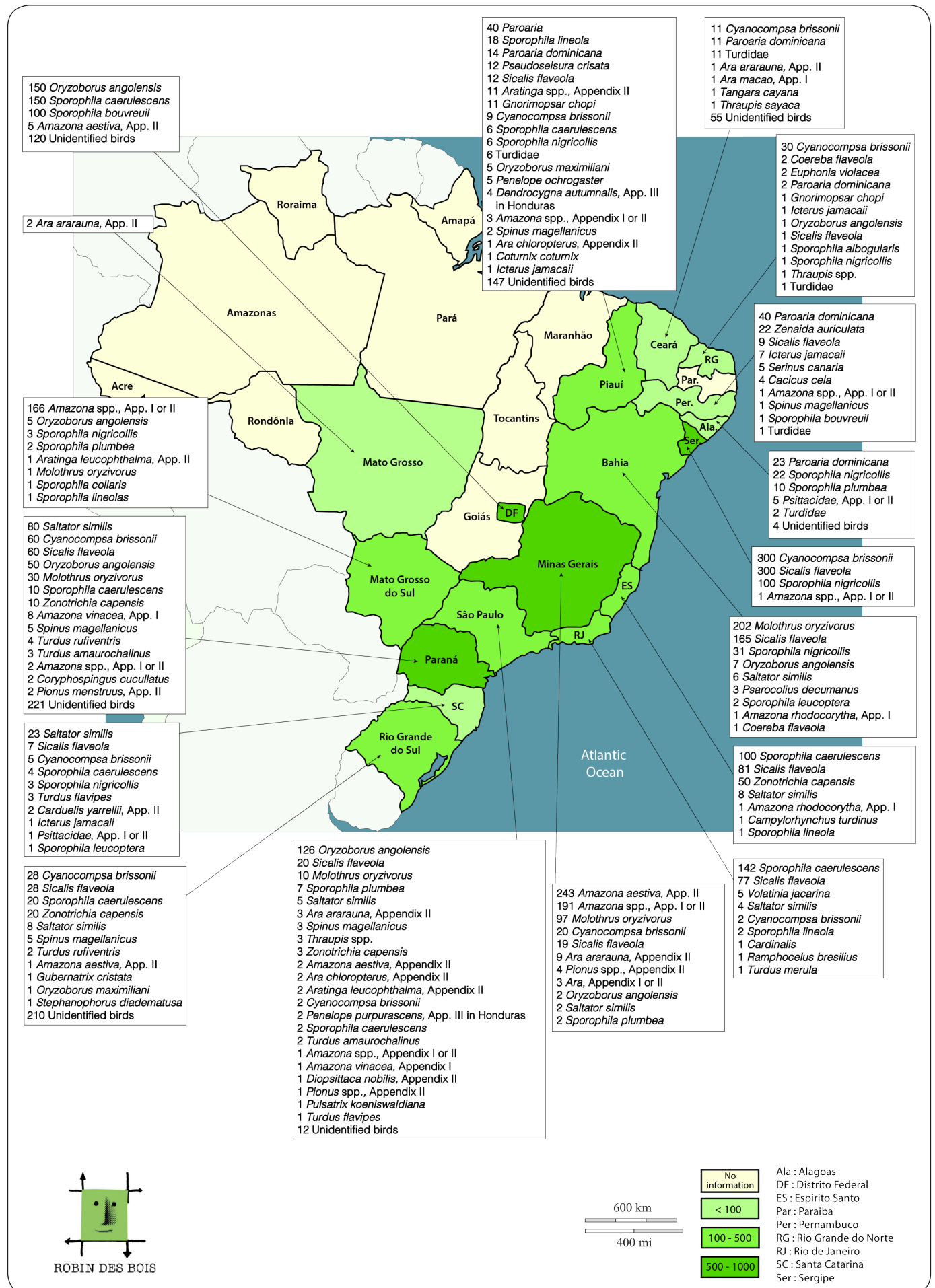


End of September 2019

Luján, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

67 birds, red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), black-backed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus aureoventris*) grassland yellow finches (*Sicalis luteola*), song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), golden-billed saltators (*Saltator aurantirostris*) and hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), were handed over to the Centro de Conservación de Vida Silvestre de La Florida for quarantine and, if possible, release. They were all seized from private homes, businesses or markets by the city's environmental police. "Mascotry affects each captive bird, the future of the species, the balance of natural habitats and even threatens the life of their masters through the transmission of diseases such as psittacosis," the provincial government said in a news release.⁷







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COLOMBIA

End of July 2019 Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of 32 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*). The police raided an underground ring that was organizing a singing contest, a bird karaoke presented on Facebook as “an extraordinary event,” “a combat of Titans.” The ticket price did not include whisky, which was available at an extra charge. A prize of 100 US\$ was promised to the owner of the winning bird as designated by the judges counting the trills on an abacus. Training birds to prolong their songs until they are exhausted is torture, according to veterinarians. “Just because it’s a tradition doesn’t mean it’s legal,” according to Paula Ortiz who directs a unit of 500 police officers specialized in environmental crime and a brigade of 16 dogs who are trained to sniff out feathers and fur and the smells of wild animals, in airports and bus depots in the metropolitan area of Bogota (7.40 million inhabitants).⁸

Birds and song contests, see “On the Trail” n° 24 p. 36, p. 44, n° 25 p. 42, 47.

facebook

GUATEMALA

Beginning of July 2019 Sierra de Lacandón National Park, Guatemala



Release of 13 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), 5 males and 8 females of trafficked ancestry seized by police or customs and too influenced by human activities to be released. The offspring received lessons in survival and dietary self-sufficiency before suffering the shock of freedom. Four of them are equipped with a beacon to monitor their adaptation to wildlife. The NGO Arcas and CONAP (Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas) cooperated at length to bring this event to fruition.⁹

End of August 2019 Cali, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Arrest of Alejandro Arias Peláez, director of Zoomarcanes, a company specialising in the sale of “exotic mascots”, and Jesús Ernesto Ocampo Prado, former agent of the DAGMA (Departamento Administrativo de Gestión del Medio Ambiente) for organising or contributing to the sale of wild animals.¹⁰



End of September 2019 Bogota, Colombia

Seizure at the El Salitre bus station of 106 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II) crammed into cardboard boxes fixed above the tank of a bus coming from Aguachica, 590 km from Bogotá.¹¹



MEXICO

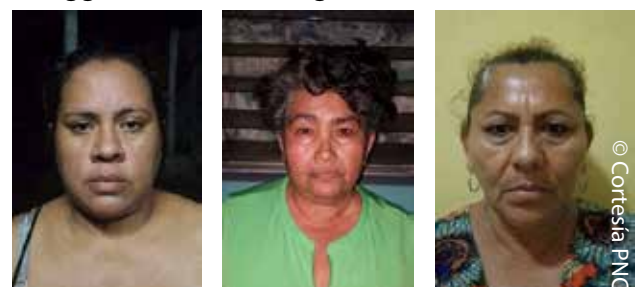
July 26, 2019 Merida, State of Yucatan, Mexico

Seizure of several cages and of toucans (Ramphastidae family) who were inside on the Lucas de Galvez market. A similar operation took place on the same market in 2015. The local newspapers talk about “open secrets” and remind that besides rabbits, ducks and chickens, ocelots are also for sale in hutches.¹²

EL SALVADOR

Mid-August 2019 San Salvador, Department of San Salvador, El Salvador

Thirty-two yellow-headed parrots (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) were held by Jessica Marina Saravia Céspedes, Paula Reymunda Silva, María Lucrecia Laínez Reyes and Iveth Asís Guillen, aged 36 to 59. They sold the parrots for 100 US\$ and the amazons for 60 US\$. The birds had been smuggled in from Nicaragua.¹³



BANGLADESH

September 9, 2019

Shiberer Hat, Nawabganj District, Rahshahi Division, Bangladesh

A team from the Department of Narcotics Control was on a routine patrol when, around 11:30 p.m., they came across Azizul Haque, Mohammad Raju, Tanvir and Mridha transporting 457 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II) in a pick-up truck. They had collected them in the village of Chakla and were taking them to be sold in Dhaka. The bird merchants Azizul Haque and Mohammad Raju appeared before an itinerant courtroom the next day and were sentenced to one year in prison for breaking the law on conservation and wildlife security, while Tanvir received a fine of 50,000 takas (590 US\$) and Mridha a fine of 10,000 takas (118 US\$). The birds were released in the afternoon.¹⁴



CHINA

July 2, 2019

Port of Hong Kong, China

Ten kilograms of swallow nests, or about 700 nests in a tire inside a hidden compartment under the rear frame of the vehicle. Value: 400,000 HK\$ or 51,195 US\$. The driver is 23 years old. He faces 7 years in prison.¹⁵



July 30, 2019

Hong Kong, China

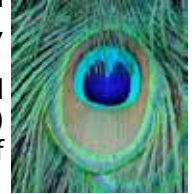
Thirty-two months in prison. The individual had 27 helmeted hornbill helmets (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I) sent to him by mail. Two parcels.¹⁶



September 20, 2019

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 28.94 kg of green peafowl feathers (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II) corresponding to the poaching of approximately 20 specimens.¹⁷



INDIA

July 5, 2019

Datavali, Moradabad District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

They were plucking alive a green peafowl (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II) near a mango orchard. The trio admits to specializing in peacock poaching. The victim was taken to a veterinary clinic.¹⁸



July 6, 2019

Khamrang, Kolasib District, State of Mizoram, India

Ambush of the Border Security Force and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence on the road to Aizawl, the state capital. The agents were tipped off. Two vehicles were stopped. They were coming from Myanmar and were going to the state of Kerala. On board were 8 people and 26 exotic birds in India: emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) native to Australia and yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I) endemic to the Sunda, Sulawesi and Timor islands. Their value is estimated at 2.8 million rupees (39,000 US\$).¹⁹

July 12, 2019

Vaiya, Aravalli District, State of Gujarat, India

Death by poisoning of 6 male and 2 female Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). A farmer is questioned by the police.²⁰



July 19, 2019

Lasudi Antari, Neemuch District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

A poacher fleeing through the fields at night was mistaken for a henhouse thief. He was caught by angry villagers and beaten to death. The police, who arrived too late on the scene to avoid the worst, found 4 dead Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) next to his body. Three accomplices of the dead poacher managed to escape.²¹



July 20, 2019

Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of at least 60 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) perched in a cage attached to the roof of the bus connecting Moradabad district to Delhi (160 km). Although the cage was covered with a tarp, the stowaways were all stressed and freezing.²²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 30, 2019

Kalal, Rajouri District, State of Jammu and Kashmir, India

When they were warned of a poaching operation near the village, officers from the Forestry Department travelled to the site. On the way, they intercepted a car driven by Gurdeep Singh carrying 3 passengers, Charan Singh, his son Karnail and Jasbir Singh. While searching it, they discovered the body of a Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and a 12 bore gun belonging to Charan Singh. The vehicle was impounded and the 4 men arrested.²³



August 7, 2019

Singanallur and Vellalore, Coimbatore District, and Ramanathapuram, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 29 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) - 21 females, 6 males and 2 chicks - during a joint operation by the Forest Department and the NGO Animal Rescuers in 3 different points of sale. The birds' quills had been cut off and their beaks trimmed.²⁴



14 septembre 2019

Burdwan, District de Purba Bardhaman, Etat du

September 14, 2019
Burdwan, Purba Bardhaman District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 524 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II). Two arrests, Sheikh Akhtar and Baishakhi Mohammad.²⁵

September 25, 2019

Indira Gandhi International Airport, State of Delhi, India

A Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officer stationed in front of the airport's control screens noticed a man carrying 3 large bags on a cart. Once intercepted and his bags searched, Nasser Ansari was found to be carrying 49 kg of peacock feathers (*Pavo spp.*, Appendix II or III). He was about to board an Air India flight to Hong Kong.²⁶



INDONESIA

July 17, 2019

Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Banten Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Helmets are forbidden at airports, especially when they come from helmeted hornbills (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I). The 48-year-old woman of Chinese ancestry had hidden 78 helmets in cookie jars. She was on her way to Hong Kong.²⁷



September 23, 2019

Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Special Capital Region of Jakarta, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure inside a loudspeaker of a cage wrapped in a t-shirt and socks inside which were piled 35 birds, white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*), greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), Daurian starlings (*Agropsar sturninus*), Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*), oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) and zebra doves (*Geopelia striata*). Only 6 were still alive. The 2 people arrested are Indonesians working in Malaysia.²⁸



MALAYSIA

September 22, 2019

Kota Tinggi, State of Johor, Malaysia

Another case of dual trafficking involving narcotics and wildlife products. When a maritime police patrol unit surprised him, the Indonesian man was in the process of loading a beached skiff with packages of a methamphetamine, known locally as *syabu*, and with baskets full of melodious laughingthrushes (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II), white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and black-throated laughingthrushes (*Garrulax chinensis*). Thus the suspect violated the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 and the Immigration Act 1959/63. One kilo of *syabu* is estimated at a little under 29,000 US\$. Each of the birds sells for between 50 and 70 US\$ in neighboring countries, according to the commander-in-chief of the regional maritime police. If any of them were to turn out to be gifted singers or already well-trained, they can be worth over 2000 US\$.²⁹

PAKISTAN

September 29, 2019

Between Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Seizure of 2 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) on board a bus from Kohat to Karachi (1,400 km).³⁰

SINGAPORE

August 10, 2019

Woodlands Checkpoint, Singapore. Border with Malaysia.

Discovered at 7 a.m. at the Woodlands border post. Customs agents were alerted by chirping in phony compartments above the back tires of a bus coming from Malaysia. 815 songbirds and ornamental birds packed into 15 crates: 38 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*), 10 oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*), 141 Indian white-eyes (*Zosterops palpebrosus*), 626 scaly-breasted munias (*Lonchura punctulata*) and white-headed munias (*Lonchura maja*). The driver was arrested. White-rumped shamas are victims of a frenzy on the caged-birds market. They have become very rare in south-east Asia. There are still a few specimens in the residual forests in Singapore. Oriental magpie-robins used to be common in Singapore. Today, they are threatened by loss of habitat, capture for their singing abilities and food competition from Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*). Indian white-eyes can be identified by their yellowish-green feathers and a white ring around their eyes. Scaly-breasted munias are not very common in Singapore. They are still sometimes seen in tight flight-formations flying over prairies. The surface area of Singapore is 721.5 km². The 600 birds, who survived the stress after being caught in Malaysia and then transported by road, have been quarantined.³¹

Pictures above : *Zosterops palpebrosus* et *Lonchura punctulata*



THAILAND

July 6, 2019

Cho-airong, Narathiwat Province, Thailand

Seizure of 5 concave-casqued hornbill chicks (*Buceros bicornis*, Appendix I) and one musk lorikeet chick (*Glossopsitta concinna*, Appendix II) stolen from nests within Budo-Sungai Padi National Park. To be sold in Bangkok or the northern provinces at 100-300 US\$ if they survive the stress of capture, deportation and artificial food. In the wild and with its partner, a concave-casqued hornbill could live 50 years. But this enviable fate is becoming increasingly rare due to poaching and logging.³²



August 23, 2019

Lat Phrao, Bangkok, Thailand

Seizure of 49 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) with a total value of 1,593 US\$, or 32.5 US\$ per bird, and 34 cages at the home of Mr. Nannan Cherdtrak. The bulbuls are exploited in song contests and neighbours who are no longer charmed by their warbling have reported their renewed presence to the police.³³

VIET NAM

End of August 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

An imperial-looking spot-bellied eagle-owl (*Bubo nipalensis*, Appendix II) was moping around on a restaurant shelf. It got out of thanks to an informant and was admitted to the bird sanctuary before to be released if possible.³⁴



EUROPE

GERMANY

July 6, 2019

Frankfurt am Main International Airport, State of Hesse, Germany

Seizure of a Pennant's parakeet (*Platyercus elegans*, Appendix II) in a wine bottle case carried by a Dutch traveller about to fly to Egypt.³⁵

BELGIUM

July 30, 2019

Ghent, East Flanders Province, Belgium

Seizure of 4 red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) including 2 chicks and 5 raptors of species imported under dubious conditions: a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II), a Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), 2 mountain caracaras (*Phalacrocorax magellanicus*, Appendix II) and an African eagle-owl (*Bubo africanus*, Appendix II). The farm is suspected of several illegalities. Five raptors and one red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II) have disappeared between the start of the Federal Environmental Inspectorate's investigation and the final seizure. Sixteen CITES certificates not matching the birds in the farm are among the exhibits. They are in the hands of Ghent's public prosecutor, who will decide whether or not to initiate legal proceedings.³⁶ Bird trafficking in Ghent, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.43.

SPAIN

July 2019

Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Industrial olive oil kills European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*). The European robins nest in these olive trees when they come from Northern Europe to protect themselves from winter snow and frosts. The olive harvest is done at night between October and January with harvesting machines equipped with powerful, blinding spotlights which are staggering the birds. In Andalusia alone, the mass murder of European robins, estimated by Vanessa Mata, director of the Portugal-based Research Centre for Biodiversity and Genetic Resources, is more than 2 million a year. The picking of olives, European robins, European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), wagtails (*genus Motacilla*), and passerines (order *Passeriformes*) is done at night to preserve the aromas of the fruit.³⁷



OPERATION ILUMINATIS

Mid-July 2019

Villafranca de los Barros, Badajoz Province, Autonomous Community of Extremadura, Spain

Closure of the clandestine zoo "Guaridas Park". The animals are put under writ of sequestration in the zoo pending the investigation. The most valuable specimens were delivered by traffickers operating from Seville, Badajoz, Cordoba, Malaga, Valencia in Spain and Caparica in Portugal. Despite the forgery of CITES certificates for grey crowned-cranes (*Balearia regulorum*, Appendix II), rheas (*Rhea* spp, Appendix I or II), Eurasian eagle-owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), scarlet ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*, Appendix II), Livingstone's turacos (*Tauraco livingstonii*, Appendix II) and African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), and also despite of the lack of zoo certifications, sanitary control and accommodation for boarders, the illegal establishment still received school visits.³⁸

OPERATION COLORÍN

July 17, 2019

Lorca, Murcia Region, Spain

Seizure of 21 wild unbanded European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). Transfer to the El Valle refuge near Murcia.³⁹

August 1, 2019

Martorell, Province of Barcelona, Autonomous community of Catalonia, Spain

An SUV was intercepted at a toll booth on AP-7 between Perthus Pass and Estapona, in Andalusia. A grand Andalusian choir was discovered inside: 900 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 234 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 43 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and 37 common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*). The concert was scheduled for Barcelona. This is the fourth time that orchestra directors of this type have come to Barcelona. They change vehicles every time and provide law enforcement officers with certificates that were supposedly issued by the Regional Government of Andalusia and maliciously justify the songbirds' transfer. The birds, caught in the wild, caged and subjected to an exhausting journey in the middle of a heat wave, were then to be sold on the pet market in the Catalan metropolis.⁴⁰



Beginning of September 2019

Candeleda, Avila Province, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain

Seizure on a property of 24 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 6 common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*), 2 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and 130 capture devices. All the birds were released.⁴¹

FRANCE

Beginning of July 2019

Department of Sarthe, France

Seizure of 18 birds, European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*) caught by a net in his garden. The man sold the world heritage on the Internet. From freedom, he was making a great profit. The basic goldfinch sells for between 110 US\$ and 220 US\$, 3 to 4 times more if he is a great singer. ONCFS agents released them.⁴²



August 26, 2019

France

- Suspension by the Council of State of the ministerial order of July 31, 2014 authorising the hunt of 6,000 Eurasian curlews (*Numenius arquata*).
- A curlew coming from Poland was not lucky. He was killed "legally" on August 26 in the Normandy bocage. In Poland, Eurasian curlew population decreased by 50% in 10 years. Couples are estimated at less than 300. France, a signatory to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, is the only European country to allow the hunt of these waders.⁴³

September 2019

Tournefeuille, Department of Haute-Garonne, France

Another example of trafficking both in narcotics and wildlife products. Departmental security investigating drug trafficking discovered in the house of a 27-year-old individual 49 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 1,600 € hidden in a cage. The birds were released.⁴⁴

September 22-23, 2019

Le Crotoy and Ville-le-Marcelet, Department of the Somme, France

- In ambush during the migratory season, the 70-year-old hunter had already killed one common linnet (*Linaria cannabina*) and 13 meadow pipits (*Anthus pratensis*) when ONCFS agents stopped the massacre.

Weapons and dead birds were seized. ⁴⁵



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- In ambush during the migratory season, one man trapped the legally protected passerines to feed his illegal breeding operation and grow his illegal trade. Seizure and release of 39 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 6 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), 4 Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), and one Eurasian siskin (*Spinus spinus*). ⁴⁶



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ICELAND

July 29, 2019

Iceland

3,670 € for the right to kill 100 Atlantic puffins (*Fratercula arctica*). The whole trophies or only the beaks are then brought home, frozen, dismembered by international waterfowl enthusiasts. The puffin is the CITES' great forgotten victim. Amidst general indifference, it suffers a swift regression. Theresa Villiers, Environment Secretary in the United Kingdom, wants to ban the import of puffin trophies and to shelter the species under the umbrella of CITES. ⁴⁷



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© Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting

ITALY

July 19, 2019

Torre del Greco, Naples, Campania Region, Italy

The singing on the balcony proved fatal to the dealer. There are no dealers, only enthusiasts. That's the well-known tune in the courtroom. Seizure by the carabinieri of several European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). They were taken to the CRAS (Centro Recupero Animali Selvatici). ⁴⁸

OPERATION "ALI AZZURRE 2"

August 5, 2019

Rieti and Latina Provinces, Lazio Region, Italy

Seizures in pet shops and breeding farms by the Carabinieri of the CITES group in cooperation with the NGOs Ornithologia Italiana and LIPU (Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli) of 70 live birds, grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), kestrels (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), common barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), Eurasian scops owls (*Otus scops*, Appendix II), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), common nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), common redstarts (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*), European rollers (*Coracias garrulus*) and blue rock thrushes (*Monticola solitarius*) captured in forests and meadows with nets or stolen from their nests as chicks. ⁴⁹

August 9, 2019

Cerveteri, Metropolitan City of Rome, Lazio Region, Italy

Seizure of 8 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) in dirty cages exposed to the sun in the middle of a heat wave. The NGO Fare Ambiente is responsible for this good deed. It is involved in every fight. It fights against wild garbage dumps, animal abuse and clandestine breeding of fighting dogs.⁵⁰

August 27, 2019

Annone Veneto, Metropolitan City of Venice, Veneto Region, Italy

Seizure at the bird fair of 20 red-fronted kakarikis (*Cyanoramphus novaeseelandiae*, Appendix I). The alleged breeder was unable to produce documents proving the legal origin of these rare birds, listed since 1977 in CITES Appendix I. He risks 6 months to 2 years in prison and/or a fine of 15,000 to 150,000 €. ⁵¹

September 15, 2019

Province of Vicenza, Veneto Region, Italy

The whole thing started rather simply, in the hills of Berici, with carabinieri reprimanding an 80-year-old hunter who was using an electronic decoy to attract wild birds. But it then led to the biggest bird trafficking case the Veneto Region had seen in ten years. A search warrant for the home of the die-hard hunter revealed approximately 700 deep-frozen birds, including 120 common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*), 132 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 109 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), European serins (*Serinus serinus*) and one woodpecker (Picidae family). They were all destined for the restaurant black market. The police are carrying out a full investigation to shed light on the “woodland trading business,” as the Venetian press calls it.⁵²



September 27, 2019

Carpinedolo, Brescia Province, Lombardy Region, Italy

Seizure of Fischer's lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*, Appendix II), parrots (*Platycercus* spp., Appendix II) and a white-cheeked turaco (*Tauraco leucotis*, Appendix II) in a private residence.⁵³



NETHERLANDS

July 2019

The Netherlands

Customs seizure of a knife from Argentina with a rhea finger handle (*Rhea* spp., Appendix I or II).⁵⁴



AUSTRALIA

July 9 and 10, 2019

Adelaide, State of South Australia, Australia

The forest fire season has not yet begun, and it is raining dead birds on the city and in the courtyard of a primary school. Blood was running out of the birds' mouths and the children thought they were in the middle of a horror movie. Of the 60 little corellas (*Cacatua sanguinea*, Appendix II) and the long-billed corellas (*Cacatua tenuirostris*, Appendix II) who crashed, only one survived. The autopsies revealed that the birds did not have any kind of virus disease. They were victims of the severe toxicity of an organophosphorus pesticide commonly used for agriculture and home gardening. The NGO Casper's Bird Rescue has demanded that the product, if it cannot be banned, at least be subject to strict traceability standards, in order to identify those responsible for such atrocities.

Crashing poisoned birds are not rare events in Australia. Not all are reported.

- In March 2014, in New South Wales, hundreds of birds fell to the ground around the town of Dubbo. Most of them were sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II), little corellas and roseate cockatoos. The state EPA (Environmental Protection Authority) did not hesitate to attribute the deaths to a case of collective ingestion of pesticide. "We were finding the body of a dead bird every 10 meters." Ann Mara, a volunteer for the NGO WIRES, was appalled. "Little corellas, the breed that's mostly affected, they might start breeding on average at four to five years of age. So to rebuild a flock of 500 from a group of 20 to 30, even if every one of them was a breeding pair, it's going to take a very long time to get anything like that flock back to that size - if we can indeed."



- In August 2017, in Bairsdale in the state of Victoria, 5 white-bellied sea-eagles (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*, Appendix II) were found dead, lying next to one another. They had been poisoned by the carcasses of little corellas that had been deliberately impregnated with DDE (DichloroDiphenyldichloroEthylene).

- In August 2017, near Natimuk in the state of Victoria, dozens of little corellas died in what was attributed to an ingestion of imidacloprid, a synthetic molecule that attacks the nervous system of insects and birds, and has been banned in the European Union since 2013. The Victoria Ministry of Agriculture felt obliged to point out that poisoning by pesticide was not the only cause of bird mortality.

- In July 2018, hundreds of roseate cockatoos (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II) were found dead in a neighborhood in the former mining town of Burra, in the state of South Australia. The massacre was limited to the northern part of town.

- Starting at the end of November 2018, dead roseate cockatoos began raining down on the towns of Milang, Murray Bridge and Goolwa. The towns were 60 km away from each other. In Milang, the highest concentration of victims was observed near Lake Alexandrina. "It's absolutely horrific. They go down so fast and you can see how their claws are balled up because they can't hold onto the branch anymore and they fall out of the trees." Sarah Hope's description is not disputable. She has been studying wild birds in the region for around 20 years. The initial laboratory analyses from Biosecurity SA attributed their sudden and simultaneous deaths to poisoning. However, given that roseate cockatoos are not considered to be an endangered species, no investigation was ordered at the time to identify who was responsible for the disaster. Birds of prey who had eaten the poisoned roseate cockatoos, including a wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*, Appendix II), also died. Their deaths were not taken into account by the administration, even though they are the object of reinforced protection.⁵⁵



Pangolins

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

“On the Trail” n°26
Value on the black market
according to media or official sources

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Uganda	3,029	7
		3,000	8
Asia	China (Hong Kong)	640	16
	India, state of West Bengal	3,015	24
	Indonesia	65-200	31
	Philippines	190	33
	Turkey	1,240 - 2,480	34
	Singapore	3,000	4*

* Cf. chapter « Pangolins and elephants »

Value of a pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref.
Asia	India, Uttarakhan	14,530	23
	India, West Bengal	1,005	24

Value of 1 kg of pangolin meat

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	India, West Bengal	307	24
	Philippines	3-5	33

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 10 and 12, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest in a shopping mall of Nkosikhona Ndebele and Mphumelelo Keya. They were in possession of fragments of pangolin skin still covered with scales. Keya was released on bail of 2,000 rand, or 140 US\$, while Ndebele remains in prison.¹



© African News Agency

September 4, 2019

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The pangolin had been seized by the police from a vendor's bag. He had just undergone 10 to 15 days of fasting and his claws had been torn off. He died at the Wildlife Veterinary Hospital in Johannesburg despite multiple treatments including a blood transfusion from a healthy fellow animal.²

CAMEROON

OPERATION HALCOMI (STOP ILLICIT TRADE)

August 12, 2019

Bamenda, Northwest Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 383 kg of scales in a truck stopped by the Bamenda mobile brigade.³

COTE D'IVOIRE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 29, 2019

Agboville, Lagunes District, Côte d'Ivoire

Arrest of a couple who operated a network of pangolin gatherers and scale shuckers. The husband is an officer with the Ministry of Livestock and Fishery Resources.⁴

KENYA

August 26, 2019

Lac Nakuru National Park, Nakuru County, Kenya

Seizure of a pangolin who had just been captured by a group of young boys. The pangolin was released.⁵

NIGERIA

Beginning of July 2019

Nigeria

In a week, the Lagos customs Zone "A" have seized about 15 luxury vehicles whose importers are wanted, tons of counterfeit medicines, a load of adulterated rice, 1,698 boxes of Powerman -the sex tablet that stops the heart- and 671 kg of pangolin scales.⁶

UGANDA

Beginning of July 2019

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Sentencing of Johnson Asaba, 45 years old, to 18 months in prison for transporting and attempting to sell 5.38 kg of scales with a total value equal to 16,300 US\$ or 3,029 US\$/kg.⁷



September 17, 2019

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Appearance of Zubair Alahai Dramadri. He was caught transporting and attempting to smuggle 99.16 kg of scales into the Yowa Guest House in Nankulabye. Dramadri denies the whole thing. His partner, Achileo Byarugaba, called in sick and sent a medical certificate to the court. It is a wildlife hold-up of 300,000 US\$ or 3,000 US\$/kg according to estimates by the tax authorities.⁸

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

July 24, 2019

Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 300 kg of pangolin scales poached in Garamba National Park.⁹

ZIMBABWE

July 4 and 10, 2019

Zimbabwe

- Reception of a sub adult female pangolin weighing 2.9 kg snatched away from traffic.
- Reception of an 8.5 kg female pangolin stressed by capture and transport to death. It's only after a few days in the refuge that she regained the use of her tongue.¹⁰



July 2019

Gomwe, Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Langutani Sibanda. He had a live pangolin at home.¹¹

August 9, 2019

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Release in good health after more than a month of treatment in the Tikki Hywood Foundation sanctuary of a pangolin mistreated by poachers and traffickers who were trying to sell it.¹²

September 13, 2019

Zimbabwe

A pangolin deeply wounded by a trap despite its armour of scales, carried around in the bag of a salesman before being recovered by the police has been handed over to the care of the Tikki Hywood Foundation.¹³



ASIA

CAMBODIA

September 11, 2019

Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre, Takeo Province, Cambodia

Seizure under the seat of a motorcycle of a pangolin wounded in a trap. One arrest.¹⁴



CHINA

July 3, 2019

Rizhao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 1,000 g of pangolin scales purchased in Viet Nam.¹⁵

July 17, 2019

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Arrestation of 2 men aged 20 and 46 years old arriving from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo and from Fujian Province with 50 kg of scales each. The 100 kg are estimated at 500,000 HK\$ or 64,000 US\$.¹⁶



Beginning of August 2019

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of 119 g of pangolin scales upon landing of a flight from Addis Ababa.¹⁷

September 10, 2019

Hong Kong, China

Sentencing of a man not residing in Hong Kong to 34 months' imprisonment for organizing the fraudulent importation of 64 kg of scales by air from Malaysia in September 2018 and storing another 190 kg in an industrial facility.¹⁸



INDIA

August 3, 2019

Kurai, Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of 4 kg of scales. Pangolins were poached in Pench National Park. After capture pangolins are boiled. Arrest of Dhanvijay Markam.¹⁹

August 13, 2019

Mahalakshmi Layout, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Sub-inspector Venkataramanappa was on guard when an informant told him that 3 men were trying to sell live pangolin and scales near the playgrounds. Two arrests. Munivenkatappa and Gowtham said they had captured the animal in Bannerghatta Forest and were in town to meet a buyer.²⁰



August 14, 2019

Pedda Dornala, Prakasam District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

The adult pangolin was in a cage waiting to be delivered, boiled and scaled. Rescue at the very last moment thanks to an anonymous tip.²¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 28, 2019

Nandini Layout, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Nagarjun and Narasi Reddy were trying to convince the customers around the Rajkumar memorial to buy 4 kg of pangolin scales, luring them with amazing profits if resold to Chinese buyers. But someone alerted a police patrol who caught them in the act and seized their bag full of scales.²²

August 29, 2019

Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Three poachers had captured a 15.2 kg pangolin on farmland and were heading to the town of Rudrapur to try to sell it. Intelligence allowed the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) to ambush them on the road. Jugal Mistry, Sanjeev Gaain and Amrendra Singh were arrested. The live pangolin was in a backpack. It was handed over to the Forest Department rescue centre in Ranibagh. Its value on the international market is estimated by the WCCB at one million rupees (14,530 US\$).²³

GANG

September 6 and 9, 2019

Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

- The WCCB had been informed that pangolins were to be brought into town from Durgapur. WCCB investigators and Forest Department officers found 2 live pangolins in a house in Bhowanipore district, arrested 3 suspects and seized a vehicle. Three other people then fell into the trap. The members of the network are Partha Das, Joylal Golder, Suprio Majhi, Sahanaj Molla, Sayed Abibul Hossen and Krishna Das. A WCCB investigator estimates the price of one kilogram of scales at 216,000 rupees (3,015 US\$), one kilogram of meat at 22,000 rupees (307 US\$), a live pangolin can cost up to 72,000 rupees (1,005 US\$).²⁴

- A live pangolin caught alive from traffickers and handed over to a zoo.²⁵

September 6, 2019

Guddada Rangavvanahalli, Chitradurga District, State of Karnataka, India

Rural Police Detective B.V. Girish had a tip. At the gas station in Venkatesh village, he and his teammates arrested Thippeswamy and Shankar carrying 2 pangolins, one dead and the other still alive. They were charged, while the surviving pangolin was released into the forest.²⁶

GANG

September 12, 2019

Mangaon, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Settling of scores between poachers and pangolin dingoes. Hilam and Waghmare killed Salunkhe and Gosavi. The 4 had agreed in the summer of 2018 to get involved in pangolin poaching and selling scales. But when Hilam and Waghmare were arrested by the police, they definitively suspected Salunkhe and Gosavi of having denounced them and thus received a reward. A year later, Hilam and Waghmare ambushed their 2 ex-partners, assuring them of reconciliation and giving them clear and juicy news like "we'll erase everything and start over". With the help of 3 accomplices, they murdered in the hills Salunkhe and his brother-in-law Gosavi. They put the bodies in a car with the idea of driving it to the bottom of a river. The car broke down before reaching the edge of the abyss. Then they sprayed it with gasoline and set it on fire, hoping vaguely in their lit minds to stage an accident situation. In mid-September, the police handed over Hilam and Waghmare, who had gone from poacher to murderer in one year. Their three accomplices are on the run.²⁷



September 29, 2019

Patakpur, Mewat District, State of Haryana, India

Pangolins have become so rare in the area that when a 0.75 m long specimen entered the village at night, the inhabitants mistook him for a reptile and beat him to death. Forest Department officials could only note his death and then file a complaint with the Puhahana police station. According to Anil Gandas, a friend of the local fauna, the last sighting of the species in the district dates back 2.5 years. Desertification is spreading in the Aravalli mountain range.²⁸

INDONESIA

July 30, 2019

Dusun Utara, South Barito Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Arrest of 2 young villagers known as MR and ES. They were in possession of 568 and 934 g of scales.²⁹

August 19, 2019

Kuta Alam, Banda Aceh City, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 6.3 kg of pangolin scales and 115 porcupine quills (Hystricidae family).³⁰



August 29, 2019

Ledo, Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia. Border with Malaysia (State of Sarawak).

Seizure in a café on the Subah-Ledo roadside of 3,500 g of scales in the hands of BM. According to him, he buys the scales from poachers for the equivalent of 65 US\$/kg and sells them for nearly 200 US\$.³¹

NEPAL

August 26, 2019

Bhaktapur, Bhaktapur District, Province No. 3, Nepal

Arrest of Shyam Bahadur Tamang and Bishal Tamang by the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) in the Kamalbinayak Chok district. They were holding 380 g of scales.³²

PHILIPPINES

July 23, 2019

Tagaytay, Cavite Province, Philippines

Conviction of 3 men, fishermen and truck driver, to 3 months in prison and a fine of 20,000 pesos (390 US\$) for having transported and attempted to sell 10 pangolins, 7 of which died after the seizure (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.52). They were liable to 2 to 4 years in prison and fines of 586 US\$ at the lowest and 5,860 US\$ at the highest. In the country, meat sells for between 3 and 5 US\$/kg and scales for around 190 US\$/kg.³³



TURKEY

July 29, 2019

Istanbul International Airport, Marmara Region, Turkey

Seizure of 1,210 kg of scales estimated on the national market at 8.5 million lira or 1,240 US\$/kg and on the Asian market at 3 million US\$ or 2,480 US\$/kg. The shipment was declared as "prepared bones".³⁴

VIET NAM

July 23, 2019

Ben Tau Dan Tien, Mong Cai, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 10 pangolins. Total weight: 55 kg. Heading for China. Means of transport: car. Counting departures, transits and arrivals, between 30 and 40 countries are involved in pangolin trafficking every year.³⁵

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 29, 2019

Son Kim 1, Huong Son District, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

The couple was about to infiltrate Viet Nam with 30 live pangolins (total weight 140 kg) in a hidden compartment under the 16 seats of their van. They explain to the police officers that they had been recruited by a Laotian trafficker to deliver the goods to a Vietnamese trafficker.³⁶

September 18, 2019

Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure of a pangolin in a jar of alcohol on the shelves of a TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) shop.³⁷

September 24, 2019

Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Nguyen Thi Thuy to 5 years in prison for trafficking of 11 dead pangolins bought in March from Laotians in Huong Son district and sold in Vinh (see "On the Trail" n°24 p.0).³⁸



Pangolins and Elephants



AFRICA

NAMIBIA

OPERATION BLUE RHINO

September 6, 2019

Walvis Bay, Erongo Region, Namibia

Capture of 2 traffickers by police and seizure of a tusk and a pangolin skin. ¹

September 11, 2019

Sachinga, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Seizure of 2 elephant tusks and a dead pangolin in a car stopped at a roadblock and occupied by 2 Zambians and a Namibian. ²



ASIA

CHINA

September 19 and 20, 2019

Beijing Capital International Airport, Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizures of 59 worked ivories, 3,972 g of pangolin scales and lion teeth (150 g). ³



SINGAPORE

GANG

July 21, 2019

Pasir Panjang Port, Singapore



Spectacular seizure in the 2nd largest container port in the world. In a joint operation, the National Parks Administration, Singapore Customs and the Immigration Control Authority opened 3 containers coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and bound for Viet Nam and removed 11.9 t of pangolin scales in 237 bags with a total estimated value of 35.7 million US\$, i.e. 3,000 US\$/kg, and 8.8 t of raw ivory in 132 bags with a total estimated value of 12.9 million US\$, i.e. 1,465 US\$/kg. The scales come from the giant pangolin species (*Manis gigantea*). Approximately 2,000 specimens were caught. The ivory comes from about 300 elephants. This is the largest ivory seizure ever made in Singapore. According to the bills of lading,



the 3 containers were carrying timber. Information shared between China's General Administration of Customs and their counterparts in Singapore helped target the criminal containers. Arrest of 12 suspects in mainland China. This is the first time that a bilateral exchange between Chinese and Singaporean Customs has resulted in the dismantling of a transnational gang. If customs around the world held hands at all times and in all places, traffickers would be more likely to find themselves in handcuffs. ⁴



Primates

AFRICA

GUINEE

During the night of 8 to 9 September and October 5, 2019

Forécariah, Kindia Region, Guinea. Border with Sierra Leone.

- Seizure in the hands of a female customs officer specializing in wildlife trafficking of a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) about one year old that she had obtained from a trafficker from Sierra Leone.



- The orphan was handed over to the Chimpanzee Conservation Centre (CCC) managed by the NGO Projet Primates Guinée. This is the 23rd to be hosted by the CCC after being rescued from trafficking by the NGO WARA. ¹



UGANDA

August 1, 2019

Kibale National Park, Western Region, Uganda

Attack on a chimpanzee family (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) by poachers and a pack of dogs. The invaders were repelled by a patrol but a 3-week-old baby chimpanzee died after being bitten and dragged. A young male was wounded at the start of the assault. He managed to escape. His condition remains uncertain. Kibale National Park is home to the largest chimpanzee population in Uganda. Teams from the Ngogo Chimpanzee Project, led by Kevin Langergraber, patrol the park to remove traps set by poachers in which monkeys are regularly trapped. ²

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Beginning of July 2019

Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Sentencing of Blanchard Bukasa, Kimona Nganu and Giresse Kiala to 5 months in prison and a joint fine equal to 5,000 US\$ for attempting to sell a live baby bonobos (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I), 2 heads and 11 hands of bonobos and a civet skin. On the local black market, the skulls sell for around 500 US\$ each, the hands for around 100 US\$ each, the live chimpanzee for around 3,000 US\$ and the civet skin for around 100 US\$. The baby chimpanzee was transferred to the Lola ya Bonobo refuge near Kinshasa. ³



July 22, 2019

Tayna Gorilla Reserve, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

"Nduma Defense of Congo / Rénové" militia killed 3 gorillas (*Gorilla* spp., Appendix I), 2 females and one male, to meet their food needs. In response to the unanimous indignation and accusations, a "leader" of the rebel group replied that the animals wanted to kill the fighters on patrol and that the fighters acted in "self-defence". ⁴

July 2019

Garamba National Park, Orientale Province, Okapi Wildlife Reserve, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Reception of 2 babies thanks to the aerial means of Virunga National Park: a female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) and a female red-tailed monkey (*Cercopithecus ascanius*, Appendix II) whose mothers and families have been killed or harassed by poachers. ⁵



Cercopithecus ascanius

AMERICA

BRAZIL

August 6, 2019

Manacapuru, State of Amazonas, Brazil

The common woolly monkey (*Lagothrix lagotricha*, Appendix II) was held captive in the Liberdade district. He was taken to the nearest CETAS (Centro de Triagem de Animais Silvestres).⁶

COLOMBIA

September 19, 2019

Bogota, Colombia

Rescue in Bogota's 9th district of a capuchin monkey (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II) chained by the waist to a barrel. The alert was given by a neighbour.⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 8, 2019

State of California, United States of America

Aquinas Kasbar pleaded guilty. The eccentric teenager, involved in stealing diamonds and Rolex watches, broke into the Santa Ana Zoo during the night of July 27, 2018 and cut a hole in the enclosure housing 8 capuchin monkeys (*Cebus* spp. Appendix I or II) and 6 ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I). He took one of the latter and abandoned him the next day in a plastic bag left in front of the Marriott Hotel, 11 km from the zoo, with a note saying, "Lemur (with tracker). This belongs to the Santa Ana Zoo. It was taken last night please bring it to police." The day after the theft, the zoo staff found the other 13 primates wandering through the zoo alleys. They had all left their cage. They were put back where they belonged, and later joined by "Isaac," who is going on 34 years old. According to the zoo director, he is the oldest lemur in captivity in North America. Kasbar, a resident of Newport Beach, risks a year in prison and a fine of 100,000 US\$.⁸



MEXICO

September 18, 2019

Merida International Airport, State of Yucatan, Mexico

Seizure of 2 spider monkeys (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) in the parcel section of the southern airport. They were in wooden boxes bound for Monterrey and Guanajuato, 1,200 and 500 km away.⁹

PERU

End of July 2019

Moyobamba, Department of San Martín, Peru

An eventful exfiltration by activists from the NGO Neotropical Primate Conservation and by the police of a 6-month-old Poepig's woolly monkey (*Lagothrix poeppigii*, Appendix II) carried from shoulder to shoulder by a group of young people during a large festival with fireworks and deafening concerts. He is now in a shelter after a stay in a veterinary clinic and should hopefully regain his freedom.¹⁰

ASIA

CHINA

August 2019

Guangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Seizure of 2,735 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) fraudulently imported from Viet Nam and destined for a wholesaler in Wuzhou in the east of the province. They were destined for animal testing laboratories. Seventeen arrests. This is the culmination of an investigation triggered one month earlier when 70 macaques were discovered in the back of a truck during a roadside check.¹¹

INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 29, 2019

Nakti Narayanpur, Bareilly District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The video had been on social media for several weeks: a man is filmed delivering more than 45 blows from a sharp object to a monkey, then he beheads him. He then places the head in a plastic bag. The complaint filed by workers of the Hindu organization Bajrang Dal mobilized the police. The events reportedly took place on 26 June. Mool Chand (65) and his son Pancham (38) were identified. They are on the run.¹²

August 17, 2019

Kumily, Idukki District, State of Kerala, India

Seizure of a cotton-top tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*, Appendix I). It was transferred to the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo pending the production by the alleged "owner" of certificates proving his legal origin.¹³

September 21, 2019

Kolkata, Kolkata District, West Bengal State, India

This is a first. The Anti-fraud Enforcement Directorate transferred ownership and responsibility for 3 chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) and 4 marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II) to the Alipore Zoo. They had been seized by customs agents in the home of Supradip Guha in Kolkata on January 22, 2014 (see "On the Trail" n° 4 p. 47). To justify the presence of primates in his basement, Guha had provided forged birth certificates. After the seizure, they were "entrusted" to the Alipore Zoo where they became the main attraction and a major source of revenue. The Enforcement Directorate estimated that the chimpanzees were worth 8.1 million rupees (35,000 US\$) each and the marmosets 150,000 rupees (2100 US\$). Thus assets worth 8.1 million rupees (113,000 US\$) have been attributed to the Alipore Zoo in application of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Guha has fled and is a fugitive. The subsequent investigation showed that he had already delivered 2 chimpanzees to the Hyderabad Zoo, and that the monkeys had come into India by road from Bangladesh.¹⁴

September 23, 2019

Shahjahanpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

A police station is in the crosshairs of the Forestry Department. The cops thought they were allowed to chain a common langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*, Appendix I) outside their premises to keep the troubling rhesus monkeys away. Inspector Vinay Kumar claims that the female recruits training at the site are bothered by the monkeys. The rangers do not believe the police tale, but they have little hope of being able to prosecute them for mistreating a wildlife specimen.¹⁵



Semnopithecus entellus in Ahmedabad (Gujarat)

INDONESIA - ORANGUTANS

July 9, 2019

Denpasar City, Bali Province, Bali Island, Indonesia

Sentencing of Andrei Zhestkov, 27, to one year in prison for attempting to take a baby orangutan in his luggage when leaving Bali for Russia (see "On the Trail" n°24 p.90). In addition, he is sentenced to pay a fine of 710 US\$ or an additional 2 months in prison in case of non-payment.¹⁶



July 21, 2019

Jambo Dalem, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Nine years old, 18 kg. Male. Closed in a plantation. Anaesthetized and released the same day in a forest 6 km away.¹⁷



July 24, 2019

Krio Hulu, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

The female, about one year old, was rescued by a BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) and IAR (International Animal Rescue) team after she had been chained by the neck to a tree for 4 months at the house of a man who claims to have adopted her while he was cutting trees and she was wandering around her dead mother.¹⁸



July 29, 2019

Singkil, Aceh Singkil Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Two minors, aged 16 and 17, were sentenced to participate in morning and evening prayers for one month in a mosque in their village of Bunga Tanjung for having pumped 74 air gun pellets into a nursing female orangutan. The orangutan, whose name is Hope, has no hope of recovering her eyesight. Over one million people have signed a petition which demands reinforced sanctions for orangutan aggressors and strict regulations on the use of air guns. Hope's son died of malnutrition and psychological distress soon after the savage attack on the mother and himself. They were peacefully nestled at the top of a tree at the time (see "On the Trail" n° 24 p. 53). 52 cases of orangutans seriously or mortally injured by air rifles were recorded between 2009 and 2019. In the bodies of the survivors or the dead, a total of 889 bullets were detected or extracted. The worst case involved 130 bullets (see "On the Trail" n° 20 p. 58) and the harshest sentence was for 7 months in prison (see "On the Trail" n° 22 p. 58).¹⁹



August 28, 2019

Kabu, East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

HOCRU and BKSDA rescue of a 4 or 5 years old female orangutan held on a leash and in a cage by a village guy.²⁰

August 29, 2019

Mekar Makmur, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province and Sepang, Subulussalam City, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Rescue of 2 orangutans:

- A male held by the operator of a palm oil plantation. He is in a very poor state of health. He is undernourished and suffers from old, badly healed wounds on his arms. He has been urgently transferred to the shelter of the Sumatran Orangutan Society.

- A female, about 17 years old, taking refuge in a plantation. In good health, she was immediately released into the forests of Mount Leuser.²¹



September 16, 2019

West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

The forest is burning and the orangutans can't look the other way. They are trapped in the ashes and smoke. Hiding in trees, they cough and they don't eat anymore.



Rescue of 2 adults, about 20 years old. They were transported to Gunung Palung National Park. The BKSDA, the park administration and the NGO IAR are on alert 24 hours a day. Feedback shows that the effects of the fires on habitats, food autonomy and movements of orangutans are felt several months after the fire season. In 2015, in collaboration with BKSDA, IAR had rescued nearly 50 orangutans.²²

September 18, 2019

South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

A remarkable orangutan, around 30 years old, was stuck in a plantation at the edge of a forest. Clearly, his life was in danger. When the joint team from the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) and the OIC (Orangutan Information Centre) arrive on site, they easily located the orange monkey whose fur was grayed by age. He had a gash above the left brow bone and a deep narrow cut under his arm, sign of an injury from a sharp projectile. He was sent to the SOCP (Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme) care and quarantine center. The victim of the attack is not just anyone, if indeed an orangutan can be "just anyone." He is one of the last specimens of the *Pongo tapanuliensis* sub-species, described in 2017 and present at the beginning of the 20th century in the southern part of the island of Sumatra, as far as Padang and Jambi, and perhaps even as far as Palembang, if we are to believe the accounts of the explorers and the origins of the stuffed orangutans in museum collections. The genetic differentiations between the *Pongo pygmaeus*, the *Pongo abelii* and the *Pongo tapanuliensis* result in the latter's superior capacities to adapt to variations in climate, altitude and food. Conifer seed are a regular part of their diet. The *Pongo tapanuliensis* are currently restricted to a habitat of 1000 km² and have been reduced to a population lesser than 700-800 individuals. In the long-term, they may be endangered by the adverse effects of inbreeding, but in the short-term and the very-short-term, they are exposed to the potentially mortal threat of a logging permit issued on 300 km² and the projected construction of a hydroelectric dam which would confiscate 100 km² of their habitat. Preliminary land clearing is already underway. All of this in addition to the noise and other disturbances from roads built along routes that defy all logic and the loss of 3 km² attributed to a gold and silver mine in the south of the *Pongo tapanuliensis* territory.²³

September 21, 2019
Kuala Satong, Ketapang Regency,
West Kalimantan Province, Borneo
Island, Indonesia

Rescue of an orangutan with his foot injured by a trap, dehydrated, emaciated and contaminated by smoke from clearing fires. During the summer, there were at least 1,400 fire outbreaks in the province.²⁴



September 22, 2019
Mantangai, Kapuas Regency, Central Kalimantan
Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia



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The orangutan, about 25 years old, was still alive when he was rescued by the Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) veterinary team deep inside a palm oil plantation operated by PT Sakti Mait Jaya Langit (SMJL). Now known as Sepat, he is gradually coming out of his lethargic state. No anaesthesia was administered before his transfer to the Nyaru Menteng refuge. He was shot at least 70 times with an air rifle on the hands, legs and head.²⁵

September 28, 2019
Tanjung Pura, Ketapang Regency,
West Kalimantan Province, Borneo
Island, Indonesia

Rescue of a male, around 20 years old, taking refuge in a forest residue surrounded by charred trees and palm oil plantations. Tanjung Pura is one of the 5 villages member of the OPU (Orangutan Protection Unit) which strives to reduce conflicts between orangutans and human activities. Alerting, mediating, anaesthetizing and translocating refugees to habitats spared from the ransacking of the palm oil industry are OPU's weapons. OPU works in collaboration with village whistleblowers, the BKSDA and the IAR.²⁶



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THAILAND

Beginning of September 2019
Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Voluntary handing over of a 2-month-old common squirrel monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*, Appendix II) to the WFFT (Wildlife Friends Foundation



© WFFT

Thailand). In recent years, the Foundation has noticed an influx of exotic monkeys arriving in Thailand through legal or illegal channels or being bred clandestinely in the country. African specimens such as mangabeys and mona monkeys come mostly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa, and South American specimens such as marmosets and tamarins come mostly from Surinam and the European Union.²⁷

VIET NAM

July 25, 2019
Cat Tien District, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over to ENV (Education for Nature – Vietnam) and transfer to the Cat Tien refuge of a black-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nigripes*, Appendix I) which was in the hands of a presumed benefactor. "I bought the primate from an ethnic hunter in order to save it".²⁸

August 6, 2019
Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in 2 private homes of 2 white-cheeked gibbons (*Nomascus leucogenys*, Appendix I). One of the white-cheeked gibbons had been caged for 8 years. They were taken to the dedicated shelter in Pu Mat National Park.²⁹

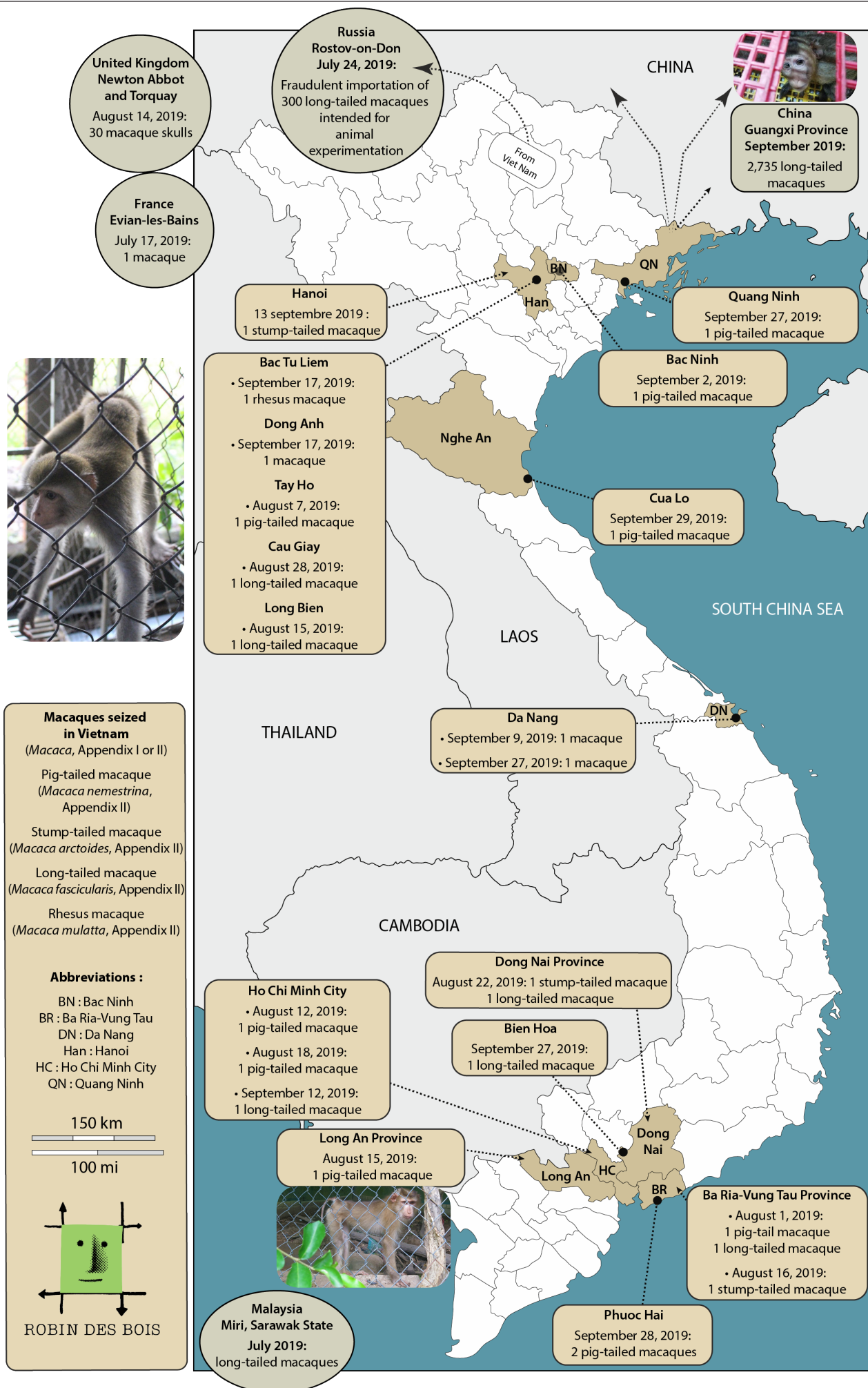
August 30, 2019
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 gibbons (*Hylobatidae*, Appendix I) in a cage on the sidewalk. They were welcoming customers to a coffee shop. They were temporarily transferred to a zoo.³⁰

September 26, 2019
Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam

Last moment rescue of a pygmy loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I). Just before being cooked, he was reportedly purchased by a rescuer and handed over to ENV who, in cooperation with the forest services, delivered it to the Binh Dinh Safari Park Zoo.³¹

Seizures of macaques



EUROPE

BELGIUM

August 1, 2019

Molenbeek, Brussels, Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium

Seizure of a red-handed tamarin (*Saguinus midas*, Appendix II) during delivery by Internet vendors. The buyer was in cahoots with the police. The little monkey from South America was sold 3,800 €. Caught in the act, the traffickers claimed he was a squirrel.³²

FRANCE

17, 25 and end of July 2019

Evian-les-Bains, Department of Haute-Savoie (Border with Switzerland), Calais, Department of Pas-de-Calais and Romainville, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, France

- Seizure by the anti-crime squad at the home of a young man known to be a drug dealer of 10 kg of cannabis, 500 g of cocaine, 15,000 € in cash and a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) believed to be imported from Morocco. He was handed over to the care of the Foundation 30 Millions d'Amis before being transferred to a permanent place of reception.³³

- Seizure in a private home of a 4-year-old capuchin monkey (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II) and a 10-month-old female baboon (*Papio* spp., Appendix II). The "adoptive parents" say they are very attached to the offspring, which could come from a circus or an Internet purchase in Belgium or France.³⁴

- Seizure of a cotton-top tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*, Appendix I) in the suburbs of Paris during the search of an apartment whose occupants were suspected of various thefts.³⁵

UNITED KINGDOM

August 14, 2019

Newton Abbot and Torquay, Devon County, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of 30 macaques' skulls (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) from a 52-year-old man.³⁶



RUSSIA

July 24, 2019

Rostov-on-Don, Rostov Oblast, Russia

Import from Viet Nam via Sochi airport of 300 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) for animal testing in a laboratory in Krasnodar. Economic value of the "goods": 8.5 million rubles, i.e. 135,000 US\$ and 450 US\$ per specimen. Legal proceedings against the trading company. The monkeys were imported under the guise of use in circuses and zoos.³⁷

Vicunas and Guanacos



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

End of July 2019

Sierra Grande, State of Río Negro, Argentina

Seizure of 3 dead guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) in the back of a truck intercepted at the Sierra Grande checkpoint, of knives, a firearm and ammunition. Five arrests.¹

Mid-September 2019

Las Grutas and San Antonio Oeste, Rio Negro Province, Argentina

Seizure in butcher shops of rotten guanaco meat.²

End of September 2019

National Route nº3, Chubut Province, Argentina

Interception of a pickup truck. Seizure of one guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) and meat quarters. Incineration.³

CHILE

Beginning of July 2019

General Lagos, Arica and Parinacota Region, Chile

Poaching of 2 vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I). Wool was sheared.⁴



Felines

"On the Trail" n°26 The value of felines or felines parts on the black market, according to media or official sources

Tigers	p.60
Tigers and Lions	p.63
Lions	p.64
Leopards	p.65
Cheetahs	p.68
Snow Leopard	p.69
Asian Golden Cat	p.69
Leopard Cats and	
Fishing Cats	p.69
Jaguars	p.70
Pumas	p.70
Lynx	p.71
Multi-felines	p.71

Continent	Country	Animal/part	US\$	Ref.
Asia	India, state of Maharashtra	Tiger claw	30	5
	India, state of Maharashtra	Tiger skin	14,530	7
	Indonesia	Sumatran tiger skin	4,000	13
	Indonesia	Tiger skin shred	7 to 14	13
Africa	South Africa	Living lion cub	3,500	21
Asia	India, state of Odisha	Leopard skin	2,790	46

TIGERS

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

AFRICA

ALGERIA

**Beginning of August 2019
Nezla, Wilaya of Ouargla, Algeria**

The young tiger escaped from the Touggourt Zoological Park under circumstances that haven't been cleared up. The soldiers of the wilaya of Ouargla had no other solution than to shoot him with live rounds, an extreme solution that was necessary according to the president of the communal people's assembly in the face of the panic that spread like wildfire. The polemic also spread, with several Internet users being surprised that zoo keepers or the police had no means of shooting with an anaesthetic syringe rather than with lead bullets (see "On the Trail" n°19 p.73).¹



ASIA

INDIA

**GANG
REPEATED OFFENSE
July 1, 2019**

Tumsar, Bhandara District, State of Maharashtra, India



A search warrant from the Department of Forests at the home of Maniram Anandram Gangboyar was fruitful. A specialist in poaching by electrocution, the man is at the center of a network of poachers and sellers in animal parts and bush meat. He has been active for at least 7 years. At the time of the raid, he was in possession of a fragment of tiger skin, 22 tiger claws, 2 leopard claws, 7 deer antlers and a certain amount of boar meat, both cooked and raw. Because a tiger has 18 claws, it can be assumed that 2 tigers were killed, including one that Gangboyar electrocuted on June 28 at the farm of a certain Shabbir Babu. The carcass of the big cat, without its skin, was discovered buried in the Sitasawangi forest. Several accomplices were arrested, including Shiv Madan Kumre, in whose home investigators found bamboo spikes and steel cables used to set electric traps. Kumre also sold bush meat to Vijay Sundaral Pardhi and Ravindra Kisan Rahangdale, who were also arrested. Two other accomplices have also been taken in, Chamru Kohale and Rohit Bhatta. The gang's arrest could help investigators explain the drop in tiger population in the Nagzira wildlife sanctuary located in the same district.²

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

July 8, 2019

Metepar, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India



Three new victims of Thimet. The tigress and her 2 cubs are about 5 years and one year old. "The government should control sale and use of this chemical in the same way Endrin and Aldrin were banned in 1994," says a spokesman for the Wildlife Protection Society of India.³



July 16, 2019

Seerawas, Alwar District, and Bagriyon Ki Dhani, Sikar District, State of Rajasthan, India

The images captured on July 7 and 8 by one of the photographic traps set up in the Sariska Tiger Reserve showed 2 men armed with home-made rifles. Following an investigation, the Forest Department came to pick up Satish Singh and Phool Singh in their respective villages today. In 2018, the ST-5 tigress and the ST-11 tiger had been poached in the reserve.⁴

July 2019

Bhandara District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 25 tiger claws, 2 leopard claws, a fragment of tiger skin and tiger bones, 7 chital antlers (*Axis axis*) and wild boar meat. Arrest of 9 poachers and middlemen and 3 claw buyers. The gang has reportedly had at least 3 tigers to their name since 2015. A businessman, a certain Maniram, ran the organization. Revenge would cause the fall of Maniram and his acolytes. Maniram's daughter was having a love affair with a young boy from Madhya Pradesh. She had run away from her father's home. By means of authority, Maniram "retrieved" his daughter. Four days later, information received by the district forestry services, helped focus the investigation on Maniram and his network, which also included the brother of an influential property developer from the town of Bhandara (population of about 100,000).

In the state, several tigers have been mysteriously disappearing without a trace for 4 years now, like Jai whose son Srinivas was found electrocuted in 2017. Maharashtra hosts 6 tiger reserves: Tadoba Andhari, Pench, Bor, Sahyadri, Melghat and Navegaon Nagzira. The tiger claws to which an array of superstitions is attached are sold at the price of 2,000 rupees per item, i.e. 30 US\$. A tiger has 18 claws.⁵

July 24, 2019

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

From "it might have been a tiger" (see p. 66) to "it was a tiger," there was just one violent step to take, and a horde of villagers used sticks and sharp projectiles to take that step. According to the forest service report, a young man ventured into sector 12 of the reserve and began to yell and call for help when he saw a tigress. About 50 villagers working in the fields at the edge of the forest came running. Nine of them claim to have been attacked by the big cat as she fled, but there is no proof and the district magistrate is skeptical. The tigress died after 24 hours of agony, and the forest rangers, who are the only ones authorized to take action to drive off, capture or anesthetize tigers according to protocol, tried to stop the lynching, but had no other choice but to give up, given the massive, coordinated and violent reaction of some people among the furious population.

The report entitled *Living with the Wild — Mitigating Conflict between Humans and Big Cat Species* in Uttar Pradesh recorded 136 alleged tiger attacks in the 94 villages that encircle the reserve, between 2000 and 2013. Most encounters occur in forests or at forest edges (55%), in fields (31%), especially sugar cane fields. Incidents are more frequent in winter, with a peak in February corresponding to the season for collecting firewood in forests. As for tiger or leopard attacks on livestock, the highest rates of frequency occur during harvesting season. Between 2003 and 2012, 427 heads of livestock were presumably killed by big cats. WTI (Wildlife Trust of India) says that between 2000 and 2018, 90 people were injured or killed following an encounter with a tiger. The highest exposure to risk is for agricultural workers and people who go into the forests to carry out multiple and sometimes illegal activities or who stop at the outskirts of villages to take a break, urinate or defecate. Uncontrolled reactions and cruelty on the part of villagers toward the big cats has been growing for a few years. The wave of cruelty continues to rise.⁶

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, see "On the Trail" n° 7 p. 54, n° 8 p. 44, p. 49, n° 9 p. 48, n° 12 p. 56, n° 16 p. 53, n° 17 p. 59, n° 20 p. 69, n° 21 p. 66, n° 23 p. 83.

August 13, 2019

Mumbra, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Shashikant Dandavte was looking for a buyer for a tiger skin. He was hoping for one million rupees (14,530 US\$). But he had been denounced. The crime branch caught him and found the skin in his backpack.⁷

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

August 24, 2019

Gondpimpri, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Intentional poisoning or not? The autopsy of the tigress aged 3 or 4 years old found dead in a cotton field near the body of a boar does not exclude any hypothesis. She had no wounds or traces of electrocution. The farmer of the field, Santosh Ankapure, had recently sprayed pesticides. The tigress may have been drinking from the run-off. Her stomach contained wild boar meat. Another hypothesis is that the boar corpse was sprayed with pesticides.⁸



**Beginning of September 2019
New Delhi, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India**

Sentencing of Surajbhan and Naresh to 5 and 3 years in prison and fines of 60,000 and 30,000 rupees (840 and 420 US\$). They had been caught transporting tiger parts in September 2013. Their accomplice Surajpal died during the trial.⁹



**September 12 and 17, 2019
Navinagar, Shahjahanpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India
Phardhan, Lakhimpur Kheri District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

The bad news continues and one case resembles the next along the Sharda Canal. The cadaver of a tigress who died 3 or 4 days ago was fished out of the canal on Saturday, September 12, near the village of Navinagar. The autopsy did not reveal any injury caused by combat with another feline or mutilation due to poaching. The hypothesis of poison seems most likely. The Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) kept the viscera to do toxicological analyses. Witnesses allegedly saw the body floating in an upstream affluent several hours earlier and unsuccessfully tried to report it to the local forest office. The feline appears to be from the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR). According to Amitabh Agnihotri, vice-president of the Wildlife Biodiversity Conservation Authority, reserve agents are in no hurry to count the dead. It is not good for their image. On September 17, the IVRI published a report on the cause of death of another tigress, aged 3 to 4 years, found floating in the same canal on July 10. She was poisoned by an organophosphorus insecticide applied to the cadaver of a wild boar. It is a common trap: the toxic product is diffused through the body of the carrion eaters once it is diluted by drinking water. That explains why the poisoned tigers' bodies are often found near drinking holes or rivers.¹⁰



©Amar Ujala

September 18, 2019

Delhi, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

Definitive remittance to the public treasury of 5 million rupees (73,500 US\$) seized in September 2013 at Chacha's home. His wife may claim that the money came from a real estate transaction, but the court had none of it and considered wildlife trafficking to be the source of the gold mine. The same decision was made for the 270,000 rupees (3,800 US\$) seized from Sarju's car along with the 18 kg of tiger claws, teeth and bones to be delivered to Chacha (see "On the Trail" n°2 p.41).¹¹



September 28, 2019

Pune, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Rameshwar Harishchandra Deshmukh and Vijay Ganpat Jagtap had ridden their motorbike from their village of Aurangabad to the city in search of a buyer for a tiger skin. It was the wrong move: the criminal police were informed and caught them on Nehru road. The 2 farmers explained that a guru had given them the skin 6 years ago to thank them for taking care of him. The officers of the Forest Department are doubtful but have nevertheless opened an investigation to find the spiritual guide.¹²

INDONESIA

July 1, 2019

Marike, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of a Sumatran tiger skin cut in 2 parts, with an estimated value of 57 million rupees or 4,000 US\$. The suspect claims to have inherited it from his grandfather and wanted to sell it to buy cattle. He had attracted the attention of the Gunung Leuser National Park rangers by selling tiger skin shreds worth 100,000 to 200,000 rupees (7 to 14 US\$). An animal skull was also seized. It is supposed to come from the same tiger. Research is underway to confirm this hypothesis.¹³

July 12, 2019

Minangkabau International Airport, Padang City, West Sumatra Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

The package, according to the attached document, contained "sweets". The X-ray machine detected a speckled image. It was the skin of a Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*, Appendix I).¹⁴



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TIGERS - FOLLOWED

VIET NAM

GANG

July 23 and 25, 2019

Cau Giay District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure of 7 frozen tiger carcasses from a truck. Hue, the gang's manitou, was buying the tiger carcasses in Laos and importing them by refrigerated trucks under the cover of an import-export company. The carcasses weighed between 200 and 300 kg. This trick had been running for several years. Arrest of 3 men aged between 28 and 52 years old.¹⁵

Frozen tigers in Viet Nam, see "On the Trail" n°7 p.49, p.54, n°8 p.101-102, n°15 p.64, n°16 p.54, n°17 p.61, n°17 p.87, n°19 p.73, n°20 p.127, n°24 p.56.



September 10, 2019

Tu Son District, Bac Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Sentence of 18 months in prison for an Internet dead tiger cubs seller (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.63).¹⁶



September 14, 2019

Cam Pha, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Discovery of a live tiger in a truck. Nguyen Thai Chien, Nguyen Hong Nhat say they were recruited by Nguyen Van Minh to deliver the tiger to his home in Ha Long near the border with China. A search of Minh's home resulted in the seizure of 12 tiger skulls, 2 skeletons and 3 skins, as well as accessories and ingredients for distilling tiger bone glue, which is supposed to cure rheumatism.¹⁷



TIGERS AND LIONS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 2019

Klerksdorp, North West Province, South Africa

The convoy was heading for a retired farmhouse. In the vehicles there were gas bottles, burners, cooking pots, a saw, knives and buckets full of cut and crumbled lion bones amounting to about 40 skeletons. They were about to make glue out of them. In the skips of the trucks, there was also a tiger skin and lion meat (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.93).



Four Vietnamese were fined 8,000 rand (565 US\$) to 50,000 rand (3,500 US\$) and ordered to leave the country. Thirty-two South African and international NGOs wrote to the Attorney General criticising the lightness of the sentences. "Collectively, we believe there is a need to, among others, raise and enforce the penalties for wildlife crime, establish specialist wildlife criminal courts staffed by highly skilled wildlife criminal prosecutors and magistrates, and provide specialized training for prosecutors, especially in magisterial areas in close proximity to key national provincial game reserves," says Fiona Miles, representing the NGO Four Paws in South Africa and speaking on behalf of all signatories. The 3 South Africans involved in this evil plan will be tried later. They are out on bail of 700 US\$.¹⁸

August 8, 2019

Pienika Farm, Lichtenburg, North West Province, South Africa

The farm of horrors had not yet revealed all of its secrets (see "On the Trail" n° 25 p. 70). Another search of the premises uncovered 20 lion-cub and tiger-cub carcasses in a freezer. Two lion cubs confined in metal cages had to be put down. Their poor physical and neurological condition was irreversible. They shook incessantly. There are 60 breeding farms of this type in South Africa. Their "flocks" are not all in such pathetic condition. The operators earn money by selling baby-bottle feeding sessions with the "kittens," selling the lion cubs on the pet market, selling licenses to kill apathetic, sometimes half-starved lions to impatient hunters and selling the bones to Chinese traffickers who smuggle them out of the country and market them as tiger bones.¹⁹



LIONS

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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 12, 2019

South Africa

New tragedy in a lion's pen. Three bodies decapitated and their paws cut off.²⁰



August 21 and 27, 2019

Athlone, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure in a private home of a 6-month-old lion cub transferred from a breeding center in Limpopo to be given as a birthday present to a 2-year-old girl who, according to her parents, was mesmerized by the Disney movie, The Lion King. The lion cub is estimated to be worth 50,000 rand, or 3500 US\$. The director of the Drakenstein Lion Park stated that at 6 months old, a lion cub is already capable of killing a human. A spokesperson from the NGO Animal Welfare Society pointed out that an adult lion weighs over 180 kg, can run 80 km/hr and jump 10 m. The birthday present was put in the capable hands of CapeNature, a public institution in charge of promoting and guaranteeing wildlife conservation in the Western Cape Province. The institution promised to treat the lion cub in compliance with the best international directives. CapeNature made the worst choice. The lion cub was deliberately killed by an injection by a licensed veterinarian, the very day of the seizure.²¹

September 11, 2019 Beestekraal, North West Province, South Africa



On a hunting ranch, 2 lions, a lioness and 2 lion cubs were poisoned with Temik or an equivalent. Their heads and paws were cut off.²²

KENYA

September 12, 2019 - ANNA Meru National Park, Kenya

Freeing of a lion. Left hind leg encircled to the bone by a metal trap. Favorable prognosis.²³



MOZAMBIQUE

Beginning of September 2019

Coutada 9, Manica Province, Mozambique

Thanks to a quick collection of donations of about 2,500 US\$ to charter a small emergency plane, rescue by the vets of Saving the Survivors of a lion caught in a trap. Pending the arrival of veterinary assistance, anti-poaching guards dug holes in the dry riverbed to water the victim while they fed him. The injury to the lower left front paw is severe, but he is likely to survive.²⁴



NAMIBIA

July 28, 2019

Anabeb, Kunene Region, Namibia

After the discovery in the arid savannah of 4 dead lions, 3 males and a female, the investigation led the police, assisted by the canine brigade, to a suspicious house where remains of zebras (genus *Equus*) and oryx (genus *Oryx*) were found. Three arrests. The shooters had placed poisoned bait on the lions' paths.²⁵ Lions in Namibia, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.52, n°17 p.63, n°18 p.58, n°21 p.62, n°22 p.66.



TANZANIA

September 13, 2019

Masasi, Mtwara Region, Tanzania

Mussa Daudi is sentenced to 20 years in prison for keeping a lion's tooth in his wallet. He was arrested on the public highway in Masasi on October 9, 2018 and taken to the police station. The police were acting on the basis of corroborating information. According to the investigation file, the man had a habit of abusing the credulity of cashew nut growers by spreading gossip about the magical power of lion teeth. The offence fails under the Economic sabotage crimes Act.²⁶



LIONS - FOLLOWED

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid-September 2019
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Seizure in a restaurant of a stuffed lion without his claws. He had spent his life in a public or private zoo.²⁷

ASIA

SAUDI ARABIA

September 23, 2019
Jeddah, Mecca Province, Saudi Arabia

He was walking down a central, fashionable Jeddah street with a lion on a leash. He faces a fine of 500,000 dirhams or 136,147 US\$.²⁸

LEOPARDS

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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 20, 2019
Flagstaff, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The NGO Landmark Foundation denounces the murder of an adult leopard by "intolerant" people. The province, 168,966 km², is home to about 400 wild individuals.²⁹



CAMEROON

July 24, 2019
Loum, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 4 adult leopard skins and a motorcycle. Three arrests, 2 sellers and a buyer. The skins are used in luxury furnishings or for making coats and ceremonial dresses, the tails, whiskers and claws as fetishes.³⁰

KENYA

July 14, 2019

Lamuria, Laikipia County, Kenya

Gently capture in a cage by the KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service) of a leopard accused of stirring up trouble in the neighbourhood. The unfortunate leopard suffers from the partial amputation of his left front leg, typically the kind of torture inflicted by a trap. The vets consider that it was the loss of mobility and agility that caused the savannah badly disabled to fall back on cattle. He was taken to a KWS transit compound in Nairobi.³¹



September 11, 2019

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

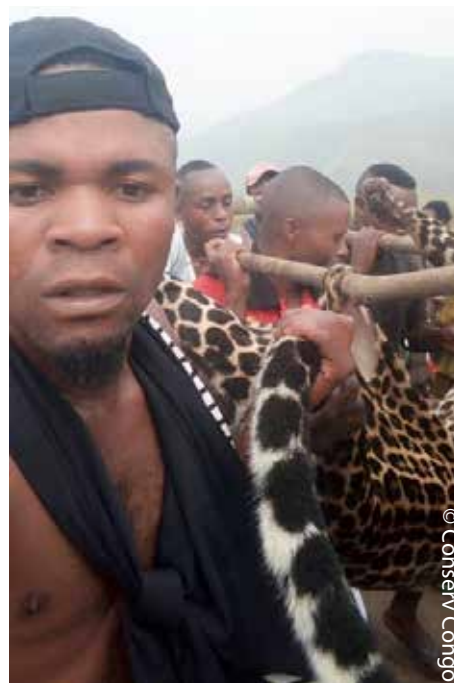
Relocation of a leopard suspected of attacking goats around a village.³²

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

August 3, 2019

Walungu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

A leopard surrounded by frightened villagers. While trying to get out of the way, the feline is said to have wounded 5 people. He was killed in no time. His paws and teeth disappeared at lightning speed.³³



LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

ASIA

INDIA

July 2, 2019

Devarahalli, Chikmagalur District, State of Karnataka, India

Failed attempt to rescue a leopard about 6 years old caught in a boar trap. He was cremated at the scene.³⁴



July 11, 2019

Khandala, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India

Capture and death of a leopard cub in a trap set by Uttam Kandeshwar to prevent porcupine incursions into his crops, he says.³⁵



Mid-July 2019

Kanha Tiger Reserve, Mandla District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

He would have killed a cow. The corpse was sprayed with farm poison by the ranchers. The young leopard died of poisoning a few meters from the bait. "It could have been a tiger as well", worry the authorities (see p. 61). "Those involved will not be spared."³⁶



July 30, 2019

Bakti, Gondia District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of Mangesh Badole who was keeping a 1.55 m long skin in a plastic bag at his home. His accomplices Vinod Rukhmode and Ravindra Walde were arrested.³⁷

August 6, 2019

Ashwathapura, Dakshina Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India

A 4-year-old female was trapped by a snare set to capture a wild boar. Villagers discovered her and alerted the Forest Department. The feline was anaesthetized, treated and released by veterinarians. The operation lasted several hours in the pouring rain, in the presence of a crowd of villagers, including possibly the poacher. The victim was taken unconscious to the Pilikula amusement park in Mangalore.³⁸



August 8, 2019

Laldhang, Haridwar District and Laalpani, Pauri Garhwal District, State of Uttarakhand, India

- To, he says, avenge the death of a domestic dog and a puppy, Sukhpal sprayed the puppy's body with Killer 505 pesticide and threw it into the nearby forest. The autopsy confirms this scenario: hair and bones from the bait were removed from the intestines of 3 leopard cubs.



- A female leopard whose body is covered with wounds was found dead by forest officers in the same forests.³⁹

August 14 and 16, 2019

Parsad Forest, Udaipur District, State of Rajasthan, India

Hundreds of villagers from Paduna, Barapal and Chanavda blocked the NH-8 national highway from Udaipur to Ahmedabad for approximately 10 hours one night. The goal was to get a leopard to be recognized as a "man-eater" and immediately tracked down and killed. Cars were burned and 10 police officers were hurt when stones were thrown at them. The day before, a 13-year-old girl was mortally wounded by the most-wanted feline in Rajasthan. The repeat offender is also suspected of ripping the leg off a man who was surprised in his sleep in July, and having bitten a 15-year-old boy who was playing in a field near Chanavda. For several days, around one hundred forest agents were deployed in the Parsad forest and surrounding hills to look for prints, to trace him and try to capture him. One of the teams is posted at the top of a hill with binoculars, firearms and anesthetizing rifles. To reduce the risk of nighttime attacks, a curfew was declared and according to the emergency task force, it is respected by the villagers. Finally, Friday afternoon, a leopard was spotted, and according to the spokespersons from the Chief Conservator of Forests, he was anesthetized with an anesthetizing rifle. Perhaps the dose was too strong. The leopard died a few minutes later. Only after the autopsy will the exact cause of death be known, and the contents of his stomach will tell whether he was actually a "man-eater" or not. This was the 2nd time that the Rajasthan authorities, in cooperation with the National Tiger Conservation Authority, ordered a leopard to be neutralized for being suspected of being a man-eater. The first dramatic incident occurred in 1995 near Haldighati, 100 km from Parsad.⁴⁰

LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

September 6, 2019

Chandan Nagar, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure at the home of Gaffar alias Bhayyu Rashid of the remarkable skin of a "leopard king" whose spots have mutated into stripes due to an atypical genetic combination. According to another disputed hypothesis, it could be an enhancement of camouflage under the dense and dark forests of the Western Ghats. Gaffar had fled with the skin while 3 accomplices, Shakir Moulana, Shiva Baba and Baldev, were arrested in possession of the claws. The last known appearance of a "leopard king" dates back to 2012 in the forests of the Palakkad district of Kerala.⁴¹

September 8, 2019

Hasimara, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest during the night of Dawa Tshring, a soldier in the Bhutanese army, in possession of a 3.35 m long skin, including the tail, with 2 bullet holes. He hid it in a schoolbag and intended to deliver it to Nepal via Siliguri. He was remanded in custody for 14 days.⁴²

September 9, 2019

Hallare, Mysore District, State of Karnataka, India

A 4-year-old mother and two 4-month-old leopard cubs found dead in 2 agricultural plots near the village health centre. The most likely explanation is poisoning but no bait was found. The deaths are estimated at 38 hours before the autopsy. Samples were sent to the forensic laboratory in Mysore. The fields have 2 owners, Mohammed Pasha and Chennabasappa. The latter has been missing since the discovery.⁴³



September 15, 2019

Haridapasi Forest, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India

The inhabitants of the region are challenging the Department of Forests' version of the death of a female, over 10 years old, found yesterday by a woodcutter. Sasmita Lenka, a Divisional Forest Officer, affirms that the autopsy concluded natural causes. But villagers contradict that version. They testify that the animal was electrocuted by poachers Sunday at dawn. They had noticed his presence in the area over the past 2 weeks and had informed the Department of forests, but their report was not taken seriously because no leopards had been seen in the region for many years.⁴⁴

September 20, 2019

Pusane, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Covered with leaves, decapitated and amputated of all 4 legs, the female leopard, about 6 years old, was discovered by a shepherd near the Rajiv Gandhi Information and Technology park. The feline had been reported here and there in the vicinity for the past 2 months. A cage with bait had been put in place by forestry officers to capture her safely and keep her away from human activities, but the ploy wasn't successful.⁴⁵

September 24, 2019

Chatibargaht, Deogarh District, State of Odisha, India

Sanatan Luhura, Debendra Ranchudia, Bimbardhar Udabar, Rajesh Behera, Nitesh Induar and Satya Ranjan Kisan were carrying a 1.05 m long skin in an MUV escorted by a motorcycle. They were intercepted by agents of the forestry division. Bullet impacts are visible on the skin estimated at 200,000 rupees (2,790 US\$). Two other suspects were arrested in this case.⁴⁶

September 27, 2019

Phillobari, Tinsukia District, State of Assam, India

The forest rangers of the Digboi and Doomdooma divisions are looking for 3 or 4 orphaned leopard cubs whose mother, nicknamed Banapriya, was found dead a few weeks ago. She appears to have been poisoned. The cubs have been seen near some houses. A resident of Phillobari is worried: "Although Banapriya was taking away our goats and cattle, we wish her cubs would be rescued by forest guards." Leopard cubs hunt as soon as they are one year old, but live with their mothers until they are 18 to 24 months old.⁴⁷



PAKISTAN

September 16, 2019

Darra Adam Khel, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

The goats were grazing in the forest. The shepherd was accompanied by his child. He claims a leopard approached them. He fired a scare shot that hit the feline in the head. Human-leopard conflicts are reportedly on the rise in the area.⁴⁸

LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

THAILAND

September 2, 2019

Na Chom Thian, Sattahip District, Chonburi Province, Thailand

Despite the concerns of the neighbourhood, the courts accepted the principle of leaving a 20-year-old leopard, whose legal acquisition dates back to September 2003, under the responsibility of the occupant of a house whose yard is enclosed by concrete walls raised by a metal fence.⁴⁹



EUROPE

FRANCE

September 18 and 24, 2019

Armentières and Maubeuge, Department of the Nord, France

Exceptional intervention by the fire brigade and a veterinarian on top of a small brick building. The black panther came out of a window on the top floor and walked along the gutter with the clear intention of exploring her surroundings. A cat, surprised by the size of this fellow creature, ran away at full speed. No one has seen him since. The black panther was anaesthetized after 3 lasso attempts in the apartment she had left and momentarily returned to. She was transferred to the Maubeuge zoo pending the investigation and identification of her owner. Six days later, one or more kidnappers came at night to steal her. Now she, too, is nowhere to be found.⁵⁰



CHEETAHS

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

AFRICA

KENYA

September 17, 2019

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Deliverance of a cheetah who was strangled by a metal trap.⁵¹



SERVALS

Servals (*Leptailurus serval*) are listed under CITES Appendix II.

AMERICA

CANADA

July 2, 2019

Little Fort, British Columbia Province, Canada

Police and SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) raid on a serval farmer. Ten adults and 3 kittens were seized. They were confined inside caravans in "horrible" conditions, with no light, no ventilation, no space, no water and in the middle of their droppings. They were for sale on a website full of cute things presenting the servals as cuddly little beasts and kept in their breeding cages with a thousand precautions. To date, serval farming is allowed in British Columbia and only animal abuse could be used against the wildlife dealer.⁵²



SNOW LEOPARDS

Snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

ASIA

MONGOLIA

July 22, 2019

Songino Khaikhan District, Ulan Bator, Mongolia

Seizure of a snow leopard skin. Two arrests. Snow leopards are subject to increased trafficking, even though their population in the country is believed to be less than 1,000 individuals.⁵³

ASIAN GOLDEN CATS

Asian golden cats (*Catopuma temminckii*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

ASIA

THAILAND

Beginning of July 2019

Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand



Voluntary handing over. An Asian golden cat has just been entrusted to the WFFT. He lived in solitary for 2 years. He's skinny, he's got heart and red blood cell problems.

The claws and teeth of Asian golden cats are used as lucky charms. They "guarantee" prosperity, protection and sexual power. They are not allowed to be sold and at the same time can be found on social media.⁵⁴



BENGAL LEOPARD CATS AND FISHING 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. Fishing cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) are listed under Appendix II.

ASIA

THAILAND

July 6, 2019

Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand

Disciplinary sanctions against a soldier brandishing the remains of a leopard cat as a title of glory. The propagation of the photo on social networks is attributed to the group of "netizens" Watchdog Thailand.⁵⁵



July 17, 2019

Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

The "donor" of a fishing cat to the WFFT says he caught him with 2 other kittens at a shrimp farm. His brother and sister died as a result of detention and a diet based on kitchen scraps. He lost part of his sight due to cataracts on both eyes.⁵⁶

VIET NAM

End of July 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over to ENV of a leopard cat living illegally in an apartment for 2 years.⁵⁷



End of August 2019

Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

"Buying to save" is part of a good feeling that it is not always possible to control, but it makes money for the traffickers. ENV was contacted by a sentimentalist and the leopard cat was released into the forest.⁵⁸



JAGUARS

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

AMERICA

BRAZIL

Beginning of July 2019

Brazil

Nothing to do with hunting for necessity. The bourgeois gang had been engaged for decades in leisure hunting, pleasure poaching, the pleasure among others of posing around a dead jaguar, holding his head in front of the camera, as if the jaguar himself was posing. The other trend is to wear the white, black, yellow and blood-red spotted feline around the neck like a scarf. The worst of the 7 is a dentist. He would have 1,000 jaguars in his hunting bag since 1987. They lured the jaguars with dogs tied to a tree or, a less known process, with the sound of the cuica, a Brazilian friction drum.⁵⁹



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

September 9, 2019

Juan Llerena, San Luis Province, Argentina

Rescue by environmental police officers and a veterinarian of a young puma, approximately 4 months old, held captive on a farm. He was transferred to the CCVS (Centro de Conservación de Vida Silvestre).⁶⁰

COLOMBIA

End of September 2019

Montería, Department of Córdoba, Colombia

Intensive care under the direction of the CVS (Corporación Autónoma Regional de los Valles del Sinú y San Jorge) for 2 small male pumas about 2 weeks old seized on a farm. They are fed with goat's milk, which is considered to be the most appropriate domestic milk. Daily monitoring of temperature and weight. No information on the fate of their mother.⁶¹



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 2019

Simi Valley, State of California, United States of America

Alfredo Gonzalez, 60 years old, charged for poaching a 7-year-old puma whose territory was delimited by the Santa Susana mountains and who, according to local experts, was the father of 4 litters of cubs.⁶²

LYNX

EUROPE

SPAIN

OPERATION CELACANTO

June-July 2019

El Rosario, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain

Seizure of a lynx fur coat (*Lynx* spp., Appendix I or II).⁶³

MULTI-FELINES

AMERICA

GUATEMALA

Beginning of August 2019

Cobán, Department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

Seizure by the DIPRONA (División de Protección a la Naturaleza) of 2 feline skins, a jaguar skin (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) and a margay skin (*Leopardus wiedii*, Appendix I) and of wood which exploitation is prohibited by the Instituto Nacional de Bosques. One arrest.⁶⁴



ASIA

INDIA

July 24 - August 14, 2019

Bhikhampur and Amaria, Pilibhit District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Three poaching in 3 weeks:

- A leopard beaten to death despite the presence of forest rangers.
- An adult tiger skinned on a riverbank.
- The carcass floated adrift on the Devha River near the Deuni dam reservoir. It was partly skinned. Given the advanced state of decomposition, it could not be determined with certainty whether it was an ex-leopard or an ex-tiger. Samples were taken before the remains were burned at the scene.⁶⁵



EUROPE

RUSSIA

July 12, 2019

Krasnodar International Airport, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Seizure in the luggage of a passenger boarding for Tashkent, Uzbekistan, of 2 leopard cubs (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) aged approximately 2 months and a Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*, Appendix I) aged 2.5 months. Catheters were used to deliver a sedative to the cubs' paws to prevent their untimely agitation.⁶⁶



Wolves

AMERICA

BRAZIL

September 5, 2019

Casa Branca, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of a maned wolf's pelt (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*, Appendix II), 2 rifles and a large arsenal from a veteran hunter.¹



Chrysocyon brachyurus, see "On the Trail" n°13 p.98, n°19 p.77, n°23 p.147.

Bears

AMERICA

CANADA

July 5, 2019

Fort Frances, Ontario Province, Canada

Mr Kim sentenced to a fine of 9,000 C\$ or 6,833 US\$ for possession of 6 gall bladders of American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). He had bought them on 2 occasions at his workplace from undercover agents of the Canadian services.¹



ECUADOR

July 31, 2019

Cayambe, Pichincha Province, Ecuador

Opening of an investigation following the death of a spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I). The body was transported to the Guayllabamba Zoo to determine the age, sex and cause of death.³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 11, 2019

State of Alaska, United States of America

Christopher L. Gordon, 35 years old, charged with killing a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) without self-defence and allowing the meat to rot without taking into account the general interest of the community. In December 2018, Gordon had dumped and abandoned whale remains in his backyard, which after a while had attracted wild carnivores or omnivores, in particular one polar bear who Gordon killed with several shots and whose carcass was left in place, covering itself with snow. It was only in late May that municipal services took over the polar bear remains and burned them in the open air at the Kaktovik landfill site.⁴



COLOMBIA

Beginning of August 2019

Colombia

Chucho's legal status is the subject of debate. Should we continue to call him Chucho or should he be Mr. Chucho? He is a spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I), around 24 years old. He was born in semi-captivity in the Río Blanco de Manizales Reserve and he was meant to contribute to restoring the population in the department of Nariño, where they were in danger of extinction. His guards did not allow him to carry out his mission. In 2017, he landed in a zoo in Barranquilla where his mission was more modest, but was also unsuccessful: it was to accompany and if possible mate with a female bear who had just lost for ever her partner-in-misery. Mr. Luis Domingo Gómez Maldonado, a lawyer specialized in animal rights, wants to see Chucho's rights reinstated and has pleaded for respect for his personality, even if his personality is considered animal. The debate is ongoing at the Constitutional Court. Last week, the initial hearing lasted for 8 hours. The zoo representative declared that his lodger was in better health than when he arrived. A bear expert from the University of Magdalena stressed the fact that he only had a few years left to live and that he needed constant care, and predicted imminent death if he were to be freed and no longer monitored. The Minister of the Environment assured that the government would respect the decision of the Court and committed to improving living conditions for domestic and wild animals, while also pointing out that since the beginning of last year, protecting spectacled bears has been a priority for national parks. The Constitutional Court magistrate has confirmed that "animals have the right to not be subjected to physical violence, to live without hunger or thirst, to not be subjected to stressful conditions or fear". "Animals have the right to express their natural behavior and not suffer from exploitation," he added. And the lawyer has called for recognition of his client's personality and the full-fledged right to live in a habitat that is as natural as possible.²



REPEATED OFFENSE

September 1, 2019

Red Lake Indian Reservation, State of Minnesota, United States of America

Charges have been made against Brett James Stimac, 40 years old, for having killed a 317-kilo American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with a bow and arrow, on an Indian reserve where bears are considered to be part of the cultural heritage and where hunting is reserved exclusively for tribe members. One of the arrows hit the bear, who fled. Stimac and his companion found the body the next day. The case file states that Stimac tried to skin the bear on site, but was not able to do so. He then decapitated the bear with a saw, cut off his paws and carved 35 kg of meat. Two weeks later, the head was seized in a taxidermist's shop and the meat at Stimac's home. Stimac already had a record for illegally transporting wild meat, for hunting deer with bait and for hunting without a permit.⁵

ASIA

INDIA

August 14, 2019

Mahapur, Deoghar District, State of Jharkhand, India

Rescue of 5 sloth bears (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) being tamed. The team of rangers alerted by villagers turned up at dawn but the bear tamers had already disappeared. They are believed to be from the states of Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand. In Jharkhand, the sloth bear population is estimated at between 1,000 and 1,500 individuals. The display of bears is prohibited in all Indian states. The operation is beneficial but cumbersome. The district forestry services do not have the premises or the expertise necessary to take care of their new residents. Advice and assistance is expected from the State Wildlife Department.⁶



September 14, 2019

Dalavaikatte, Chitradurga District, State of Karnataka, India

A female sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) wandered into the village after quenching her thirst in a pond. Under undetermined circumstances, she then allegedly killed a man and a domestic animal. The inhabitants rushed at her and beat her with sticks, leaving her unconscious. They then paraded her in a procession through the streets. Transported to the Adumalleshwara "mini zoo" in Chitradurga - a kind of amusement park - she succumbed to her head and back injuries. Her body was cremated. Residents of the village may be prosecuted under the Wildlife Protection Act.⁷

Mid-September 2019

Bellari District, State of Karnataka, India

- Rescue and treatment by Wildlife SOS vets of a 15-year-old sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) suffering from deep wounds on his left hind leg after falling into a trap.⁸

- A 3-year-old sloth bear is freed from a trap by volunteers from a local NGO.⁹



IRAN

August 28, 2019

Sisakht, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Iran

Discovery of 2 brown bear cubs (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I or II) aged one to 2 years old riddled with bullets to the head and chest and buried under a tumulus. The crime is probably linked to the poaching of a female adult bear whose mutilated body had been found a few weeks earlier in a waste dump.¹⁰

August 29, 2019

Golestan Province, Iran

Emergency treatment for a juvenile brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) riddled with bullets, with open fractures of one leg. He died during transfer to a veterinary clinic in Gorgan.¹¹

MALAYSIA

September 25 and 27, 2019

Kuching and Serian, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

- Release of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), 76 kg, 7 to 8 years old. Place of captivity: a fenced patio. Special circumstances: the owner had a possession and accommodation permit issued by the State services. It was on the basis of mistreatment that the animal was able to be exfiltrated. Transfer for examination to the Matang Sanctuary.¹²



- Release of a Malayan sun bear, 85 kg, about 20 years old. Place of captivity: a farm. Special circumstances: the operation was triggered by an alert received by the daily newspaper The Star. Transfer for examination to the Matang sanctuary.¹³

VIET NAM

September 16, 2019

Bao Loc, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in the shop of an artisan jeweller of bear claws (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) ready to be mounted on a silver necklace.¹⁴

September 18 and 20, 2019

Dong Nai and Binh Duong Provinces, Viet Nam

- Release of a female Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) that had been captive for about 15 years. Anaesthesia for transfer to a transit cage and loading onto a truck before taking the road to the Ninh Binh refuge in northern Viet Nam, 1,600 km away. With the exception of an inflammation of the gall bladder caused by bile extraction, she is not in an alarming physical condition.

- Release of 6 bears that have been captive for about 17 years. It was not necessary to anaesthetize them to transfer them to the transport cages. They were lured with honey before heading to Ninh Binh. They are in poor physical condition. They are suffering from the effects of malnutrition. Their furs are peeling. Their vision is impaired. One of them has had his right front leg amputated. The farm operator has only consented to part with these 6 individuals. There are 12 left in these deplorable conditions, mainly because of the lack of light and the concrete floors.

The Ninh Binh Sanctuary covers 10 ha. It can accommodate 44 bears. It is under the supervision of the NGO Four Paws. There are believed to be 450 captive bears left in the country, most of them Asian black bears, in 150 settlements that were involved in the bile extraction industry for medicinal purposes.¹⁵



EUROPE

GERMANY

September 20, 2019

Wolfsburg, State of Lower Saxony, Germany

Seizure from a postal parcel sent from Canada and believed to contain a "teddy bear" of an American black bear pelt (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with the head. The gift was supposedly intended to celebrate the birthday of the recipient's 2-year-old daughter.¹⁶



Heli Dungler died in Vienna on Sunday 5 January 2020. In 1988, Heli Dungler founded the NGO Vier Pfoten in Austria. 22 years later, he is head of Four Paws, active and influential in 15 countries from Albania to Viet Nam to South Africa. All animals kept as slaves and not only those with four paws have lost a defender. Four Paws manages the Ninh Binh bear refuge in Viet Nam (see opposite and "On the Trail" n°19 p. 82, n°20 p. 77, n°25 p. 74) and the Pristina refuge in Kosovo ("On the Trail" n°4 p.61). Four Paws: see also "On the Trail" n°15 p. 71, n°18 p. 65, no. 24 p. 57 and concerning the lions in South Africa this n°26 p.63.



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°26

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	Viet Nam	60,000	27

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

September 13, 2019

Nanyuki, Laikipia County, Kenya

Mohammed Hussein Warsame, former KWS agent, sentenced to 12 years in prison for poaching and dehorning a rhino and an African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) in the Ol Pejeta protected area.¹



September 22, 2019

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

Death of 2 black rhinos. They would have been victims of anthrax. A calf was found wandering around his mother's body and taken to an orphanage.²



MOZAMBIQUE

September 2, 2019

Mozambique

Two poachers sentenced to 16 and 17 years in prison for killing 2 rhinos in the Limpopo National Park bordering the Kruger Park in South Africa. This is the first time in 10 years that this type of crime has been punished by prison in Mozambique. South Africa, through the Director of National Parks, has taken note of this sentence with satisfaction.³



REPEATED OFFENSE

September 30, 2019

Maputo, Mozambique

Lucílio Matsinhe has been arrested. He is better known by his pseudonym "Tchenguela" and even better known for being the eldest son of General Mariano de Araujo Matsinhe, former Minister of Domestic Security and considered to be one of the "liberators of the nation." "Tchenguela" was in possession of 2 rhinoceros horns and was about to sell them at a hotel in town. In the middle of an electoral campaign, the incident caused quite a commotion among leadership circles. It did not get much coverage in the press, but spread like wildfire through social networks. Newsrooms apparently received "recommendations" discouraging them from divulging the identity of the trafficker. A few days after the arrest, a spokesperson from the ANAC (Administração Nacional de Áreas de Conservação) announced that the horns were fake, that they were made from a mixture of goat hair and resin, and even added that at the heart of each horn was an empty beer can that was meant to lighten the horn and reinforce the apparent authenticity of the forgery. Many people believe that the ANAC declaration is a scam that enables FRELIMO, the majority political party, to avoid being tarnished by yet another case of wildlife trafficking. However, the ANAC may be telling the truth since "Tchenguela" has been involved in the past in a case of counterfeited precious stones.⁴



ZIMBABWE

September 20, 2019

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Seven Chinese citizens suspected of horn smuggling escaped. At their home in December 2018, 30 kg had been seized by the police (see "On the Trail" n°23 p. 101). They were released on bail in April 2019 with confiscation of their passports, obligation to report daily to the police station and a ban on traveling beyond 10 km from Victoria Falls except to respond to summons from the Hwange court.⁵

SOUTH AFRICA

Beginning of July, 2019**Near Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

It's a big day for the orphanage and for the 2 young rhinos in a state of distress who were taken in after their mothers were poached in 2014. At the time, they were one month old and 3 months old. They were fed with baby bottles every 3 hours until they were 16 months old. In the beginning, a ewe was put in each of the enclosures to accompany the orphans and to reassure them with the constant and peaceful presence of another animal and contact with caretakers was reduced to the strict minimum. A one-month-old rhinoceros weighs a little over 100 kg. After the milk came grass and alfalfa. When rhinos reach 5 years old, at the earliest, they can fend for themselves to eat and are strong enough to defend themselves against natural predators. They weigh over 500 kg. The orphans had to be released together. They had grown to know each other while they were in captivity, and since they were released, they have stuck together like glue. The ex-"Gertjie" and "Matimba" are inseparable in the reserve where they were freed. However, there is still reason to be concerned about their futures. "We cannot simply release a wild animal and assume that he or she will be fine until the end of their lives, but a wild animal needs to live in a wild environment. Rehabilitation is only half of the process." "In the end, we have to find them a reserve or a protected area with a good anti-poaching team and effective fencing." That explains why, at the time of the release – and the separation – Karen Swiegers, orphanage manager, Corlet Grobler, safety manager at the orphanage and Janelle Genis, assistant veterinarian, were both happy and worried.⁶

**July 2019
South Africa**

After a 3-hour flyover, the Saving the Survivors team managed to locate the female and her young under a tree. After anaesthetizing the mother and moving her young away, Dr. Johan and his team treated the wound but could not explain its origin. To prevent the wound from being constantly searched by oxpecker birds, they covered it with a dressing made of elephant skin collected from a taxidermist.⁷

July 3, 2019**Acornhoek, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Two men, aged 20 and 37, were stopped driving a Ford on the outskirts of a private hunting reserve. They are suspected to have planned to poach a rhino. Seizure of a large-calibre weapon.⁸

July 16, 2019**Limpopo Province, South Africa**Two slaughters.⁹

© Artemis Veterinary Services

July 16, 2019**Thulamahashe, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Three poachers from Mozambique and aged between 30 and 36 sentenced to prison terms of 13 to 18 years. They begged for the court's indulgence but the rhino bloodstains on their poaching clothes did not argue for them.¹⁰

**August 15, 2019****Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Three suspects arrested. They're members of a network that sells horns in Asia. Seizure of 2 horns, 2 vehicles and 70,000 rand, 4,600 US\$, in cash. The police statement highlights that 11 State services and the Mpumalanga Province Parks Directorate have been investigating for a year and in a coordinated manner to bring this rhino crime syndicate to justice.¹¹

August 17, 2019**KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Rescue of a 7-month-old orphan girl who was being harassed by hyenas and lions. Her mother was found dead and dehorned.¹²



© Wild Vet

August 28, 2019**Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa**

Disinfection of an infected wound attributed by the vet to a poaching shot. The park has lost 10 rhinos since the beginning of the year.¹³



September 4, 2019

Rankin's Pass and Vaalwater, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrests in 2 different places of 3 men linked to a single case, namely the poaching of a rhino on a ranch and the poaching of his 2 horns. The manhunt mobilized several police crews and private air means. Along with the 2 horns, a rifle with silencer, ammunition, an axe and a car were seized.¹⁴



September 17, 2019

Midrand, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest by the Hawks of 2 men with a rhino horn hidden in a bin bag under the passenger seat of their car.¹⁵

ESWATINI

July 9 and 10, 2019

Eswatini

Sixteen black rhinoceroses have been transferred from South Africa – males, females, adults, sub-adults and juveniles. They came from a private hunting reserve 700 km away from the kingdom.



When the road convoy arrived, the rhinos were all preventively de-horned and they are all monitored individually to make sure that they eat and drink properly and that the mothers are not separated from their 6-month-old young. The zoos in Dallas, Omaha and Sedgwick all contributed financially to the transfer operation and the preparation of their new site. Four years ago, the Kingdom of Swaziland, now the Kingdom of Eswatini, sent 12 elephants to the 3 zoos (see "On the Trail" n° 12 p. 90). Big Game Parks, who operate 3 parks and reserves in the kingdom, took this opportunity to deny accusations claiming that the export of elephants to the United States was purely commercial. In other words, it is implied that the revenue from the American public's curiosity with regards to the elephants participated in the transfer of these black rhinoceroses.¹⁶

NAMIBIA

July 20, 2019

Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia

Take 2 out of a population estimated [or overestimated] to be about 3,000. Next to the carcasses, there were spent cartridges.¹⁷

September 8, 2019

Otavi, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Gunfight at noon this Sunday between a man suspected of poaching and pursued by 15 policemen and one helicopter. Later in the evening, around 11pm, he was arrested with a horn, food and ammunition but without the firearm he allegedly got rid of during the chase.¹⁸

ASIA

CHINA

July 3, 2019

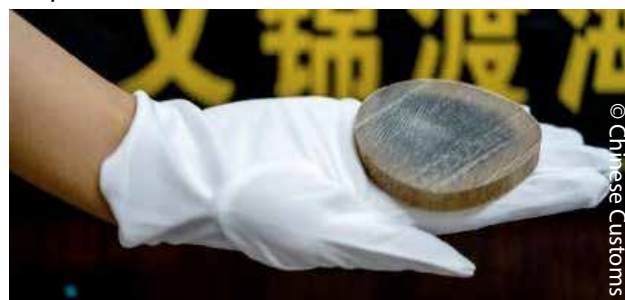
Rizhao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a horn fragment, 170 g, purchased in Viet Nam.¹⁹

July 6, 2019

Wenjindu Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 860 g of slices and other fragments of suspected rhino horn.²⁰



INDIA

GANG

REPEATED OFFENSE

July 6, 2019

Borgang, Biswanath District, State of Assam, India

Arrest on the NH-15 of 2 rhino snipers: Arfan Ali already convicted twice for poaching and Ramkuiba who came from Nagaland for the occasion. Thanks to their first confession, 3 accomplices in charge of the logistics and transport of weapons and ammunition were arrested. In conspiracy, they were preparing to hunt in Kaziranga Park. Official figures put the number of rhinos in Kaziranga Park at 2,413, 102 in the Pobitora Sanctuary, 100 in Orang National Park and 34 in Manas National Park.²¹

July 10, 2019

Guwahati, Kamrup District, State of Assam, India

Toyikhu Zhimomi, alias Master, alias Hokopo Zhimo, alias Hokup, has been arrested. He is suspected of being the mastermind of several cases of rhinoceros poaching in the Kaziranga park. He is reputed to have never set foot on the field, nor dirtied his hands in blood. He supplied weapons and allowances to sharpshooters recruited in the states of Manipur and Nagaland, and maintained a network of guides and informers around Kaziranga. Upon request, he exfiltrates horns through Moreh, a town on the border between India and Myanmar. Kaziranga covers a surface area of 450 km². Poaching is in decline there. In 2017 and 2018, 12 cases of poaching were recorded, while in the first 5 months of 2019, only one case was recorded. According to Rohini Ballav Saikia, who is the park forest ranger manager, several attempted cases of poaching have failed thanks to cooperation with local residents.²²



September 17, 2019

Baghmari, Guwahati District, State of Orissa, India

Rhino's nails, 3 per foot, are now sought after by networks. This is at least what stands out of the seizure of 12 nails and one horn in possession of 5 poachers - in short all the keratin of a rhino killed at the beginning of April on the Biswanath side. The loot was reportedly transported into Arunachal Pradesh before being smuggled to Myanmar and then to China.²³

VIET NAM

July 18, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

A 22-month-old toddler is admitted to a paediatric hospital in absolute emergency. It turns out that he was poisoned after his parents made him drink a potion supposedly containing rhinoceros horn powder to cure him of a mild fever. Thanks to the diagnosis and the treatment of the chief doctor and his team, he was saved.²⁶

July 15, 2019

Gia Tran, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam

He was on his way to the Huong Tra Hotel to deliver it to a client. The horn weighs 0.83 kg. Dinh Van Thuong was stopped on the road by a patrol.²⁵

July 28, 2019

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure of 55 horns and fragments. 125 kg. 7.5 million US\$ near the Chinese border. Police used piolets to break the plaster wrapping the cargo. Half a day's work. The 14 parcels came from an unidentified African country via the United Arab Emirates. The consignees were the Yang Shin Company and the Thien Ha Garment Export Company in Bac Giang, 100 km from the border with China.²⁷



Rhinoceroses and Elephants

AFRICA

ANGOLA

Beginning of August 2019

Angola

Great catch by SIC (Serviço de Investigação Criminal) 2 weeks before the CITES plenary session in Geneva. Seizure of 700 kg of raw and worked ivory, a rhinoceros horn, giant sable antelope horns (*Hippotragus niger variati*, Appendix I) and teeth of leopards and lions, 4 weapons with telescopic scopes, 2 pistols, a drone and large amounts of cash. Thirteen arrests: 6 Chinese, 6 Angolans and one Vietnamese. The gang was also trafficking in ebony.¹



KENYA

GANG

End of September 2019

Litein, Kericho County and Sotik, Bomet County, Kenya

- Dismantling of a gang specialised in stealing, trafficking and selling exhibits in court administration services. Seizure of 5 sections of tusks and a rhino horn in a shopping centre. Arrest of Mathew Kipkemoi Maritim, Emmanuel Ngetich and Edi Abdi Kontoma.

- Bail was denied by the Sotik court. Behind the scenes and mostly anonymously, there are rumours that the conditions of storage of evidence before trials and its management after trials should be audited. The complicity of clerks or other agents of the Ministry of Justice is not excluded.²



NAMIBIA

August 14, 2019

Mukuyu, Zambezi Region, Namibia

A Zambian caught in the act of transporting raw ivory and rhino horn in the middle of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area - KAZA - (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 82, n°13 p.67 and 89, n°14 p. 83), a transboundary park uniting Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.³



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

August 22, 2019

Australia

Draft bill on the closure of the domestic ivory market in all states and territories. A list of exemptions has yet to be drawn up; musical instruments containing less than 20% ivory, antique pianos with ivory keys would be part of it. The measure will be extended to rhinoceros horns or objects made of rhinoceros horn.⁴

Elephants

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

"On the Trail" n°26
Black market raw ivory quotation
from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	960	4
		963	7
		960	13
		937	15
	Malawi	100	20
	Uganda	72	25
	Zimbabwe	166	38
Asia	Namibia	118	45
	India, state of Karnataka	3,480	121
	India, state of Maharashtra	1,453	124
	Singapore	1,465	4*

* Cf. chapter « Pangolins and Elephants »

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

July 5, 2019
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

Seizure of 2 sections of tusks and ammunition. Arrest of Peter Mugi Kamau and Jamal Dida Guyo.¹



July 10, 2019
Samburu, Kwale County, Kenya

Seizure of 82 kg of raw ivory. Arrest of Hussein Wanjala, 57, and Stephen Riziki, 20, during the transaction with buyers who turned out to be agents of the DCI (Directorate of Criminal Investigations).²

July 21, 2019
Oi Pejeta Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya
Surgical intervention on a female elephant who was victim to a gunshot fracture on her left front leg. The fracture was incurable and terribly painful. There was no choice for her to be finished off. Her calf was sedated by an injection of Stressnil® and he was then transferred to the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary.³

July 30, 2019

Makobeni, Kilifi County, Kenya

Seizure of 35 tusks and sections of tusks. Total weight, 183 kg. Value of 960 US\$/kg. Arrest of John Chisiwa Ngoma and Mwauchi Mgaza.⁴



End of July 2019

Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, Kenya

Deep trunk cut. The young male was ambushed by a trap for antelope or other small ungulates. Prognosis reserved.⁵



August 2, 2019

Nakuru, Nakuru County, Kenya

Arrest of 2 men. On their motorbike, they were carrying 14 kg of raw ivory that had allegedly been snatched from elephants poached in Laikipia county several months ago.⁶

August 10, 2019

Nyandarua County, Kenya

Seizure by the DCI of 100 kg of raw ivory worth 96,312 US\$ or 963 US\$/kg. Arrest of David Ndegwa. His accomplice managed to escape.⁷

August 13 and 17, 2019

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

- An elephant with several fractures died. Presumed cause: collision with a vehicle.
- Death of an elephant that fell into a water hole. Foot fractured. Presumed cause: collision with a vehicle.⁸



August 17, 2019

Oi Kinyei Conservancy, Kenya

Rescue of an elephant by mobile veterinarian team. The head of an arrow was deeply embedded in one foot.⁹

August 14 and 19, 2019

Jomo-Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

A French woman wearing an 85 g ivory bracelet is liable to a fine of one million shillings, or 9,631 US\$, or, failing payment, to 12 months' imprisonment. Same offence, same penalty, for a Spanish woman.¹⁰



August 20, 2019

Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

Four policemen caught in the act of transporting 5 kg of raw ivory in February 2016 (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.77 and n°25 p.82) sentenced to life imprisonment or payment of a fine of 20 million shillings (192,000 US\$) each. Stephen Ngawai, Martin Mwiti, Francis Karanja and Peter Kuria Kimungi have 14 days to appeal.¹¹



August 21, 2019

Near Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

The crisis in Narok county is ongoing. Another dead elephant was found in a steep, mountainous area. A deeply-planted lance was extracted from the elephant's flesh. The 2 tusks are in place and observers declared that it was not a case of poaching, without even suggesting the possibility that the elephant was able to flee after being hit with the lance, and hid in the rocks before collapsing. Nicholas Murero, coordinator of the forum for the environment and wildlife in the county of Narok, regrets the crime and the propagation of conflicts between elephants and human activities. This disastrous series of events could end up killing tourism, is essentially what he means. Last year, the Masai Mara Reserve brought in 2.73 billion shillings, or over 26 million US\$, for the county.¹²

2 August 23, 2019

Maritati, Meru County, Kenya

Seizure of 6 tusks, 17.5 kg in total, with an estimated value of 1.75 million shillings or 16,800 US\$ and 960 US\$/kg in a Toyota Probox.¹³

August 24, 2019

Kieni, Nyeri County, Kenya

Express skinning of an elephant that died of electrocution. Arriving urgently on the scene, KWS agents interrupted the sharing by pointing out the health risks of meat unfit for human consumption. The angry villagers promised to continue to kill elephants they considered a threat. The KWS repelled the crowd and then proceeded to burn the remains. The fate of the tusks is unknown.¹⁴



September 5, 2019

Baringo County, Kenya

Seizure of 21 tusks with a total weight of 72 kg, average weight per tusk 3.5 kg, and estimated value of 7 million shillings or 937 US\$/kg. The ivory is believed to come from Laikipia county or Uganda. Five arrests.¹⁵

September 17, 2019

Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya

8.5 kg of raw ivory at the heart of a family business. Japheth Bakari was arrested along with one of his friends, Ibrahim Ali, on May 16 with the tusks stashed in a sack of corn. He said he was the victim of a plot by a rich businessman who is also the father of his girlfriend. The "tycoon" would have found no other way to compromise his future son-in-law, who is too poor from his point of view, and to keep him away from his daughter once and for all than to offer him a trapped bag of corn. For the time being, Bakari remains in pre-trial detention and it will be known later whether the justice system gives credit to this airport novel.¹⁶



September 11, 12, 14, 17, 20, 22 and 27, 2019

Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, Kenya

Rescue of 8 elephants and calves caught in traps, hit by throwing weapons or stuck in water holes.¹⁷



September 23, 2019

Amboseli National Park, Kenya

Discovery of an elephant carcass. Chest pierced by a spear.¹⁸

MALAWI

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 15, 2019

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

Sentence of 8 years in prison for the Kaunda brothers (See "On the Trail" n°1 p. 33, n°10 p. 56, n°19 p. 92) responsible in May 2013 for the clandestine importation of 2.6 t of raw ivory, that is 781 tusks and sections of tusks under a cargo of bags of cement from Tanzania. At first trial, they had each been fined 5,500 US\$. The prosecution appealed on the grounds that in view of the loss of 400 elephants and the value of the seizure, the fine was insignificant. The Kaunda brothers were not on the stand for this second trial, although they had pleaded guilty in the first, and a warrant has been issued for their arrest.¹⁹



July 2019

Kasungu, Central Region, Malawi

34 kg at less than 100 US\$/kg, to bait the Chinese or Vietnamese. On the street, they were trying to sell the ivory. At home, there was the meat and weapons. Four arrests.²⁰

End of July 2019

Nkhotakota, Central Region, Malawi

Arrest of Gift Nyirenda, court clerk. He is suspected of having stolen or facilitated the theft of 2 tusks that were secured as exhibits in the court's vault.²¹

September 13, 2019

Liwonde and Mangochi, Southern Region, Malawi

One thing leading to another, thanks to the use of anonymous information, tailing and the confidences of all stakeholders, the police seized 6 kg of raw ivory and arrested Vincent Mwathaya, Ibrahim Daudi Nyenje, Ayami Wiales Meya and Moses Alli. The tusks were originally acquired in Mozambique.²²

MOZAMBIQUE

Beginning of August 2019

Bárué District, Manica Province, Mozambique

Arrest of 2 men presumed to be Cambodian nationals in possession of 10 ivory tusks. They are currently known as S. Deh and M. Deioulbe. The national press is making the connection with the seizure in Phnom Penh in December 2018 of 1,026 tusks or sections of tusks that were allegedly stolen in Lichinga, Niassa province, from the vault where the government stores the ivory seized from poachers (see "On the Trail" n°23 p. 128).²³

UGANDA

August 2, 2019

Kamdini, Northern Region, Uganda

A disabled elephant was quickly butchered after being shot by UWA rangers, on the same day as the funeral of Benson Omara who was killed in an attack by a female elephant followed by her calf. All of them were part of a herd who had left the Murchison Falls national park and had been arousing fear and public anger. For 2 days, children were kept home from school, for fear that they could be charged by raging elephants. Warning messages were published for car-drivers and bikers, advising them to avoid driving on the road between Karuma and Kamdini, especially at night.

Rumor was spreading that the elephants were marching in procession on the road to avoid getting stuck in the trenches that the villagers had dug to try to slow down the invaders' progress. It was in this unhealthy atmosphere that an isolated elephant, clearly handicapped by a fracture to his front right leg, was targeted. He had been injured since Wednesday night as he crossed the road along the Abang marshes. He was limping along on 3 legs, unable to get back to the park, and also unable to charge anyone, or even to destroy a hut or trample a vegetable garden. In fact, we might say that he was not slain by rangers, but simply put out of his misery. A broken leg cannot heal in an adult elephant and is terribly painful. The villagers cut up the hot body removing the meat all the way to the bones with the consent of the rangers who are supposed to have removed and stored the tusks in a safe place.²⁴

September 13, 2019

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Detention pending trial in Luzira prison for Joshua Wanbuzi who was caught transporting 28.8 kg of raw ivory worth an estimated 7 million shillings (2,070 US\$ and 72 US\$/kg).²⁵

TANZANIA

July 2019

Selous Game Reserve, Tanzania

Inaugural speech in front of a model of the hydroelectric dam across the Rufiji River. IUCN and UNESCO have called for the suspension of clearing operations and preparatory road works. The President moderates concerns. He says the villagers who will be served by the electricity generated by the dam will no longer have to fell trees for their energy needs. For President Magufuli, this is the beginning of the country's economic emancipation. The 2 Egyptian companies chosen after a call for bids have undertaken to deliver the 750 m long and 130 m high dam within 3 years. The project in the heart of the Selous reserve is disputed. 2.6 million trees will be cut down and 1,200 km² flooded by the dam's reservoir.²⁶



August 2, 2019

Chamalendi Village, Katavi Region, Tanzania

Arrest of Emanuel Lukanda, 26 years old, with 3 elephant tusks with a total weight of 10 kg. He was denounced by neighbours. He has ties to poachers operating in Katavi National Park.²⁷

August 19, 2019

Lupa Itewe, Chunya District, Mbeya Region, Tanzania

Seizures of 13 tusks in 2 stages :

- Zungu Paulo and Baraka Lazaro were arrested at 2pm in the village streets. They were carrying 3 tusks in a bag.
- Nyirenda John 'Daimon' and Igelele Daniel were arrested in a guesthouse in possession of 10 tusks.²⁸

September 3, 2019

Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 413 tusks or sections of tusks corresponding to the poaching of at least 117 elephants and 2 hippopotamus teeth. Arrest of 6 people including Hassan Likwema alias Nyoni, who had been wanted for more than 3 years. Among the 5 others, 2 are police officers. The value of the raw ivory is estimated at 1.75 million US\$ and the value of the 2 hippopotamus teeth at 1,500 US\$.²⁹



ZAMBIA

July 2019

Mpika, Muchinga Province, Zambia

Fredrick Chilufya and Ackson Mvula sentenced to 5 years imprisonment with hard labour for possessing 68 kg of elephant meat and 28 kg of raw ivory divided into 6 sections of tusks.³⁰



August 13, 2019

Harry Mwanga Nkumbula Airport, Livingstone, Southern Province, Zambia

Arrest of Samuel Mulekwa, police officer in charge of public security in Zimba District. He was transporting raw ivory. His accomplices are reportedly in custody at Livingstone and Dambwa police stations.³¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

REPEATED OFFENSE

July 2019

Between Kaulzi and Nyonyo, Eastern Province, Zambia

Transmission of skills. Father and son were busy in the dry forest with various weapons, firearms, throwing weapons and traps, bushmeat and elephant tusks when they were caught by a Nsefu Wildlife Conservation Foundation patrol.³²

ZIMBABWE

Beginning of July 2019

Kariba, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe. Border with Zambia.

Sentencing to 36 months in prison each of 2 Zambian suspects who entered Zimbabwe illegally and engaged, at least on June 29, in poaching activities, in particular of a warhog (genus *Phacochoerus*) which they intended to eat. Three accomplices fled. The gang was targeting elephants.³³



July 8, 2019

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Discovery at dawn of 7 elephant corpses. They died several days ago. The patrol was guided to the mass grave by the smell. Strong suspicion of cyanide poisoning (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 92, n°18 p. 89 and n°20 p. 93).³⁴



July 2019

Near Bumi Hills, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

The elephant calf had been spotted with the steel rope of a trap wrapped around its left front leg. His mother, always standing nearby and refusing to move away, also had to be anaesthetized. The calf was freed and both woke up and left to be with their herd.³⁵



**Mid-July 2019
Zimbabwe**

After the privatisation of POSB (People's Own Savings Bank), IDBZ (Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe), the privatisation projects of Willowvale Motor Industries and Allied Timbers which is consumed by corruption, the president has just announced that he is looking for private buyers to manage ZimParks which covers 5 million hectares -approximately 13% of the country- and which, like all the above-mentioned entities, is in deficit.³⁶

August 1, 2019

Dete, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Police and park rangers followed the footprints of 4 poachers from Hwange National Park to the home of one of them where 8 elephant tusks and 2 warthog teeth (genus *Phacochoerus*) were seized. Cyanide is their weapon.³⁷



August 6, 2019

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Appearance of 3 men between 43 and 70 years old caught transporting 34 kg of raw ivory. Moikothai Molathegi, a national of Botswana, pleads guilty while Mathew Matusu and Mathew Kasisi plead not guilty. The seizure is estimated at 5,664 US\$, or 166 US\$/kg.³⁸

August 26, 2019

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Harare Drive was the scene of an incredible coup de main. As ZimParks agents were about to break into a suspicious house, 4 men got out of a car and presented them with cards from the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) and asked them to get lost. Police war was declared. Unsure of the alleged identity of the new arrivals, the ZimParks guys asked for backup. The true cops then apprehended the fake ones after warning shots were fired. That's when 5 guys loomed out of the house, jumped over the parapet and blended into the crowd. One of them, carrying a bulky bag full of raw ivory, got stuck. He was arrested. The 3 tusks weighing 12 kg were labelled by official and indelible stamps. They come from a State vault or a court clerk's office.³⁹

August 29, 2019

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

A police officer is caught illegally transporting tusks to an unknown destination.⁴⁰

September 11, 2019

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of 2 individuals while they were haggling an ivory sale at a restaurant in the Belgravia district.⁴¹

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 12, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 4 tusks from the trunk of a car. Arrest and release on bail equal to 350 US\$ each of Glen Baadjies and Tanyan James Gradwell.⁴²

BOTSWANA

June 13, 2019

Kasane Forest Reserve, Chobe District, Botswana. Border with Zimbabwe.



Intervention of Elephants Without Borders veterinarians to remove the steel ropes from 2 traps, one around the neck, the other around the right hind leg. The alert had been given by the Elephant Valley Lodge.⁴³

NAMIBIA

July 16, 2019

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia. Border with Zambia.

Arrest of an educator for children in difficulty who was driving a government vehicle carrying sections of elephant tusks.⁴⁴

Beginning of September 2019

Near Twyfelfontein and Khowarib Schlucht, Kunene Region, Namibia

- A dead elephant by the road D2162. The villagers climb on him and take selfies. A tourist is angered on WhatsApp. An Environment Ministry spokesman confirms the incident. According to him, the death was due to a fight with another elephant and he adds that in these circumstances, the meat is distributed to rural communities and the tusks are removed and added to the stock managed by the ministry.

- Another young male elephant was found dead with its tusks removed in Khowarib Schlucht. The weekly wildlife crime report says that in addition 3 tusks, a section of tusk and 2 elephant skins were seized from 4 suspected poachers or traffickers. Namibia currently holds 69,391 kg of ivory worth an estimated 125 million N\$ (8.2 million US\$ and 118 US\$/kg). Of this state-owned stockpile, 39,427 kg come from seizures.⁴⁵

September 20, 2019

Walvis Bay, Erongo Region, Namibia

Dirk Vermeulen, Edgar Clarke and Mike Lusse (Michael) were arrested for attempting to sell 2 tusks weighing a total of 63.5 kg. The trio was freed on bail for 30,000 N\$, or 1970 US\$, each. An article in Namib Times tells the extraordinary tale of the 2 tusks of a "super tusker," an elephant with particularly large tusks. It all started with a hunting permit issued in 1999 to a certain Mr. Hainson, former manager of a fish-processing plant in Walvis Bay, Namibia, who had retired to Cape Town in South Africa. Hainson killed the elephant in the Maun region, and the tusks were properly stamped with the code "Maun" and 3 indelible numbers. Hainson asked a friend, Bryce Edwards, former mayor of Walvis Bay and owner of several fishing boats, to ship his tusks to South Africa. Edwards had sold one of his ships, the *Emerald Isle*, to a shipowner in South Africa, and asked the captain, Basson, to deliver the tusks when he delivered the ship to Cape Town. However, before leaving Namibian waters, a Nampol patrol boat intercepted and searched the *Emerald Isle*.



The 2 majestic tusks were found and seized, the ship was escorted to the port in Lüderitz, the crew was put under house arrest in a hotel and the captain was charged with ivory smuggling. Edwards called on a well-known lawyer from Walvis Bay, and a few days later he got the crew freed on bail and the ship released. Several months later, the public prosecutor recognized the validity of the hunting permit issued to Hainson and ruled that the administrative and fiscal noncompliance in the attempted exportation was negligible. Charges of smuggling were dropped. The 2 tusks were returned to Edwards who stated that he intended to send them to his friend. The operation never happened and Hainson died in 2010 without having recovered the fruit of his dirty deed. Edwards got the Hainson family to agree to let him start procedures to get the ownership license transferred to himself, in remembrance of his friendship with the deceased and also in exchange for the considerable legal expenses that he had paid in 1999 to get the crew and ship released. In 2012, the tusks were still in Edwards' possession, but in Hainson's name. That is when, due to some unknown difficulties, Edwards entrusted them to a certain Mike Lusse for safekeeping until the property license was transferred to him. Some time later, Edwards died in an accident in the staircase of his estate. In early 2019, Lusse and his 2 acolytes were caught trying "to get rid of" the 2 cumbersome tusks by selling them to buyers who were none other than undercover police officers. The Walvis Bay Court has stated that it is a "serious offense" and that the 3 accomplices knowingly engaged in illegal ivory trafficking. To be continued.⁴⁶

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

September 27, 2019

Banikoara, Department of Alibori, Benin

Seizure of 4 tusks with a total weight of 26.5 kg. Arrest of 3 suspects in the north of the country near W national park which brings together Niger, Benin and Burkina Faso.⁴⁷

BURKINA FASO

July 2019

Po, Centre-Sud Region, Burkina Faso

Seizure of 2 tusks. Three arrests.⁴⁸

COTE D'IVOIRE

September 12, 2019

Cocody, Northern Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Seizure of 2 tusks. Two arrests. The authorities claim to have seized 582 kg of raw ivory and 300 worked ivories in 2 years. From more than 1,000 in 2000, elephants in the country have now fallen to less than 300.⁴⁹

NIGERIA

August 20, 2019

Yola, State of Adamawa, Nigeria. Border with Cameroon.

Customs report the seizure of 2 elephant tusks, buffalo horns, 210 bales of second-hand clothing and used tires.⁵⁰

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

Mid-August 2019

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Seizure in a suitcase of 16 tusks or sections of tusks. They are labelled and may have been stolen from court vaults.⁵¹



September 5, 2019

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon

There were 5 of them in the black Toyota Prado driven by the son of a former finance minister. They were about to take out of the trunk the 2 tusks of a savannah elephant coming from a bygone era. They each weigh 50 kg. Nowadays, a 20 kg tusk is considered exceptional. The Yaoundé gang is said to have been gripped thanks to information obtained from the Douala gang that was nabbed for its part in March 2019 about to export 2 t of pangolin scales and 73 tusks or sections of tusks (see "On the Trail" n°24 p. 50).⁵²

GABON

August 23 and September 25, 2019

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province and Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Alain Roger Moumbonzi and Ikagna aka Francky caught in the act of transporting 11 tusks or sections of tusks weighing a total of 80 kg. The duo is sentenced respectively to a 3 years suspended prison and to one year including 6 months suspended, to pay fines equal to 833 and 416 US\$ and to pay a joint fine equal to 8,335 US\$ in damages.⁵³



August 27, 2019

Fougamou and Sindara, Ngounié Province, Gabon

Marie-Laure Motambi Ngoubou, 22 years old, caught red-handed transporting and attempting to sell 3 tusks. Her presumed husband, Sylla Demba, 24 years old, was arrested a few hours later.⁵⁴

September 19, 2019

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Seizure of 6 tusks. Two arrests.⁵⁵

September 30, 2019

Minkébé National Park, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

After a gunfight with poachers that did not result in any deaths or injuries, the ecoguards of the National Parks Agency managed to recover 82 tusks weighing a total of 200 kg and 37 elephant tails. The average weight of the tusks is 2.4 kg. Clearly, these elephants died early, far too early.⁵⁶



September 30, 2019

Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Seizure of 6 tusks. Norbert Ndzang would have bought them in Minvoul from Cameroonians.⁵⁷

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

August 2019

Republic of the Congo

Conviction of 5 years in prison to an ivory trafficker recidivist for having detained and attempted to market 2 raw tusks. He had already been sentenced to prison for 2 years in 2017 to similar crimes, but had managed to escape due to the complicity of a police officer. Unless his sentences are adjusted, he should spend 7 years in prison.⁵⁸



August 26, 2019

Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 15 kg of raw ivory, a buffalo tail and 7 Kalashnikovs magazines in the hands of 2 civilians and 2 military personnel.⁵⁹

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

September 16, 2019

Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 200 kg of raw ivory from rampant poaching in the Manono region 500 km to the north. The tusks were placed in the vaults of the Banque Commerciale du Congo.⁶⁰

CHAD

August 6, 2019

Pala, Mayo-Kebbi Ouest Region, Chad. Border with Cameroon.

Seizure of 25 elephant tusks and 2 military weapons in the hands of 6 poachers operating in conspiracy in the Binder-Léré Faunal Reserve.⁶¹



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April to June 2019

Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America

While the federal law prohibits the sale of elephant ivory outside the borders of each of the 51 states, the trade continues unabated in the White House and Capitol district. At an antique shop and flea market in Georgetown, investigators from the Humane Society found an ivory boat (25,000 US\$), a pair of carts (12,000 US\$), a Buddha statue (540 US\$) and a carved tusk at a record price of 600,000 US\$.⁶²

ASIA

CHINA

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

July 7, 2019

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong, China

Seizure of ivory bracelets and necklaces on 4 passengers.⁶³

CITY OF BEIJING

August 20, 2019

Beijing Municipality, China

Appearance of Zhang Weihua. He was extradited from Viet Nam in March after 8 years on the run. In June 2011, he had fled when Beijing airport customs officials were about to open his luggage and get their hands on 17 kg of worked ivory he had bought in Nigeria. "I knew such products were prohibited in China, but I took a chance", he said 8 years later at the bar of the People's Court No. 4 in the Chinese capital. Verdict to come.⁶⁴

SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY

September 16, 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Shanghai Municipality, China

Seizure of an ivory pendant.⁶⁵

July 13, 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Shanghai Municipality, China

Seizure of 66 beads, a bracelet and 2 charms: 154 g.⁶⁶

TIANJIN MUNICIPALITY

July 14, 2019

Tianjin Binhai International Airport, Tianjin Municipality, China

Eight pearls and a candlestick: 125.17 g.⁶⁷

ANHUI PROVINCE

July 24, 2019

Suzhou, Anhui Province, China

Seizure in a parcel of a Buddha statuette, 564 g, and 2 ivory bracelets, 149 g.⁶⁸



FUJIAN PROVINCE

July 3, 2019

Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China

Six bracelets: 140 g.⁶⁹



July 19, 2019

Quanzhou, Fujian Province, China

719 g of worked ivory in a package from the Netherlands officially carrying "powdered milk for adults".⁷⁰



August 22 and 29, 2019

Xiamen International Airport, Fujian Province, China

- Two bracelets: 280 g.

- One bracelet and 2 necklaces: 405 g.⁷¹

September 18, 2019

Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China

A necklace and a pendant.⁷²

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

Beginning of July 2019

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

25 worked ivories in a passenger's luggage: 1,237.2 g.⁷³

Beginning of July 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Another scam with ivory dyed to look like wood. 16 bracelets and other trinkets: 1,496.5 g.⁷⁴

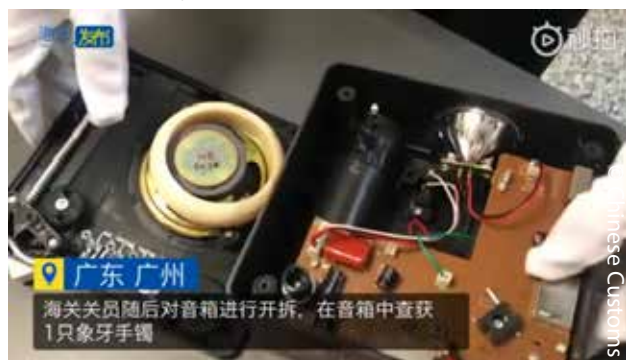


July 8, 2019
Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China
A 2-strings pearl necklace 105 g.⁷⁵

July 8, 2019
Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

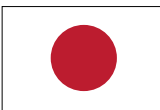
Seizure in the luggage of a female passenger coming from Addis Ababa of 28 worked ivories including :

- a bracelet hidden in a radio set.
- 25 pearls disguised as lollipops.⁷⁶



July 11, 2019
Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Another seizure of a so-called toy in a parcel from Japan and bound for Guilin in Guangxi. Intrigued by the weight of the parcel and its small size, and remembering that toys from Japan are mostly made of lightweight plastic, customs officials opened it. They discovered 3 finely worked ivory parts which after assembly constituted a 30 cm high vase engraved with lions and dragons.⁷⁷



Mid-July 2019
Huanggang Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure on 3 passengers of 25 jewels: 1,237.2 g.
- Seizure on a passenger of 19 worked ivories: 1,116.4 g.
- Seizure on 2 passengers of 6 worked ivories: 120.4 g.⁷⁸

July 26, 2019
Futian Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China
Seizure of 2 bracelets and a pendant.⁷⁹

August 15, 2019
Futian Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Two ivory fans, 46 and 98 g, in the luggage of a young 20-year-old woman. She says she was paid to smuggle them.⁸⁰

September 2, 2019
Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Customs opened a 5 kg box of powdered milk in the luggage of a passenger arriving from Addis Ababa and seized 9 worked ivories including 5 bracelets and combs.⁸¹



Beginning of September 2019
Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Ivory fans are trending. This one came from Italy in a parcel declared as clothes. It is described by Chinese customs as a "modern product".⁸²



September 5, 2019
Wenjindu Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China
Seizure of 2 worked ivories: 56 g.⁸³

HEBEI PROVINCE

End of September 2019
Tianjin, Hebei Province, China

Seizure on board a fishing vessel of 63 ivories, including 3 tusks weighing a total of 5,335.7 g. The 10 crewmen are heard by the police.⁸⁴



HENAN PROVINCE

July 12, 2019
Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

Four bracelets: 391 g. From South Africa.⁸⁵

September 20, 2019
Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

Seizure of an engraved tusk in a parcel from Taiwan: 1.14 kg.⁸⁶

End of September 2019
Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

Seizure in a parcel from abroad officially containing "treats" of 32 ivory objects, 5,449 g.⁸⁷



JIANGSU PROVINCE

August 10, 2019
Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China

A statuette in a parcel from Belgium: 545 g.⁸⁸



September 22, 2019
Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Suzhou and Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizures of worked ivories, including 2 painting scrolls.⁸⁹



LIAONING PROVINCE

August 29, 2019
Dandong, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure by the railway brigade of a collar in a passenger's luggage: 52 g.⁹⁰

September 11, 2019

Dandong, Liaoning Province, China. Border with North Korea.

Seizure of a necklace in the belongings of a rail traveller. 92 g.⁹¹

September 18, 2019
Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Jewellery and mah-jong games: 1,429 g.⁹²



SHANDONG PROVINCE

July 3, 2019
Rizhao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 740 g of worked ivory purchased in Viet Nam.⁹³

Beginning of July 2019
Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Pearls, bracelets, statuettes on 4 passengers: 283.2 g.⁹⁴

End of July 2019
Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

A sculpture from Japan: 1,026 g.⁹⁵



August 27, 2019
Rongcheng, Shandong Province, China

An ivory pendant on a passenger disembarking a car-ferry from Incheon, South Korea: 35 g.⁹⁶

September 2, 2019
Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

A fan, 4 bracelets, a statuette, a necklace, 3 animal figurines and a box: 864 g.⁹⁷

September 17, 2019
Qingdao Liuting International Airport,
Shandong Province, China
 Seizure of 7 ivory painting scrolls.⁹⁸



SICHUAN PROVINCE

Beginning of August 2019
Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport,
Sichuan Province, China
 Seizure of 26 worked ivories, 687 g, upon landing of a flight from Addis Ababa.⁹⁹

September 27, 2019
Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport,
Sichuan Province, China
 Seizure in the luggage of 2 Chinese passengers coming from Addis Ababa of a bracelet and 398 beads and other semi-raw products to be refined and assembled: 2,730 g.¹⁰⁰

YUNNAN PROVINCE

August 9 to 13, 2019
Kunming Changshui International Airport,
Yunnan Province, China
 Eight pendants, bracelets and other charms on 6 Chinese passengers from Kathmandu, Nepal, Vientiane, Laos and Sihanoukville, Cambodia.¹⁰¹

September 8, 2019
Mohan Border Post, Mengla County, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.
 An elephant tusk in a loose tea box: 1,434.5 g.¹⁰²



ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

July 31, August 7 and 16, 2019
Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, China
 - A bracelet: 31.44 g.
 - A bracelet: 22.7 g.¹⁰³



August 22, 2019
Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China
 A vase and 3 bracelets in a parcel from abroad: 1,126 g.¹⁰⁴

August 31, 2019
Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport,
Zhejiang Province, China
 Two bracelets, 2 necklaces, 2 pendants, a cigarette-holder, a figurine and a cylinder upon landing of a flight from Hong Kong: 1,452 g.¹⁰⁵



September 18, 2019
Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport,
Zhejiang Province, China
 Seizure upon landing of a flight from Laos of a bracelet and 2 pendants: 115.24 g.¹⁰⁶

September 22, 2019
Yiwu International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China
 One necklace, 2 bracelets on 2 Chinese passengers from Cambodia: 210.57 g.¹⁰⁷

TIBET

First Semester of 2019
Lhasa, Autonomous Region of Tibet, China
 Seizure by customs since the beginning of the year of thirty ivory workings weighing a total of 535 g (see "On the Trail" n°25 p. 53, p. 93).¹⁰⁸

INDIA

July 8, 2019

Anemaala, Mysore District, Karnataka State, India

Lethal electrocution of a female elephant aged around 40 years old on the edge of a banana plantation.¹⁰⁹



July 12, 2019

Muthuppettai, Thiruvavur District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Seizure by a Coastal Security Group of a pair of long tusks, 53 cm in length. The 2 holders fled the scene. The investigation focuses on an attempted smuggling operation by sea. Tamil Nadu, the state where the incident took place, is less than 100 km by sea from Sri Lanka.¹¹⁰

July 15, 2019

Kanhmun forest area, Mamit District, Mizoram State, India

Suparna Ganguly, co-founder of Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in Bangalore and Noyal Thomas, Inspector general of Forests in charge of "Projet Eléphant" at the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), today filed a joint complaint following the death of Laxmi, a 47-year-old female elephant whose ordeal ended last June with a heart attack after an inordinate and uninterrupted workload. Once dead, villagers then cut up her body in pieces for consumption. The elephant was used to discharge logs illegally cut from the neighboring jungle. The elephant's executioner, Pu Khualhina, is a timber trader who had rented the elephant to Mastufa Ahmed Laskar, her so-called owner in Assam State. In fact, Laxmi's ownership certificate had expired in 2014 and no authorization had been issued to transport her from Assam to Mizoram. The forestry departments of both states are now in the hot seat.¹¹¹



July 17, 2019

Jalahalli, Bangalore District, Karnataka State, India

Arrest on tip-off of Unnikrishnan and Jayaseelan who were trying to sell 2 tusks of 78 and 83 cm. They say they got them from a certain Vijay based in Erode in Tamil Nadu. The police is looking for him.¹¹²

July 17, 2019

Litami, District de Zunheboto, Nagaland State, India

Another elephant was skinned, cut into pieces and shared for consumption by the inhabitants of a village. This elephant was cut down in the forest. Pictures have been posted on social networks, but the Forest Department has made no official statement. At this stage, it is not known whether he was wild or captive.¹¹³

July 15 to 22, 2019

Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh State, India

From 4 to 40 years old, elephants are good for electric fencing. For the baby elephant, it was at dawn near a back-up farm next to the reserve. For the adult bull elephant, it was at the edge of the Koundinya forest.¹¹⁴



July 24, 2019

Bangalore, Bangalore District, Karnataka State, India

Arrest of Nayak and Nagaraju. Vansatha flees. They were about to haggle over 2 long tusks, 76 cm and 94 cm long.¹¹⁵

August 8, 2019

Desangmukh, Sivasagar District, Assam State, India

Examination by forest rangers of the body of the baby elephant found by villagers last night shows that he died from several injuries. He was part of a herd that lives in the Pani Dihing Bird Sanctuary and leaves it from time to time. The forest ranger's hypothesis is that he moved away from the adults and had a fatal encounter with a group of poachers who had come to trap birds in the sanctuary.¹¹⁶

September 2, 2019

Bangalore, Urban Bangalore District, Karnataka State, India

P. Prabhakaran, Karanakaran, Shakthivel, N. Krishnamurthy, and M. Gopi had arrived by train from the Tamil Nadu province. They had with them 4 sections of tusks in a big plastic bag that they wanted to sell to their contacts in the city. The police surrounded them near the movie theater, Govardhan Talkies, and placed them into custody. The suppliers Muni Raju, Annamalaj, and Guru are wanted in Tamil Nadu.¹¹⁷

September 7, 2019

Perinthalmanna, Malappuram District, Kerala State, India

Stopped in a clothing store in possession of 2 tusks, 78 and 92 cm in length for a weight of 10 kg, Nidhin Shah, Shanu, Sumesh and Mohammed Sahil say they extracted them from a corpse found on a private land. An accomplice, Rishan, is wanted.¹¹⁸

September 10, 2019

Jhandi Chowk Purvi, Pauri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand State, India

It sounds like a provocation and the forest rangers call it a “revenge killing”. A 20-year-old male elephant was electrocuted less than 100 m from the Bijnor Forest Division. Villagers are suspected to be the perpetrators, in retaliation for the extensive damage caused to their crops by elephants. The investigation also extends to Uttar Pradesh, due to the close border between the two states.¹¹⁹



September 16-20, 2019

Kopar Khairane, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

The Anti Narcotics Cell of Navi Mumbai was on the trail of a Nigerian citizen, Uzodima Hope, who was denounced as an amphetamine trafficker by one of his fellow citizens who had been arrested a week previously in possession of 64 g. During the search at of Hope's home, police came across a 30.5 cm long tusk that he had fraudulently brought back from Nigeria. Charged with offences under the Anti-Narcotics Act and the Wildlife Protection Act, the 2 men were remanded in custody.¹²⁰

GANG

September 18, 2019

Belthangady, Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka State, India

Seizure of 51.73 kg worth 12.7 million rupees (180,000 US\$ or 3480 US\$/kg) thanks to information provided by G. Veeresh, an honorary wildlife warden (see “On the Trail” no.21 p. 46). Three arrests, Abraham, Suresh Babu and Ramesh. Anwar is a fugitive. The tusks were notably purchased from Kerala, among other places. They were also responsible for poaching an elephant near the border of Kerala.¹²¹



September 18, 2019

Masinagudi, Nilgiris District, Karnataka State, India

Destruction by incineration of 24 elephant tusks and deer antlers seized from traffickers or found on dead animals in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.¹²²

September 19, 2019

Kabbal Reserve Forest, Ramanagara District, Karnataka State, India

Negligence, laziness, corruption? Forest rangers and a veterinarian are implicated after the seizure of 2 large tusks in Mysore by agents of the Forest Mobile Squad. The 5 traffickers who have just been arrested say they cut them up this summer on a dead elephant in the Kabbal reserve forest. At the time, the autopsy report carried out in mid-July stated that the victim was a female elephant. Everyone knows that female elephants in Asia do not have tusks. After the autopsy, the corpse was cremated on site. It would not be the first time that the death of a bull was attributed by the services to the death of a female. It saves a poaching investigation when the tusks are taken away and improves the statistics.¹²³

September 19, 2019

Ghatkopar, Mumbai Suburbs District, Maharashtra State, India

Seizure of 2.5 kg of raw ivory worth 250,000 rupees or 3,632 US\$ (1,453 US\$/kg). Two arrests, Sachin Paswan and Saroj Paswan, aged 26 and 24.¹²⁴

GANG

September 20, 2019

Mettupalayam, Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Babu Jose is not finished with justice. Denounced by 2 poachers as the “brains” of a gang and the supplier of the weapons used in 2011 to kill a bull elephant near Sirumugai and 3 others around Mettupalayam, he was released on bail in the Sirumugai case and has since disappeared. In the Mettupalayam case, bail was denied.



Appearing in court to answer for poaching in Sirumugai, the forest officers grabbed him during a recess while he went out for tea. He was taken to Coimbatore Central Prison to await his new trial.¹²⁵

September 21, 2019

Pune, Pune District, Maharashtra State, India

Bhima Mudawat alias Chauhan was expected by the crime branch in the Swargate district. He was carrying in his bag 4 carved tusks, perhaps antiques ones. In any case, he intended to sell them as such. He confessed to possessing 3 others, which were later seized along with 3 teeth of an unidentified wild animal. He allegedly obtained the tusks from a state in southern India. The value of the tusks is estimated at 8 million rupees (111,640 US\$). He was released on bail pending trial.¹²⁶

INDONESIA

July 9, 2019

Tunon Taka Port, Nunukan Regency, North Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Arrest of DP, 54 years old, in possession of 10 tusks while coming off a car-ferry from Tawau, in the state of Sabah in Malaysia. DP claims to have been an agricultural worker on a plantation near Lahad Datu in Sabah for over 30 years, and says that the tusks were meant to be a dowry for a family wedding (see "On the Trail" n° 16 p. 85). He allegedly purchased them for the equivalent of 2270 US\$. Christina Liew, Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Environment in the state of Sabah expressed her regret for the fact that 5 male elephants had been poached. "This is indeed bad news to our ongoing conservation of elephants in Sabah. We applaud the efficiency of the Indonesian Customs officials in detecting the illegal consignment, we hope that the perpetrator will be dealt with according to the law. It is also our desire to see that their Malaysian counterpart at our exit point demonstrate the same efficiency as the Indonesian officials to ensure that there will be no recurrence of such smuggling in the future." Ms Liew, who is also Vice-Prime Minister of the state of Sabah, is too concerned by the fact that foreign workers are engaged in activities that are incompatible with the wildlife protection policy. In her opinion, it is the responsibility of employers to make sure that their employees are not involved in illegal trafficking. Liew concluded her diatribe by encouraging plantation operators to cooperate with her services not only to protect their crops, but first and foremost, to protect the elephants nearby from poaching.¹²⁷

July 26, 2019

Bandar Lampung, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Arrests of Candra, Pratama and Suadi. They were about to sell 2 tusks, 47 and 50 cm long. Bandar Lampung City has a fatal specialty for elephants. Cigarette smokers made of *Sumatranus* elephant ivory (*Elephas maximus sumatranus*) made by craftsmen who pass on the know-how from generation to generation would be superior in quality to the competition that uses ivory from Africa or continental Asia. The trade is still flourishing and is mainly conducted over the Internet. A 25 cm long cigarette smoker sells for 1,700 US\$, a 20 cm long one for 1,500 US\$, the basic 10 cm model for 700 US\$.¹²⁸

JAPAN

August 28, 2019

Japan

Yahoo Japan Corporation announced its intention to ban raw and worked ivory elephant from its online sales platforms (see "Off the Trail" no.18 p. 102, n°20 p. 107). A Traffic study shows that from mid-June to mid-July of 2018, Yahoo Japan proposed to sell 4,144 ivory items including 35 tusks with a total value of 340,000 US\$.¹²⁹

MALAYSIA

September 25 and October 2, 2019

Tawau, State of Sabah, Malaysia

An elephant calf tied to a tree, lying in the Sungai Udin river, shot with 40 bullets to the back and right side, ready to be eaten by crocodiles – that was the unusual spectacle that the fishermen were met with.

The male elephant calf's tusks were found after the interrogation of 2 plantation guards and their 3 accomplices, including one undocumented immigrant. They were acting according to the two-sided scenario typical in the poaching world: I shoot or electrocute on the pretext of protecting a private estate or plantation / I steal the tusks, or the skin, or whatever I might be able to sell.

Jaifol Liun, the plantation operator, violated the wildlife protection law of 1997 by not handing over to the authorities the 2 tusks taken from the cadaver. He is suspected of having demanded that his security guards and employees kill the elephant calf who was considered aggressive. He was released on bail for 7000 ringgits, or nearly 1700 US\$. His passport was confiscated. He is forbidden to communicate with the witnesses or the participants who set the trap, and is required to report to the Tawau wildlife protection services once every 15 days. The killers, Parancoi Nordin, Abdullah Simin and Martin Alok are already in prison for illegal possession of weapons and for violating immigration legislation. A primitive compressed air rifle and a homemade firearm, known locally as a *bakakuk*, were seized from their places along with ammunition. The suspects justify the shooting frequency – 70 impacts were identified – by the fact that most of the bullets did not penetrate into the elephant's flesh. A hole as big as a cannonball on the elephant's right side is raising other questions.¹³⁰

MYANMAR

September 10, 2019

Myinttayar Forest Reserve, Patheingyi District, Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar

Discovery of the half skinned body of a female around 23 years old shot down 2 days previously. She is the fifth poached elephant this year in Ayeyarwady, also adding 3 others killed in the Yangon region. Skin bits trafficking is now the main reason of poaching in the country. The patches are openly sold in the special economic zones as Mine Lar close to the Chinese border and Tachileik, close to the Thailand's border.¹³¹

Skinned elephants in Myanmar, see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 103, n°16 p. 86, n°18 p. 104, n°19 p. 98, n°20 p. 107, n°21 p. 98-99.

SINGAPORE

August 12, 2019

Singapore

The government has announced that starting on September 1, 2021, offering for sale or selling raw or carved elephant ivory by any channel will be illegal. Using ivory for teaching purposes or in religious ceremonies will remain authorized, as will be the sale of musical instruments or other personal items, such as bird cages, containing ivory. Any violation will be liable for a fine equivalent to 10,000 S\$, or 7300 US\$ and/or 12 months in prison. Preliminary public consultation was carried out and 99% of responses were favorable to closing the domestic ivory market.¹³³

SRI LANKA

September 24, 2019

Kegalle, Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka

The Temple of the Tooth was attacked from all sides for having enlisted in Buddhist processions a gaunt female elephant born in 1949. She was forced to parade through the night in early August with heavy and constricting costumes and paraphernalia on her back, preventing the thousands of spectators from realizing that Tikini was more than wasted. The "old lady" died on 24 September after more than 65 years of domesticity and enslavement.¹³⁴



September 27 and 28, 2019

Habarana, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

Poisoned death of 7 elephants aged between 4 to 25 years old including at least 5 females, one of which was pregnant. Farmers who claim to be harassed by the incursions of the wild beasts undoubtedly fomented the serial killing. The bodies were discovered in the Sigiriya forest, an area protected on paper from human activities and classified as a UNESCO-protected heritage site by the presence of the fifth-century rock fortress. Sigiriya is 175 km north of Colombo.¹³⁵



THAILAND

July 6, 2019

Bo Ngo sub-district, Ra-ngae District, Narathiwat Province, Thailand

Poaching near a rubber tree plantation of a male elephant around 20 years old. The tusks were torn off. The leader of the village reported discovery of the body.¹³⁶

VIET NAM

July 2019

Hai Phong, Viet Nam

Moi Truong ("The Environment") newspapers reveal that in the prestigious Cau Dat Street, jewelers specializing in gold and gemstone jewelry also sell ivory jewelry. A bracelet sells for around 300 US\$. The port of Hai Phong is a stronghold for the smuggling of raw ivory from Africa (see "Of the Trail" n°3 p. 66, n°5 p.100, n°6 p. 93, n°7 p. 91, n°11 p. 85, n°23 p. 70).¹³⁷

GERMANY

August 12, 2019

Frankfurt am Main International Airport, Hesse Land, Germany

Nela, an ivory specialist in the canine brigade, spotted 2 necklaces and a pair of earrings wrapped in cloth in a suitcase. The passenger was from Nigeria.¹³⁸

SPAIN

CELACANTO AND THUNDERBALL OPERATIONS

June-July 2019

Spain

Seizure of 543 worked ivories including carved tusks with a total estimated value and a range of 400,000 €. For the first time in Spain, carbon 14 was used to determine the dating of the ivory as accurately as possible.¹³⁹

FRANCE

September 7 and 8, 2019

The Andelys, Eure Department, France

Seized by the ONCFS at the 54th and aptly named "everything mess" of 17 worked ivories including an umbrella pommel and 4 big cat teeth in the bazaar of 7 exhibitors.¹⁴⁰



ITALY

The beginning of July 2019

Syracuse, Ortygia Island, Sicily Region, Italy

Seizure in the historical center of the city of 37 worked ivories representing animals or floral symbols. The sellers were unable to produce valid documents proving that the items had been made before 1947.¹⁴¹

August 25, 2019

Sarzana, Province of La Spezia, Liguria Region, Italy

Seizure among antique dealers of several undated ivory objects.¹⁴²

NETHERLANDS

September 21, 2019

The Netherlands

According to the Zambian newspaper *News Diggers!* an North Korean diplomat named Hyon Chol Kim was caught transporting raw ivory from South Africa. The event is believed to have taken place sometime this year. The Dutch customs authorities were asked by Robin des Bois to comment on this information, but said they were not legally entitled to do so.¹⁴³

North Korea and diplomats, see "Off the Trail" n°9 p. 60, n°11 p. 60, n°16 p. 72.

PORTUGAL

September 20, 2019

Setúbal, Setúbal District, Portugal

Crushing and irretrievable destruction in a cement factory of 1500 kg of raw ivory seized by the police 2 years ago as part of a drug trafficking investigation.¹⁴⁴



UNITED KINGDOM

August 13, 2019

London, England, United Kingdom

Guy Buckle, 62 years old, and Sik Hung Or, 72 years old, were sentenced to 28 months in prison for having illegally exported 136 ivory fans to continental China, Hong Kong and the United States between January 2014 and November 2017. On November 8, 2017, 2 packages destined for China and each containing a fan were intercepted by the UK Border Force at Heathrow. Then, in March 2018, a search at the home of the 2 traffickers led to the seizure of 291 fans and 4 tusks or tusk sections. The 136 fans, sold on eBay before the smuggling operation was unveiled, had brought the 2 traffickers 145,259 £, or 176,800 US\$, in other words 1,300 US\$ per fan. The traffickers dealt mostly in fans made entirely of ivory, dating from the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, made of ivory lace for the leaves and of carved ivory for the structure. Openwork ivory hand fans were fashionable in the United Kingdom and all of Europe. They were imported from China, especially from Canton, or from India. It is possible that craftsmen from Asia manufactured these prestigious fashion accessories on British soil.¹⁴⁵



Mammoths

EUROPE

RUSSIA

August 22, 2019

Moscow-Domodedovo International Airport, Moscow Oblast, Russia

A 10,000-year-old woolly mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*) tusk belonging to the national cultural heritage of which the smuggling is liable to 7 years and a fine of 1 million roubles, or nearly 16,000 US\$, was seized on a flight to Dubai.¹



Other Mammals

AFRICA

KENYA

**July 2019
Kenya**

For 3 months his left hind leg had been caught in a cable. This is how the frail legs of giraffes (genus *Giraffa*) are cut off when they are caught in the traps of bushmeat eaters. Ongoing intervention by veterinarians.¹



UGANDA

**July 2019
Moroto District, Northern Region, Uganda**

Foot-and-mouth disease harms dik-diks (genus *Madoqua*). The graceful little antelopes have unfortunately been a delight for the inhabitants and farmers of the district (3,538 km²) since the livestock has been quarantined and banned from marketing by order of the Ministry of Agriculture. "We cannot sell or slaughter our animals." "To eat, we rely on bush meat," says an inhabitant of Pupu, a stronghold of dik-dik traffic where 17 inhabitants were briefly held in police custody. Despite the quarantine, clandestine cattle meat markets are open in the bush and other discreet places. Foot and mouth disease is spreading.²

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

End of July 2019

The Democratic Republic of Congo

The army of the Democratic Republic of Congo has among its missions the fight against poaching and the protection of wildlife except when it's for eating. This is the third hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) killed by the army for the benefit of the military canteen.³



ZAMBIA

June 2019

Mpika, Muchinga Province, Zambia

Sentencing of Alick Kunda Mwape to 5 years imprisonment with hard labor for the possession of 46 kg of black lechwe meat (*Kobus leche*, Appendix II).⁴



ZIMBABWE

August 9, 2019

Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

A pack of African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) died in a trap field. A puppy at one year old died, 2 others managed to run away, as did the dominant female but all 3 still had steel ropes wrapped around their necks. They were removed thanks to the veterinarian requested by the NGO Painted Dog Conservation. The African wild dogs travel great distances day after day and they are, more than other species exposed to the risk of traps.⁵



September 3 and 28, 2019

Zimbabwe

Dete, Matabeleland Northern Province

- Sentencing of Mpilo Mhlanga, trap layer and responsible for the death of 3 wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*), to 4 months in prison suspended under the condition that he will not commit a similar offence for 5 years. The NGO Painted Dog Conservation is outraged by the leniency of this sentence.⁶
- Two other African wild dogs were taken by traps. One of them, the paw before it was cut off, died.⁷



AMERICA

BRAZIL

September 25, 2019

Careiro, Amazonas State, Brasil

Seizure 30 km downstream of Manaus of 2 pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) dead aboard the *Comandante Trindade*.⁸

September 26, 2019

Bonito, Mato Grosso do Sul State, Brasil

Conviction of a 68-year-old hunter to a fine of 1,000 reais (250 US\$) for the capture and subsequent killing of 2 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II). Fine of 1,000 reais for a fellow in cruelty who took a video of the skinning and posted it on social networks.⁹



CANADA

July 22 or 23, 2019

Stranraer, Saskatchewan Province, Canada

The pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I for populations in Mexico) was pursued at great speed by an all-terrain vehicle in a vast lentil field. At the end of the chase starting from Highway 31, the animal was fatally struck and his horns were cut. These horns are sold at an expensive rate at the market.



The pronghorn lives in North America, from the North of Mexico up to the southern Canadian provinces. Their horns measure on average about 10 cm for females whereas for male pronghorns, they can reach up to about 30 cm.¹⁰

ECUADOR

End of September 2019

Cañar Province, Ecuador

Rescue of 5 pacas cooped up in a slum (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) thanks to the alert from a citizen. They were transferred to a zoo in Cuenca for examination.¹¹

ASIA

CHINA

July 24, 2019

Huanggang Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Bordered with Hong Kong.

Seizure in a coach inside the belongings of a passenger of 2 horns of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) weighing 139 g in total.¹²



August 9, 2019

Dongxing Border Post, Guangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Seizure of 3 argali skulls (*Ovis ammon*, Appendix I or II). The argali is also known as the Asian bighorn sheep.¹³



INDIA

July 12, 2019

Vaijapur, Aurangabad District, Maharashtra State, India

Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III) barbecue! Seizure of the carcass, a butcher's knife and bottles of liquor. Two arrests, 3 escapes.¹⁴

July 28, 2019

Subrahmanya, Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka State, India

Arrests by forest rangers of Honnapa K. and Ramesh P.K., for those that came to poach 3 Indian giant squirrels (*Ratufa indica*, Appendix II) in the forest reserve bordering the town. Seizure of a double barrel rifle and ammunition. Two fellows are on the run.¹⁵



August 6, 2019

**Vizhuthiyur, Karaikal District,
Union Territory of Puducherry,
India**



Seizure of 22 fruit bats (*Pteropus spp.*, Appendix I or II) poached by the members of the Narikuraya tribe. They were returning back from the forest with the bats in their satchels on their mopeds. The local sale of fruit bat meat in restaurants and liquor stores have been spotted for some months. A spokesperson for sanitary services publically denies the rumors that eating fruit bat meat would increase testosterone levels, while reminding that fruit bats are able to carry the Nipah virus and thus contribute to the spreading of one acute respiratory syndrome or, at worst, terminal encephalitis. The Nipah virus was identified in 1998 in Kampung Sungai Nipah, Malaysia. In 2004, an epidemic was recorded in Bangladesh and was attributed to the contamination of date palms by fruit bats.¹⁶

August 18, 2019

Yoor, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

Seizure of a common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III) poached in the Sanja Gandhi national park. There are 2 to 300 there alive. A common palm civet sells on the black market for 5000 rupees or 72 US\$ to be converted into a pet or a festive meat.¹⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS / GANG / REPEATED OFFENSE

**August 19 and September 6,
2019**

**Balur and Sidappur, Uttara
Kannada District, Karnataka
State, India**



Investigators didn't believe for a long time the story told by 21-year-old Harris Khan. He was pretending that the death of his father, Abdul Jabbar, 62 years old, was due to a boar attack that had threw him to the ground, causing a fractured skull. But the forest rangers had found not far away the carcass of one gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) killed by three gunshots. It soon became apparent that the duo had been poaching him that had strayed away from his herd. As the father approached to slit the animal's throat with a knife, the gaur, in a desperate gesture, had gored him in the thigh and thrown him into the air. The man had smashed his skull on the way down. The case does not stop there.

Investigations have uncovered a whole network of poached meat sales leading to the coastal town of Bhatkal, about 100 kilometres away. Seven people were arrested, including the leader, Lakshinarayan Hedge, who revealed several caches where the bones and horns of several gaur were recovered. The meat by kilo was sold for 600 rupees (8.70 US\$). An adult gaur can fetch nearly 500,000 rupees (7,265 US\$). Five other people are still wanted.¹⁸

September 19, 2019

Jaleswarpada, Puri District, Odisha State, India

A honey badger (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III) entered this morning in a village for the search of food. He was stoned and beaten to death with sticks by locals after. He would have bitten 2 of them. His body was then exposed on the main street. Agents of the Forestry Department have come to collect him but it is not clear whether judiciary action will be undertaken against those responsible for his death. Formerly abundant in Odisha, the species is now rare.¹⁹



September 23, 2019

**Bejai, Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka
State, India**

Seizure of 2 skins and a pair of Blackbuck horns (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III). Four arrests.²⁰

IRAN

September 15, 2019

**Lar National Park, Mazandaran Province and
Teheran Province, Iran**

Poaching and butchering of 2 wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Three arrests. Administrative fines equal to 4,761 US\$. Upcoming trials.²¹

PAKISTAN

September 18, 2019

Kirthar National Park, Sind Province, Pakistan

Poaching of 4 or 5 Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III). The justice ordered that the after seizure meat was given to crocodiles in a zoo. Considering it was too spoiled, the park rangers buried it underground.²²

PHILIPPINES

July 12, 2019

**Manille Port, Metro Manila Province, National
Capital Region, Philippines**

Seizure of a deer head (*Cervidae* family) in a package presumed to contain "domestic goods" and "personal items".²³

THAILAND

August 25, 2019

Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Rescue of 2 captive small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II) in pans after being bought on a whim via Facebook for the modest sum of 60 US\$ each. The owners were quickly weary of their yells and bites. They are now in one of the WFFT basins with trees, tunnels, currents. This is an intermediate stage before being transferred to a river if everything is running well.²⁴



facebook

VIET NAM

August 31, 2019

Dak Nong Province, Viet nam

Seized in a grocery store of 4 dead civets (Viverridae family). Interpellation of a woman who traded the meat via the Internet.²⁵

September 25, 2019

Dam Doi District, Ca Mau, Ca Mau Province, Viet Nam

He had owned a small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II) for almost 2 years, which he said had been "brought back" by his dog when she was a baby. As a subadult, she was transferred to the Saigon Zoo.²⁶

facebook

EUROPE

SPAIN

End of September 2019

Xixona, Valencian Community, Spain

Discovery by forestry officers in a private hunting reserve of were 3 large cages. The 2 largest - 2.1 m side by 3.25 m high and 4 m side by 3.25 m high are for baiting and capturing deer. Next to each cage, spears that were used to silently kill the animals have been seized. The antlers and trophies of large deer are being trafficked nationally and internationally. Already in 2011, a similar discovery was made in the same forests. At the bottom of a ravine, painted green, a trap cage was used to catch mouflons.²⁷



© Levante-Emv

FRANCE

End of August 2019

Paris, France

Seizure by inspectors from the police prefect of frozen antelope meat in a grocery store in the 18th arrondissement north of Paris. It was immediately made unfit for consumption through spraying with bleach.

Bushmeat in Paris, see "On the Trail" no.1 p.40, no.4 p.96.²⁸



Multi-Species

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 5, 2019

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure of skin or skin fragments of lions, tigers, snakes and crocodiles and a firearm on the Faraday market, the market of muthi, superstition, charlatanism and animal curiosities.¹



August 16, 2019

Between Graskop and Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Seizure at the daybreak in an all-terrain vehicle of 17 wild animal carcasses : one African Civet (*Civettictis civetta*, Appendix III in Botswana), 11 common duikers (*Sylvicapra grimmia*), 4 harnessed bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) and 1 Cape bushbuck (*Tragelaphus sylvaticus*). In addition, seizure of a firearm, 144 bullets and a searchlight.²

From September 25 - 30, 2019

Victoria West, Northern Cape Province, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Coordinated police action in the 3 provinces. Roadblocks and inspection of goods on board. 54 arrests and seizure of 200 kg of dagga, 180 tablets of mandrax, 80 doses of crystal meth, several kilos of khat, wild animal carcasses– fines of 1,000 rand (65 US\$) and pending court appearances – 1 dead Cape bushbuck (*Tragelaphus sylvaticus*) – fine of 1,000 rand and pending court appearance - and 18 abalones, 55 white mussels (*Donax serra*), 18 Cape Hope squid tails (*Loligo reynaudii*), 7 spotted grunters (*Pomadasys commersonnii*) and other "seafood" with an estimated global value of 70,000 rand (4,587 US\$) – release on bail of 20,000 rand (1,310 US\$).³

BENIN

July 29 and September 12, 2019
Azovè and Aplahoué Kouffo Department, Benin

- Seizure of 40 skins, of which 17 are of marshbuck or sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekii*), in the trafficker's bag.

- Sentencing to 24-months in prison and a fine equal to 845 US\$.⁴



COTE D'IVOIRE

July 2019

Côte d'Ivoire

Sentencing to 6-months in prison of an imam who also is trafficking in wildlife products including leopard, lion, and crocodile skins and elephant and hippopotamus parts (see "On the Trail" n° 23 p.143).⁵



August 14, 2019

Bouna, District of Zanzan, Côte d'Ivoire

Sentencing of Hien Ledjou to 2 years in prison and one million CFA francs, i.e. 1,690 US\$, for poaching in the Comoé national park. Two fellows in gold digging have also been questioned by the commandos of the OIPR (Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves).⁶



MALAWI

August 16 – September 9, 2019
Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

- Arrest of Yun Hua Lin. He had been on the run since the month of May when 9 of his accomplices and compatriots, including his wife, were arrested and put in custody (see "On the Trail" n° 25 p. 104). Lin is suspected of being the coordinator of a gang of Chinese, Tanzanian and Zambian thugs, all of whom have joined forces to regroup and smuggle pangolin scales, worked ivories, slices of rhinoceros horn and wood. In 2014, Lin was arrested at Lilongwe International Airport before to be quickly released. He was flying to China with worked ivories in his luggage.

- Jimmy Mkwelezalemba and Julius Sanudia, Lin's accomplices, were sentenced to 3 years in prison.⁷



Jimmy and Lin

NAMIBIA

July 6, 2019

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Fines of 40,000 N\$ including 2,380 US\$ for Robert Sinkolela and Abel Siyauya. They were skinning a kudu (genus *Tragelaphus*) and a blue wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*) when the police stumbled upon them.⁸



REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

July 25, 2019

Impfondo, Likouala Department, Republic of the Congo. Border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sentencing of Onguele Merlin Thibault, Mobula Genèse, Antounga Mani Pie and Djamel Adam to 18 months in prison, a fine equal to 850 US\$ and to pay the Congolese State the same amount in damages. Sentencing of Engoko Matoubou Don and Bolia Mbemba Bovic to a fine equal to 850 US\$ and to pay the equivalent of 170 US\$ to the Congolese State. All of them, as canvassers, sellers, transporters and liaison agents with poachers, were involved in the simultaneous trafficking of pangolin scales, raw ivory and panther skins (see "On the Trail" n° 24 p.50).⁹



SENEGAL

July 25, 2019

Kolda Region, Senegal

Seizure of 52 skins including one lion, one leopard and 26 crocodile (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II). Three arrests. The network crosses borders. It is believed to be present in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry and the Gambia. Joint operation by the Kolda police station, the Diaobé Regional Narcotics Brigade, the Directorate of National Parks and the NGO Eagle Senegal.¹⁰

TANZANIA

August 10, 2019

Near Lake Natron, Arusha Region, Tanzania

The controversy between the government and Green Mile Safari persists. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism accuses the United Arab Emirates-based company of illegally exploiting its hunting concession around Lake Natron. Hunting permits for fully protected species are granted to Green Mile Safari clients, minors are employed for maintenance and domestic tasks and royalties to communities bordering the reserve have not been paid for 2 years. The debt amounts to the equivalent of 144,000 US\$.

As a result, the hunting licences granted to Green Mile Safari by the State are once again suspended. Awadh Abdallah, director of Green Mile Safari, replied that all of these allegations are slanderous. Green Mile Safari's hunting license for a concession within the Selous Reserve had already been revoked in 2014 (see "On the Trail" n° 6 p. 102, n° 13 p. 103).¹¹

ZAMBIA

June 2019

Mpika, Muchinga Province, Zambia

Sentencing of Elias Sichalwe to 5 years in prison with hard labor for the detention of 23 kg of zebra meat (*Equus zebra*) and 15 kg of waterbuck meat (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*).¹²



ZIMBABWE

July 2019

Guruve, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Fortunate Jombo. He had, at his home, serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) and civet (*Viverridae* family) skins and 20 kg of zebra meat (genus *Equus*).¹³

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

September 13, 2019

La Carolina, San Luis Province, Argentina

Seizure from the trunk of a car of weapons, 2 gray brockets (*Mazama gouazoubira*) and a dead armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family). Not a single hunting license. Three poachers caught red-handed.¹⁴



BOLIVIA

End of August 2019

Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia

Rescues by the POFOMA (Policia Forestal y Preservacion del Medio Ambiente) of a hairy armadillo (*Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II) wandering on the road that apparently escaped a private home and a blue-and-gold Macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) cooped up in a courtyard.¹⁵

BRAZIL

Beginning of July 2019

Brazil

The bill presented to the Chamber of Deputies by Juninho do Pneu of the Democratic Party provides for sentences of 2 to 4 years in prison for all those who poach, capture and sell wild animals. The bill also targets all those who engage in "mascotism", i.e. importing wild animals taken from the wild into their homes. Mr. do Pneu based his draft law on a United Nations estimate that Brazil is responsible for 15% of the world's trafficking in endangered species and on converging statistics saying that 90% of trafficked animals die before reaching their destination. To be continued.¹⁶

July 12, 2019

Rosana, State of São Paulo, Brazil

At the river's edge, there were guts and other anatomical pieces of a capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), metal traps and nets to capture them. In the suspect's freezer, there were 2 nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*). The meat of the capybaras had already been "given to friends", according to the poacher.¹⁷



End of July 2019

State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Joint operation of the Secretary of State for the Environment, the NGO Aliança da Terra and the military police against illegal fishing in Rio das Mortes, Rio Araguaia and Rio Xingu, in 13 municipalities within the Xingu National Park and other protected areas. Seizure of 12 turtles, 110 kg of fish, including arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), nets, harpoons and buoys. The camps of fish poachers are also said to be responsible for forest fires.¹⁸

August 9, 2019

Pedro Canário, State of Espírito Santo, Brazil

Seizure by the 3rd BPMA company (Batalhão de Polícia Militar Ambiental) of 26 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and 11 tatou tails (*Dasypodidae* family) from a couple in which the man had been poaching for a long time and the woman selling rotten meat.¹⁹



August 22, 2019

Cuiabá, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Seizure of 3 rifles, 3 revolvers, 3 chargers, a lead bag, 200 cartridges, an armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family) and the meat of a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) in a small Fiat.²⁰



August 27, 2019

North of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of Pampas deer meat (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*, Appendix I), paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family) and capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and 50 hunting weapons from alleged wild boar hunters who are taking advantage of the legal obligation to regulate this species which has been declared invasive to poach other species and put the meat local sale.²¹

August 30, 2019

Coari, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure in the city-center market of 133 kg and 20 kg of white-lipped peccary meat (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) and tapir (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II), 75 eggs and 6 yellow-headed sideneck (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 3 kg of arapaima meat (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 5 bare-faced curassow (*Crax fasciolata*). Three questionings.²²

September 2, 2019

Port of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure on board the *Vermelha* coming from Urucará, 260 km upstream from Manaus, of 37 kg of fresh arapaima fillets (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), a kilo of salted fillets, 2 live yellow-headed Sideneck (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) packaged in clothing inside a duffel bag and half an armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family).²³

September 17 - 30, 2019

Extrativista Baixo Juruá Reserve, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Yet again! (see "On the Trail" n° 15 p. 8). Inspection by the agents of the Chico Mendes Institute and the Military Police of docks and riverbanks at this critical period when the waters are at their lowest and poaching is at its highest. Seizure of 1 ton of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) more locally known as pirarucu, 36 turtles (*Podocnemis* spp., Appendix II) and 221 eggs.²⁴



September 27, 2019

Macapá, State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizure of wild meat: 40 kg of armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family), 30 kg of paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 8 kg of capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). After the sanitary inspection, it was decided to donate the poor meat to the zoo.²⁵

COLOMBIA

Mid-July 2019

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of a piece of crocodile tail (*Crocodylidae* family, Appendix I or II), coral, a seahorse (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), a sea lion tooth, 2 crocodile skin hats and 5 kangaroo fur hats in a shed.²⁶



July 20, 2019

Bogotá, Colombia

Administrative closure of a pet store where turtles of the species *Trachemys callirostris* and hamsters shared 30 cm high and 60 cm wide plastic boxes, lacking ventilation and water. They were, all of them, fed and cared for with out of date food and medicine.²⁷

Beginning of August 2019

Herveo, Department of Tolima, Colombia

Spotting of 3 poachers and 5 dogs on forest trails. Seizure of an armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family) and an agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras) in the hunting bags. Report and release.²⁸

End of August 2019

Barranquilla, Department of Atlántico, Colombia

Seizure in the markets of 3 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), 3 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 10 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and 84 birds by the environment police and zoologists from Barranquilla Verde who are considering releasing them where they were trapped.²⁹

August 30, 2019

Guacarí, El Cerrito et Buga, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Seizure in a restaurant and in private homes of 3 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), an emerald toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) and its chick, a porcupine, a Colombian slider (*Trachemys callirostris*) and an opossum (*Didelphidae* family). All of them were entrusted to the wild fauna shelter in Palmira except the opossum, which still possesses its survival reflexes and autonomy. It was immediately released into a forest.³⁰



Mid-September 2019

Bogotá, Colombia

The Policía Ambiental and the Secretaría de Ambiente of Bogotá raid a shopping mall after several months of investigation. Animal parts were sold in several spots : antlers and deer legs, heads of toucans (*Ramphastidae* family), tiger teeth (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), about 100 rattlesnake' cascabels (genus *Crotalus*), tapir legs (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II), puma paws (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), armadillo tails (*Dasypodidae* family) and skins of felines and other mammals. Some were to be used as decorative objects, but most were intended for traditional medicine or even witchcraft.³¹



ECUADOR

August 7, 2019

Napo Province, Ecuador

Seizure during traffic controls on the roads Chontapunta-Tena and Narupa-Coca of 68.5 kg white-lipped Peccary meat (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) and paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras). Seven reports.³²

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 24, 2019

Tampa, State of Florida, United States of America

Indictment of Novita Indah, 48 years old, and Larry Malugin, 51 years old, residents of Port Richey, for organized traffic of protected wildlife. In January 2017, agents from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, acting on a search warrant from the prosecutor, found and seized in their home: hundreds of bags made of skins from reticulated pythons (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), South Indonesian spitting cobras (*Naja sputatrix*, Appendix II) and monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), as well as the skull of a babirusa (*Babirusa babirusa*, Appendix I). In addition, the duo sold bones and stuffed trophies such as a leopard's head, an owl, a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) and langurs. They began trafficking back in 2011 when, from Indonesia, they began selling wildlife articles on eBay and shipping them around the world in packages with false declarations. Before they settled in Florida in 2013, they had lived temporarily in Puerto Rico. Between 2011 and 2017, they made no fewer than 4596 sales on Internet, bringing in overall revenues of at least 211,000 US\$. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the American customs department had intercepted a few of their packages recently, but the 2 wildlife wheeler-dealers continued to run their operation as if they had every right to do so. At the time of their arrest, there were 369 wildlife parts on their racks.³³



Babyrousa babyrussa

End of August 2019

Washington-Dulles International Airport, District of Columbia, United States of America

Seizure of a civet skin (*Viverridae* family), a genet skin (genus *Genetta*), a skin and 2 trophy-mounted heads of harnessed bushback (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) and 10 kg giant African land snails (*Achatinidae* family), all bound for Philadelphia, from Sierra Leone, and written to be as "African drums and clothes".³⁴



FRANCE - GUYANE

September 8, 2019

Cayenne, Department of Guyana, France

Seizure on board a pirogue on the Approuague River by the environment police of 399 yellow-headed Sideneck eggs (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 4 great Curassows (*Crax rubra*, Appendix III in Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica), 33 iguana eggs, 2 caimans (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 1 kinkajou (*Potos flavus*, Appendix III in Honduras). Turtle and iguana eggs were placed under artificial incubation. Poached by gold-diggers and threatened by pollution, yellow-headed Sidenecks are endangered. Sentencing of 3 poachers to 3 months in prison, with an application that can be modified, a 5000 € suspended fine and a 100 € fine without remission. The guns, the canoe and its motor have been confiscated.³⁵



HONDURAS

OPERATION INDEPENDENCE

September 11, 2019

Puerto Cortés, Department of Cortés, Honduras

Arrest of 3 men between the ages of 36 and 46. Two of them are involved in marijuana trafficking. At the home of the 3rd, Rusbell Elvir Valladares, an armadillo (*Dasypodidae* family) and 2 live paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III) were seized along with the skins of black iguana (*Ctenosaura similis*) and boa (*Boidae*, Appendix I or II). Two species of boa are endemic to Honduras : the annulated tree boa (*Corallus annulatus*, Appendix II) and the boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II). A black-handed spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II) was also found crucified on a wooden plank.³⁶

MEXICO

July 12, 2019

Actopan, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

Seizure in the Friday Market of 1 head, 2 legs and 20 antlers of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala), 3 maxillaries of collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), 2 tails and skin of a nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) and a skin of an American gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*). The vendors fled to the approach of Profepa agents. Similar actions are planned in the Tulancingo and Atotonilco El Grande Markets.³⁷

July 17, 2019

Tuxtla Gutiérrez, State of Chiapas, Mexico

Seizure in a private residence of 7 Guatemalan howlers (*Alouatta pigra*, Appendix I), 8 Hoffman's two-toed sloths (*Choloepus hoffmanni*, Appendix III in Costa Rica), 34 turtles (genus *Kinosternon*) and 3 dead monkeys including 2 white-faced Capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II). The living ones were transferred to the zoo.³⁸

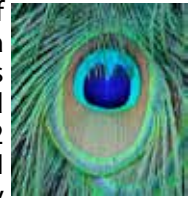


Choloepus hoffmanni

July 2019

State of Chiapas, Mexico

Seizure in the luggage hold of a bus connecting Ocozacoautla to Las Choapas of 2 parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II), 2 wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*), 2 peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 1 spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II), 1 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and one wildcat (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II). Arrest of the driver.³⁹



July 26, 2019

Mexico City, Mexico

It is the wildlife gravediggers' market. At one stall, agents from Profepa seized 114 wild animal parts or articles made from them, including bracelets, hand bags, skins of lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala), aoudads (*Ammotragus lervia*, Appendix II) and Javan file snakes (*Acrochordus javanicus*). Other species, including jaguars (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), crocodiles (*Crocodylus* spp., Appendix I or II), caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II), pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), bay lynxes (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), nilgais (*Buselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), ring-tailed cats (*Bassariscus astutus*), armadillos (genus *Dasypus*), iguanas (*Ctenosaura pectinata*), rattlesnakes (genus *Crotalus*) and chicken snakes (*Spilotes pullatus*) were present in the form of hides, ears, phalanxes, tusks, vertebrae, claws, paws, tongues and even palates.⁴⁰

PARAGUAY

July 27, 2019

Villa Hayes District, Department of Presidente Hayes, Paraguay

Seizure on the side of Transchaco Road of several displays of yacare caiman meat (*Caiman crocodilus yacare*, Appendix II), capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), deer and surubi (genus *Pseudoplatystoma*).⁴¹



PERU

Beginning of July 2019

Juliaca, San Roman Province, Puno Region, Peru

Sad street shows. The red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), with its wings cut off, served as entertainment and a call to begging. The coati (genus *Nasua*) was held on a leash to the point to be strangled. The trainers ran away when the police came nearer and left them on the spot. The 2 animals in a pitiful state, suffering of thirst in particular, were taken to the San Gabán Refuge.⁴²



End of August 2019

Yurimaguas, Alto Amazonas Province, Loreto Department, Peru

Extraction, in a tourist bar, by the NGO Neotropical Primate Conservation acting under the mandate of the public prosecutor and with the assistance of local police of 2 spider monkeys (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) and 1 scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) which were taken to a refuge before a possible release.⁴³

ASIA

CAMBODIA

September 17, 2019

Cardamomes Protected Forrest, Cambodia

Seizure of monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), serow (genus *Capricornis*), porcupine (Hystriidae family) and turtle meat. 175 kg in total. Arrest of a trafficker.⁴⁴



CHINA

July 31, 2019

Dongxing Border Crossing, Guangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Seizure in the trouser pocket of a foreign passenger of an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) bile gladder (220 g) and an ivory bracelet concealed in one of her socks.⁴⁵



GANG

August 13, 2019

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Beijing and Liaoning, Hebei, Shandong, Hubei and Guangdong Provinces, China

Seizure of 308 wildlife products including tiger skins, lion bones, elephant ivories, rhinoceros horns and bear paws worth an estimated 80 million yuan, or more than 11 million US\$. 22 questionings, including 10 Vietnamese subjects. The gang had been running for 4 years, smuggling "their goods" from Viet Nam and sending them by parcel or mail to the Liaoning Province 4,000 km from the Sino-Vietnamese border.⁴⁶



August 15, 2019

Pingxiang, Guangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Seizure in a vehicle registered in Viet Nam of 16 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), 8 dried tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II since November 26, 2019), 16 dried syngnathus (genus *Syngnathus*) and 14 g of deer antlers (Cervidae family).⁴⁷

August 29, 2019

Changsha Huanghua International Airport, Hunan Province, China

Seizure of 84 live termites and 340 g of sea cucumber (class *Holothuroidea*) from a Chinese passenger arriving from South Africa with transit through Nairobi, Kenya. It was all intended to be cooked.⁴⁸

Beginning of September 2019

Haizhou District, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Huge seizure of 10.82 t of dried tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II since November 26, 2019) and dried snakes of the species *Zaocys dumnades*, 128 kg of South Indonesian spitting cobra (*Naja sputatrix*, Appendix II) and 256.8 kg of *Ptyas mucosa*. One dried gecko weighs about 30 g.⁴⁹



September 17, 2019

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong, China

X-rays have unlocked the secret of the smuggler. Four golden mantella frogs (*Mantella aurantiaca*, Appendix II) from Madagascar, 2 California kingsnakes (*Lampropeltis getulus nigrilus*) from North America, 7 kingsnakes (genus *Lampropeltis*) from America, 31 Baron's green racers (*Philodryas baroni*) from South America and 38 fringed leap frogs (*Cruziohyla craspedopus*) also from South America were alive for the greatest number in his luggage.⁵⁰



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

August 21, 2019

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Seizure of 8 Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) and 9 helmeted hornbills (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I). The passports of the traffickers, coming from a Gulf State, were confiscated.⁵¹



INDIA

July 5, 2019

Radaur, Yamunanagar District, State of Haryana, India

There were 9 of them. Only 2 gang members were arrested. Twelve animals were recovered on the spot : 2 Yellow Monitors (*Varanus flavescens*, Appendix I), 1 Common Jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III), 1 dead Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II) and 8 live Monitors (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II).⁵²

July 11, 2019

Raiwala, Dehradun District, State of Uttarakhand, India

India is a great country. On one hand, there is a flourishing rumor about the Eurasian eagle owls, nocturnal birds of prey threatened by extinction. Their remains buried close to houses are supposed to rule out tax inspections. On the other hand, the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which has been requested by national and local NGOs, has handed down judgements that are favorable and without appeal for the protection of the environment and biodiversity. Over time, the NGT strives to ensure that they are enforced. The most recent judgement puts the Indian Army itself in difficulty. The case dates back to 1976 when the government of Uttar Pradesh granted 400 hectares, on the edge of the Raiwala Forest, to set up a maintenance site for railway rolling stock for military use, excluding all other uses. But the staff secretly devoted part of the site to a landfill for obsolete ammunition, surrounding it with an electric fence that killed several wild animals, notably elephants. The NGT expected the army to transfer this dump "in order to restore the functionality of the elephant migration corridor".⁵³



GANG

August 3, 2019

Kota, Kota District, State of Rajasthan, India

It's the end of the run for Kashish alias Barsul Madavi. He is formally accused for poaching, in 2012, a sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) and a tiger, of which the skin was sold for 650,000 rupees (9,070 US\$) to Ranjit Bhatiya who is said to be linked to Mamru alias Badlu Patlepowar, a matchmaker of international stature capable of finding stealthy ways to smuggle skins and bones into Tibet, China and even some Western countries. Barsul, 27, has been on the run since 2014 and was released on bail, but he never respected the constraints. Belonging to the Bahelya community and with a few stooges, he is an expert in tiger routes and camouflage. In 2012, at the age of 20, during the monsoon, they settled on the banks of a river to skin the trapped tigers and tan on the spot the skins free of bullet marks representing, for the final buyers, the ideal of wild skins.⁵⁴



REPEATED OFFENSE

August 27, 2019

Salem, Salem District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Formidable poacher, Saravanan alias "Kutty" Veerappan has been in judicial custody at the Central Prison since April 11 after being caught with 4 axis deer carcasses (*Axis axis*). But he is also suspected of poaching elephants in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the past ten years. More than 10 files are underway against him in both states. In order to prevent him from vanishing after having been granted an interim release in the deer case, the Forest Department has requested the application of the "Goonda law", an exceptional administrative procedure applied to the most dangerous criminals. "Kutty" Veerappan will therefore remain in prison. For K. Manikandan, forest ranger in Burgur, "He never gave up poaching despite landing in our net several times. He always manages to come out on bail and goes poaching again."⁵⁵



September 1, 2019

Villianur, Puducherry District, Union Territory of Puducherry, India

A report by Prasad Somasundaram, published in The Hindu newspaper, shows the amount of bushmeat and ornamental birds still commonly sold in the district without the Forest Department's involvement. This Saturday, a journalist saw butcher stalls selling Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II), Asian Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III) and Indian Hare (*Lepus nigricollis*) at a price of 600 rupees/kg (8.35 US\$/kg), Monitor Lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) at 1,500 to 1,700 rupees/kg (from 21 to 23.70 US\$/kg).

Alexandrine Parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II), Rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*), Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) at 300 rupees per pair (4.20 US\$) and Indian Spot-billed Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*) at 400 rupees (5.60 US\$) per pair are also for sale. Many sellers belong to the Narikorava tribe whose members use to poach around Lake Oussudu, which was declared a bird sanctuary in 2008. When contacted by the journalist, Chief Forest Conservator G. Kumar suddenly woke up: "I will send a team immediately," he promised.⁵⁶

September 13, 2019

Mumbai, Mumbai-City District, State of Maharashtra, India

One albino monkey and 20 young Siamese Crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) were seized, at the end of July, from a bus travelling from Bangalore to Mumbai. They had been purchased by Imran Shirgawkar – at first known under the name Ashfaq Hanif Wadia- in Bangkok in early July. The trafficker had imported the animals via the Chennai Airport without attracting the attention of customs officials. Imran Shirgawkar and his lawyer applied to the Bombay Supreme Court for bail.⁵⁷

September 15, 2019

Luxa, Varanasi District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

One arrest under both the Explosive Act and the Wildlife Protection Act. Rohit Maurya was illegally holding 163.5 kg of fireworks, 13 antlers of Swamp Deer (*Cervus duvaucelii*, Appendix I) and 4 conch shells. An associate has fled.⁵⁸

INDONESIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

July 25 and 29, 2019

Surabaya City, East Java Province, Island of Java, Indonesia

Sentencing of Vekki Subun, Arfandi Nugraha and Andika Wibisono to 3 years, 2 years and 2 years and 6 months in prison, respectively, for the possession and trafficking of Komodo Monitors (*Varanus komodoensis*, Appendix I) as well as pangolins (*Manis* spp., Appendix I), yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), Moluccan cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I), flat-headed cats (*Prionailurus planiceps*, Appendix I), eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), ebony leaf monkeys (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II) and cassowaries (genus *Casuaris*). They sold Komodo monitors for between 6 and 20 million rupees, i.e. between 400 and 1,400 US\$ (see "On the Trail" n°24 p. 90). They stored them in Surabaya City, East Java Province. Andika Wibisono is well known in the courts and on social media for his involvement and inventiveness in defaunation. Via Facebook, his specialty is to settle exchanges of legally protected specimens.⁵⁹



July 30, 2019

**Pekanbaru City, Riau Province,
Island of Sumatra, Indonesia**

Arrest of JM and IG in front of City Hall. They were practicing commercial short circuits. They were in direct contact with the poachers. Seizure of 1 slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), 1 leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), 1 crocodile (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II), 4 mouse-deer (*Tragulus*), 3 blue-rumped parrots (*Psittinus cyanurus*, Appendix II) and 20 other parrots (*Psittaciformes*, Appendix I or II). They also sold eagles on order at a price of 1.5 million rupees (106 US\$). Since 2016, "On the Trail" has reported the seizure and trafficking of Sunda Hawk-Eagles (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II), Javan Hawk-Eagles (*Spizaetus bartelsi*, Appendix II), Asian Black Eagles (*Ictinaetus malayensis*, Appendix II) and Wallace's Hawk-Eagles (*Spizaetus nanus*, Appendix II) in Indonesia.⁶⁰

facebook

September 19, 2019

**Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rescue Center,
Palangka Raya City, Kalimantan Central
Province, Island of Borneo, Indonesia**

Forest and peatland fires are leading at a number of victims among animal populations. Pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) are burned alive. Pangolins are charred. Refuge teams at the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rescue Center note that babies are suffering from respiratory problems.⁶¹

September 19, 2019

**Dumai City, Riau Province, Island
of Sumatra, Indonesia**

Sentencing of Yogo Atmino, Ahmad Nur Habib, Suwardi and Tarno to 4 years in prison and a fine of 50 million rupees (3,520 US\$) with an additional 3 months in prison in the case of non-payment for attempting to smuggle 2 agile gibbons (*Hylobates agilis*, Appendix I) and 38 birds, including 12 palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I), 7 lesser birds-of-paradise (*Paradisaea minor*, Appendix II), 2 twelve-wired birds-of-paradise (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*, Appendix II), 2 king birds-of-paradise (*Cicinnurus regius*, Appendix II), 2 Wilson's birds-of-paradise (*Diphyllodes respublica*, Appendix II) and 3 celebes hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II) (see n°24 p. 44) into Malaysia.⁶²



Paradisaea minor

MALAYSIA

From July 15 to 18, 2019

**Miri, State of Sarawak, Malaysia. Border with
Brunei.**

Seizure in 7 pet shops of parrots (*Psittaciformes*, Appendix I or II), long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I since November 26, 2019), red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II), red-whiskered bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*), budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) and lizards. The majority of buyers are from Brunei. In the Sultanate of Brunei, a long-tailed macaque and a baby hornbill sell for about 4,000 US\$.⁶³

August 4, 2019

**Jalan Padi Makmur, Johor Bahru, State of Johor,
Malaysia**

Seizure in the outbuildings of a 52 year-old man of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), a Sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II), a blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix I or II) and a ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*). He was released on bail. He claims that it is not trafficking. He presents himself as a hobbyist. The total value of the animals is equal to 9,000 US\$.⁶⁴

NEPAL

GANG / REPEATED OFFENSE

September 18, 2019

**Kathmandu, Kathmandu District
Province No. 3, Nepal**

The judicial epilog to the dismantling, at the end of 2017, of an international network of traffickers who were using Nepal as a hub for their traffic destined for India (see "On the Trail" n° 19, pp 128 and 129). Mohammad Faim, Mohammad Sherif Shaheed and Mohammad Usman, all Indian nationals, were sentenced to 5 years in prison. Usman is on his fifth arrest in Nepal (see "On the Trail" n° 6, p.114 et n° 13, p. 111). The Pakistani, Jawaid Aslam Khan, received the same sentence. Sanjeev Bhari, a Nepalese citizen, got two and a half years for having supplied the premises where the animals were locked up. Fifteen other people were acquitted. The network was nabbed when authorities seized 2 young chimpanzees (*Pan* spp., Appendix I or II), 8 monkeys of non-specified species (Appendix I or II), 65 parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II), 7 golden pheasants (*Chrysolophus pictus*), 2 ringneck pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) and 38 pigeons (*Columbidae*). The primates came from Nigeria, through Turkey, and were in deplorable condition, with less than half their normal weight and both sick with pneumonia. The gang had accomplices at the Tribhuvan international airport in Kathmandu. The courts have not yet decided whether the 2 chimpanzees, who are currently housed at the Lalitpur Central Zoo, should stay in Nepal or be sent back to Nigeria.⁶⁵



PAKISTAN

September 5, 2019

Lahore, Punjab Province, Pakistan

On the occasion of the Kashmir dispute, the famous Pakistani singer Rabi Pirzada got herself into a bit of a mess for flaunting, on social media, her familiarity with cobras (genus *Naja*) and pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) by pretending to offer them to Narendra Modi, the Indian Prime Minister, and hoping that the reptiles would devour him and take him to hell. The Punjab Administration did not really appreciate the patriotic refrain of Ms. Pirzada, whose husband and father are soldiers. She runs a beauty salon in Lahore where, until her stunt, customers were greeted by the famous reptiles but also by a lion and a crocodile.⁶⁶



PHILIPPINES

August 23, 2019

Santa Mesa, Manila, Metropolitan Manila, Philippines

It has been at least 3 years that, under the pseudonym Ron Mil, Sharon Jonjon Lim baited buyers via Facebook and taunted investigators. He fell into a trap set up by the police and one of his ex-associates at the time of a delivery. With him were : 3 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), 2 red-sided eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus polychloros*, Appendix II), 6 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) and 2 iguanas that were seized. Global value equal to 5,000 US\$.⁶⁷



facebook

September 27, 2019

Puerto Princesa, Palawan Province, Philippines

1.3 million US\$ was seized from an unoccupied house in the form of 2,588 kg of pangolin scales (Appendix I) distributed in 36 bags, 531 kg of sea turtle scales (Appendix I) distributed in 9 coolers, 229 kg of dried seahorses (Appendix II) and 86.5 kg of sea dragons (*Syngnathidae* family) distributed in 18 boxes. Seadragons are aces of camouflage. Three species live along the coasts of Southern Australia and Tasmania : the common seadragon (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*), the leafy seadragon (*Phycodurus eques*) and the ruby seadragon (*Phyllopteryx dewysea*) (See "On the Trail" n°16 p. 104).⁶⁸



TAIWAN

September 27, 2019

Taiwan-Taoyuan International Airport, Taoyuan Special Municipality, Taiwan

Seizure in the luggage of a woman coming from Bangkok of 2 meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*) – value on the black market close to 4,000 US\$ per specimen – 2 dormice (*Gliridae* family) dead upon arrival – value on the black market close to 1,000 US\$ per live specimen – and 4 rodents (*Octodontidae* family). She had bought rodents because 2020 is both the year of the rat and his zodiac sign.⁶⁹



THAILAND

August 20, 2019

Bangkok, Thailand

Confirmation on appeal of the 6-month prison sentence of Premchai Karnasuta, public works tycoon (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 126-127, n°23 p. 134, n°24 p. 90 and n°25 p. 118), for the illegal possession of 7 firearms. Through the intermediary of his lawyer, Premchai had demanded acquittal or reduction of the sentence. In exchange, he offered to do penance for 15 days in a monastery, donate 3 million bahts (97,400 US\$) to charity and stay away from firearms for life. The court, relying on a criminal record that is beginning to be charged, refused the deal. The sentence was upheld but he was released on bail of 200,000 bahts (6,500 US\$).⁷⁰



VIET NAM

July 3, 2019

Di Linh, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a pangolin (*Manis* spp., Appendix I), a king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) and a porcupine (*Hystricidae* family) by K'Pem and K'Tuan while roaming around the reservoir of the Hàm Thuận hydroelectric dam.⁷¹



End of July 2019

Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

ENV is increasing its efforts to ensure that wildlife is removed from all places of worship. Today it is an oriental-pied hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II). The case has been settled but 3 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), offered by worshippers, still remain caged in 3 churches in the province.⁷²

September 17, 2019

Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park, Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in the hunters' camp, of a Sumatran serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I), 3 masked palm civets (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India) and 2 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India). One of them, Nguyen Van Tuan, was stopped. Three others escaped.⁷³

EUROPE

GERMANY

September 17, 2019

Osnabrück, Lower Saxony State, Germany

Seizure of a jacket lined with bobcat (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), a travel bag and a python pouch (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II).⁷⁴



SPAIN

OPERATION FENNEC

End of August 2019

Ronda, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain



Seizure in a garage by the Guardia Civil of 200 live animals purchased from Portugal, Germany, Slovakia and Spain, preferably animals previously kept in captivity, which are easier to handle, feed, transport and maintain. The organization of the gang and especially its commercial strategy surprised the Seprona Nature Protection Service. From the hyacinth macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I) at the price of 14,000 €, to the fennec fox (*Vulpes zerda*, Appendix II) at an average price of 350 €, and the gray parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) at the price of 1,000 €, the animals are bought by the new Moroccan bourgeoisie who wish to impress their entourage with prisoners other than the European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*).⁷⁶

FRANCE

July 9, 2019

L'Abresle, Department of Rhône, France

Scandal in the retail business. The managing couple of a supermarket near Lyon was on holiday hunting leopards, lions and hippopotamus in Namibia, Tanzania and South Africa. They were forced to resign by management of the chain Super U.⁷⁷

ITALY

August 2, 2019

Palazzo Pignano, Province of Cremona, Region of Lombardy, Italy

Hold-up and serial murder in a villa. Two masked assailants bludgeoned the guard, forced the locks, stole watches and jewelry and killed in their cages a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), a true owl (Strigidae, Appendix I or II), a prairie dog (genus *Cynomys*) and a chinchilla (*Chinchilla* spp., Appendix I).⁷⁸

UNITED KINGDOM

Mid-July 2019

Preston, County of Lancashire, England, United Kingdom



A kind of zoo-farm where animals piled up on the ground, in ramshackle hutches and caravans, in niches in the middle of turtle shells that serve as drinking troughs when it rains, a cage littered with bones. A persistent smell of death and decay is roaming over 13 hens, 2 red-fronted parrots (*Poicephalus gulielmi*, Appendix II), a Cape parrot (*Poicephalus robustus*, Appendix II), a red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), 6 iguanas (Iguanidae family), a pelican (genus *Pelecanus*), a green parakeet (*Psittacara holochlorus*), meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*), maras (genus *Dolichotis*) and porcupines (Hystricidae family). Bradley Tomes, 24 years-old and operator of this camp, was sentenced to 20 weeks in prison, suspended for one year, a ridiculous sentence in the middle of England.⁷⁹

August 1, 2019

Bradford, County of Yorkshire, England, United Kingdom

Search in the home of a 26 year-old man suspected of, with a partner of the same age, engaging in the sale of Siamese crocodile skulls (*Croodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) and Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) fraudulently imported from Asia.⁸⁰



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

August 27, 2019

Violet Town, State of Victoria, Australia

In a 400 ha sheep farm, wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*, Appendix II) have been dropping down for several years. DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) agents took action and find the remains of 120 birds of prey and small kangaroos in a freezer. Other dead birds are scattered all over the estate. Initial analyses point to mass poisoning. The NGO Wildlife Victoria refers to "a cultural problem" that is reportedly occurring here and there in the state (227.600 km²). "Native animals are not respected and treated in the most abominably cruel manner".⁸¹



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.

AFRICA

NIGERIA

Beginning of July

Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

Seizure of 820 bundles of donkey skins worth 255,000 US\$. "If we let people kill donkeys because their leather is in high demand elsewhere, the animal could disappear here" said Aliyu Mohammed, head of the customs unit.¹

September 20, 2019

Kano, Kano State, Nigeria

Seizure of 678 donkey skins awaiting export to China.²

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 26, 2019

Clark Mountain Herd Area, California, United States of America

Since the month of May, 42 decomposed corpses of wild donkeys (*Equus asinus*) have been found by lookouts near Interstate 15 between Halloran Springs, California, and Primm, Nevada. They all bear bullet marks. Wild donkeys are protected by a 1971 federal law, the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. They are the descendants of domestic donkeys introduced by Mexican immigrants during the gold rush and escaped from enclosures or abandoned. A reward of 50,000 US\$ is promised to anyone who will help to identify the criminal(s). The reward is jointly funded by the American Wild Horse Campaign, Return to Freedom, the Cloud Foundation, the HSUS, the Platero Project and the BLM (Bureau of Land Management). The investigation is led by the BLM, the sheriff of the county of San Bernardino, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Highway Patrol. The alert number is 800-78CRIME.³



ASIA

IRAN

September 17, 2019

Doruneh, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran

Seizure from a poacher of an Iranian onager (*Equus hemionus onager*, Appendix II) cut into pieces and a firearm. Administrative fine equal to 12,000 US\$ before the trial.⁴

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°26 : chapter Donkeys, Iran, reference 4.

Robin des Bois especially thanks the Species Survival Network and the NGO Save the Elephants.

Institutions

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Non Governmental Organizations

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